

I have a few announcements here. First of all, a reminder for the Feast coming up. I just want to mention it again, that no perfumes and colognes at any of the Feast sites. Mentioning that because there are still some who still wear perfumes and colognes, primarily perfumes, so please don't do it during the Feast season, because we have a lot of people that are very, very allergic to those things. And it's one thing to have something like an aftershave or a mild lotion, because of dry skin and things like that, but there are lotions out there that are very, very strong. It's fine for mild aftershaves, mild lotions, and things like that, because you have to draw a line somewhere as to what is a balance, but the stronger things, please don't wear those strong lotions and the like. Some are very strong, others are just normal and mild. But we have a lot of people that are affected by those things.

One other announcement I wanted to make I forgot last Sabbath, and that's a reminder about children at the Feast. I did mention it in part of a sermon, but I want to mention it as an announcement as well, that this really shouldn't be happening on the Sabbath either, but especially not at the Feast of Tabernacles, that they shouldn't be running around unsupervised. They really shouldn't be running around, period, unless they're close to you, obviously, and well behaved. That type of thing. But, again, they shouldn't be running, going about unsupervised. They need to have a parent with them or they need to be with the parents or someone that's responsible for watching them at basically all times while we're at the hotels. Because we have a reputation with the hotels we're at, and remember that it is a Feast of Tabernacles. And on the Sabbath, Sabbath day's especially at various places we rent it's important that children are well behaved and taken care of. And same thing with going to restrooms and toilets (I mention "toilets" because that's for Europe. They don't have restrooms there. They call it toilets. Anyway, we go to the restroom, they go to the toilet. Same thing, basically.) But again, they shouldn't be going unsupervised if they're younger. And then people want to know, "Well, what age is that?" Well, I don't know? 10 and under? Something like that? I can't give a... it just depends - 11, maybe 12? I don't know. You have to decide that as a parent. But again, please... It depends on the children too. And so, please do well with that.

I did mention that when we were up in Erie that I was so impressed with how the children were there, and that is one area I visited that there are more children there, I think, than any other area that I've been in, that I can think of. Isn't that right? And very well behaved. And I do want to mention one individual that I highly respect for how she has done with her children. She went to the library and got a book called, *Nanny 911: [Expert Advice for All Your Parenting Emergencies]*; and I saw how her children behave, she has done an awesome job! So sometimes there are parents out there that might be good, that some of you go check out *Nanny 911*. Put in a plug for that book because she's done an awesome job. Probably embarrassed the tar out of her today, but

that's okay. Because we do have a couple situations, every once in a while I do get a report in from some different areas, from the elders and the like, and there are some children that are not doing what they should be doing. They're not acting the way they should be acting. And we really don't want to bring that to the Feast. And you really don't want to have that on the Sabbath anyway, so please get those things taken care of. It's a part of your responsibility as a parent to make sure children are supervised, if they're acting properly and well behaved. And if they're not that reflects upon you and it reflects on your character, upon a lot of things, candidly. So again, do well with this.

After the Feast this year we're going to begin focusing far more upon why we've been called in this end-time and what we're called to participate in during the time that remains before Christ's coming. And this will in time begin to become *exceedingly exciting* to God's Church, to all of God's people who are worshipping *in* the Temple. So we understand what those things mean now on a magnified way compared to times past.

All of you who have become baptized, and even all of you who are teenagers and younger children have been *exceedingly blessed* to live within the environment of God's true Church at the very end of this final age for all mankind. *More* than you can ever begin to comprehend, truly. *More* than you can begin to comprehend. Our lives are filled day by day with our activities in the world, with whatever it might be, our jobs, our routines, whatever those routines are. Think about your routine this past week. What did you do? Well, your life is filled with that, but it needs to be filled especially with the Sabbath day and the things you hear Sabbath by Sabbath by Sabbath and the things that God is giving to us to prepare us for a time that's coming quickly upon this earth. It is so awesome, it truly is! You are exceedingly blessed more than you can begin to grasp, truly.

So we're now entering into a final work in God's Church at the end of this age. It's a work that is squarely focused upon the message that God is going to begin delivering to this world in a very powerful way. It is the message contained in the final book being given to God's Church and to the world, again, in the message *Prophecy Against the Nations*. It's really a message for all of us, too. If you will listen, God will listen. Isn't that our life? If we will listen Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day, seek to apply the things that God gives to us, God listens. He's eager to listen. He's desirous, especially of those whom He's called, to bless, to bless and give favor and awesome blessings too in their life as we live and learn to apply the things He gives us Sabbath by Sabbath.

That's why I'm excited about where we are right now because there are a lot of people who just haven't *listened*. They haven't *cared*. They *quit* listening! That boggles my mind! Shows me so clearly they didn't *begin to see* or couldn't *grasp* the opportunity they had! That's why we need to *grasp* the opportunity that God has given to us, to hold on to with all of our being. Because people let it slide through their fingers continually. There's hardly a week gone by since I've been back that someone hasn't been disfellowshipped or suspended from God's Church. So be it! So be

it. Not listening. Not *doing* what they're supposed to be doing. Not *applying* what they're being given Sabbath by Sabbath. Now, that's incredible to me, to realize how much of this has been going on a regular basis. And if they haven't been, that, or suspended, in that respect, they've been talked to, been warned, forewarned, been worked with. It's always exciting when individuals respond and change. But there are so many who just give up, who just quit, who really weren't in the battle in the first place. So it's really, a lot of times it's never a surprise, it's hardly ever a surprise to me. Sometimes I get *shocked* to the core of my being, but most of the times I do not, because people are walking around in the courtyard and most of the time it doesn't fool me. Okay? So either we have opportunity to change or respond and get inside the Temple and do what we need to do... Because I know what'll happen if individuals don't. You can't give this to anyone. You might want certain ones to see it or certain ones to make certain changes or to do certain things, but you can't. If they can't hear on the Sabbath, they can't hear! If they can't hear from God's servant(s) then they can't hear. So no matter how much you might want it for someone else, you cannot give it to them. It's between them and God, if they have such an opportunity to be drawn, to be called, and to change. That's our choice. That's the choice of each individual with whom God works.

Herbert W. Armstrong came to understand his commission that was recorded in scripture in a very powerful way. And that commission, again, was clearly stated in Matthew 24:14. I repeat this, talk about this quite often because it's really quite profound. He knew what his job was. He knew what he was supposed to do. He knew the primary focus that God had given to him and it was in **Matthew 24:14—And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.** Now, he never saw that. He never saw what was going to happen as far as what it's talking about here. Because the next verse goes on to show what the end is and where it begins, and it began with the Abomination of Desolation. Thankfully, Mr. Armstrong never had to witness that, never had to go through that. Incredibly awesome when you understand that he came up to verse 14 and didn't know about verse 15. He didn't go on with verse 15 because it was about us. It was about that which was to follow as far as the Apostasy was concerned.

But my commission and the commission that we're able to participate and share in has, obviously, been clearly revealed to us, and really hasn't been until this final book. We've known certain things we were to do, but some of that has changed and now we have this part to fulfill. And again, it's what's revealed in **Revelation 10:11** where it says, **He said unto me, You must prophesy again before**, the word means "about" or "against" in context here, **many people's nations, tongues, and kings**. So it's exciting to be a part of what God has called us to participate in for all those who are worshipping in the Temple and the things we have gone through. This is all necessary that we be more at one, that we be more unified.

And so today we're going to begin a new sermon series that is now going to begin being given just before the Feast of Tabernacles. I mention that because some are going to hear parts of this

series probably afterwards. And we may continue on afterwards, I don't know how long this is going to be. But this is *Part 1* of a sermon entitled (or series entitled), *Be Encouraged!* Be encouraged! You know, be excited about what God's giving to you and what God is offering to you. That's the opportunity we have, to be excited, to be encouraged, to be inspired. And that comes from God. And if you feel like you're lacking in that - and even if you feel like you *are* encouraged and you *are* excited - ask God to give you more that's proper, that's good, that you have more excitement, that you have greater inspiration, that you be even more deeply encouraged about your calling and about the opportunity you have to share in something that God is doing on this earth.

You know, I don't think we really grasped during Philadelphia what we were sharing in even at that time. I think we did to certain degree, but not on a level and a plane that we would be able to now in looking back in retrospect and seeing what God had called Mr. Armstrong to do... and the entire Church called to be able to participate in that is so incredibly awesome. And if we were able to have seen those things to the degree that I feel like we could probably see them today, if we were at the same level in the sense of understanding and spiritual strength in our lives, we would have responded far more differently than we even did back then.

Let's turn over to 1 Peter 2. Several months ago we focused upon a section of scripture that we're going to once again focus upon as an introduction to this new sermon series. 1 Peter 2, and we're going to read the entire thing in its context here. But this is something that I talked about a few months back. We'd focused upon this and we're doing it again. 1 Peter 2:1. Hopefully, it means more now than what it did when we first went through it, especially when you look back. And you can always do this in your life, you can go back and you can see how God leads His Church. You can look at it through the flow of sermons. There is a process that God takes us through. And if we can "see" those things, if we're able to focus upon those things, we'll learn more about how God leads and guides and directs His people, how He works with us as a Body. And this is inspiring! This is exciting!

1 Peter 2:1—Therefore, laying aside all malice, all evil in our life. That's been a message now for several weeks - for a few months, actually - that we need to become more at-one with God, that we need to look more deeply into our lives and desire with more of our being to be at-one with God, to get rid of those things that interfere with our prayer life, with our spiritual growth, with our relationships with God and with one another, to correct those things that are in error. "Therefore, laying aside all malice," all that is evil. And anything that fights and resists God, anything that cuts us off from the flow of God's spirit, it really is evil. It is evil! ...and **all guile, and hypocrisy.** That's why walking around the courtyard, that's, to me, is an example of incredible hypocrisy. One cannot be a part of the Body of Christ and just go back and forth from Sabbath services and even tithe and go through the ceremony of those kinds of things in our life unless there is something inside of us that's a conviction, that's a power of God's spirit that we're *convicted* of this way of life, that we're striving to grow and change. And so if we're not doing

those things within the Temple because that's what that's about, it's about being in God and God in us. It's about desiring God to dwell in us and we in God. It's that hunger and that thirst that should be in us all the time, a desire to grow in those things.

And so again, hypocrisy. And, candidly, those who have gone by the wayside have lived hypocrisy, too much so. Now, we all have tendencies of it in our human lives because that's just the way of human nature. There are things in ourselves that we don't even see until we get to a certain point and then God reveals it to us because it's a process of growth. If we were able to see everything all at once we couldn't do it. We'd just give up right then. We can't do that. We're not able to, thankfully. So God shows us as we grow a little bit at a time. And sometimes we get to a certain point, people get to a certain point where God reveals certain things, or an individual *knows* they are not doing what they should be doing, and then God will reveal to them even more so, "This isn't..." and after a while the mind can become calloused and it's not moved by a desire to change the things that are wrong in their life and they get trapped in sin and don't strive to get out of it anymore. They don't strive to conquer it and fight against it anymore. If that happens, and it happens in people's lives, because the evidence of that is seen in those who depart, in those who must depart. And so there are certain times in people's lives when they *just quit fighting* or they don't even try to fight certain things in their life. Our life isn't like that in God's Church. It's a constant battle. It is one of continually desiring to grow, not coast, but to grow and conquer and overcome. That's what the word "overcome" means, by the way. It means "to conquer." That's what it means in the Greek language. "To overcome," means "to conquer." There are things in our life God has called us to conquer, to overcome, to change. And so it's about a fight. You can't conquer something, in the strictest sense of spiritual battle, without fighting. And so it's up to us whether we fight and to what we put into the fight and if we really grasp the bottom line is crying out to God on a continual basis to help us in that fight so that we not deceive ourselves because we as human beings tend to deceive ourselves.

Therefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envying, and all evil speaking... Envy? I've had my fill of envying! I hate it! I hate it when I see it. And sometimes, and more so in times past it's been way too strong in the body, individuals jealous of other individuals. Now how can that be? How can that be that people can live with jealousy and being jealous of someone else? It reminds me of the example of Paul when he talks about, you know, if you're a certain part of the body, can the head say to the foot, "I don't need you," or, well, and vice versa, whatever it might be, the eye, the ear. We're all part of the body and God places in the body as it pleases Him. But we're all blessed to share being in the Body. And we *need* each other. And if we really have that kind of a vision than that love that should be there will follow. It will be a part of it as well. We will love the Body. Does anybody hate any part of their body? You want to get rid of part of it? You want to... Well, sometimes there might be parts we want to get rid of. Sometimes we have...those are just battles of life as well, sometimes genetics, sometimes a matter of bad habit, or whatever it is, but, yeah some... But you understand what I'm saying, as far as a member of the Body, you know, fingers, toes, foot, knee. See, my focus right now has

been on my knee. Whatever it might be. A while back it was on my toe; I couldn't wear shoes. So, you know, there are certain parts that can... one little part can hurt like that and just... that's where your focus is. That's where your mind is when you're walking, when you're doing various things.

And really, that's the way we should be as a Church, as a Body. We should be concerned about every part of the Body. We should love the entire Body and desire when parts of the Body are going through battles and the like that we pray for... and God wants to know, what do you think about that? How do you feel about other parts of the Body? Are you just...? It's like saying, "Are you just selfish and just concerned about *you* and your part of the body, or do you see the entire Body and when you hear about various parts, the things that people are going through, that your heart goes out, you pray for them, you desire..." And you know what most of that prayer is for? For you! Do you realize that kind of a prayer is more for your spiritual health? Because God knows every part of the Body and He knows what parts need help and intervention and the like. And there are times because other parts of the Body pray about various things that God will respond to that too. But I hope you understand what I'm saying. The most important part is *your* part in care and concern for the Body.

Anyway, going on here: Again, laying aside these things. In other words, getting away from them, putting them away out of your life. You don't want them a part of your life. You don't want to keep dragging them along. You don't want them to be dragging them along behind you as a part of your life dragging you down.

...envyings and evil speaking, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word. It's about an attitude. It's about an attitude of humility that we understand we need God, like a child, to be childlike in that. Jesus Christ gave the examples of that. It's not talking about the fact that we are "babes" in the sense of where we are spiritually in our life, but it's showing an attitude, "as newborn babes," "as a child," we know we need help, we know we need nurturing, we know we need that kind of care that comes from God. We know that God is the source of it and we desire it. **...desire the sincere milk of the word,** that we can grow... Well, that's what it goes on to say, **that you may grow thereby.** I mean, it just goes together, doesn't it? That's why you desire it, so "that you can grow thereby." And so Sabbath by Sabbath we have a desire to drink in every bit that we can so "that we can grow thereby." **...if so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.** That's how we learn more about God and an attitude toward God and to grasp the mercy and the grace that God gives to us in our lives.

To whom coming as to a lively stone, disallowed, in other words, rejected indeed of men, but chosen by God and precious. And so it begins to talk about some of those things concerning Jesus Christ and what it means there. Why is it interjecting that here? Because those first few verses, first verse I should say, "Laying aside the malice, the evil, the guile, the hypocrisy, the envying, the jealousies, the evil speaking." That's sin. And that means we have to repent of it.

And that means the only thing we can do then is to look to Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ in the sacrifice of what He did enables the ability to be forgiven. We've tasted that God is merciful and gracious. He's given us grace that we don't have to stay that way, that we can change, that we can become something different. We don't have to remain the way we are, thank God! Sadly, too many who have left remained the way they are, and some became worse!

Therefore, also it's contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes him, not "on him," believes him, believes those things he taught and he said - this way of life, the truth that's been given to us. Everything that the Church has comes through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gives it to the Church, if we understand how God works through the power of His holy spirit, but it comes from Jesus Christ, through him. **...and he who believes him shall not be confounded.** This word means "disgraced, shamed, put to shame." Sin puts us to shame. It brings disgrace to life. And we have to change those things that bring disgrace upon the Church, that bring disgrace into our own lives. And sin does that. And we bring it upon the Church as well, then. And you know what? God doesn't allow that all the time for a long time. Now, He's allowed it through time in the Church because that's how we grow. We learn from those examples. If those examples weren't around we wouldn't be able to learn some of the things we need to learn. So God allows certain things to take place within the Church. He allows us to experience not only our own human nature, but the human nature of others. He allowed us, as a whole, those who went through it, to experience the Apostasy. He could have prevented that, but it was His purpose to allow us to experience it, to teach some of the greatest lessons mankind will ever be able to learn, that will be taught powerfully throughout the Millennium and the Great White Throne. That will be one of the major lessons that will ever be taught. Far greater than what Satan did. *Far* greater than what Satan did. As a lesson to us in the Church, to show what human beings in the Church who have God's holy spirit can do. Satan never had God's holy spirit. Angelic realm doesn't function in that way. We're different. We're unique, to become Elohim. I hope we understand the difference there. It's talked about in the book.

Verse 7—Therefore, unto you who believe... And so things reveal whether or not we really believe. And in time those things come out in life as to whether or not we really believe what has been given to us. Basically, for us, that we believe 57 Truths and those things that God has given to the Church to understand, to see, and to know. **...and he who believes him shall not be confounded,** in other words, "put to shame," or "ashamed, disgraced." **Therefore, unto you who believe, he is precious; but unto those who are disobedient, The stone which the builders disallowed (rejected) the same has become the head of the corner.** What an incredible thing to think about, what it's saying here. Those who believe. Not everybody in the Church has. Not everybody who has come into the environment of the Church has believed, see. And maybe they believed at the beginning but didn't grow because of various sins in their life, as it talked about in the first verse here, because of various sins they wouldn't fight against, wouldn't strive to conquer and overcome. And so through time then they got to a point where they didn't really believe. There are things that affect your mind and how you think.

So, again, there are those, incredibly, as it talks about here... Because when you read this verse you tend to think of those who rejected Jesus Christ when he was on this earth. It's more than this, a lot more... *a lot* more. That's not just all its talking about here. **Therefore, unto you who believe, *he is precious*; but to those who are disobedient, The stone which the builders disallowed** (rejected) **the same has become the head of the corner.** A lot of people have fallen into that category. Not just those who had a desire in the Jewish nation, the Jewish people, the leaders at least, the religious leaders who desired to see Jesus Christ put to death. It goes way, way beyond that. It goes into a period of time within the Church. It goes into a period of time that those who were given ability to see, who were called, who had opportunity to see and to be a part of something great, as far as their calling was concerned, and the majority of those who rejected Jesus Christ. Many have been called, *few* have gone through the process and been chosen. Many more than the few, see? And that's what it's talking about here, every one of those rejected Jesus Christ. Every one. Everyone who has ever come to a point where they no longer fight and continue to fight to get to a point where they have to be separated from the Body, they come to a point where they reject Jesus Christ. What is it they reject? All kinds of things; generally, me as God's apostle, that I would be giving to them what is true. That somehow they come to a point where they have to justify in their mind that, "No, God didn't give him those additional truths." "No, that isn't what the Church is all about." "No, there is no such thing as God addressing certain things about a change and a curse in women that's being removed." There are people who have left because of that! Because they just can't deal with that one! It's too much! Too much! It's what you call a "chauvinist pig." (Nobody laughed at that.) Anyway. There are people who have left because they can't take that about women! They want to keep them in subjection. That's their mindset. They don't want God to come along... Well, they don't see it as God. They don't want some minister to come along and say, "This is all changing. The wife may be the head of the home now as far as God's government is concerned." Oooo, that's a novel thought! I'm just kidding. It's God's spirit that determines order. It's how God's spirit works that determines order. And so we're learning those things within the Church because it's going to be taught during the Millennium. This is where we're going. It's an incredible thing! I'm excited by it. I know a lot of women who are, too. Sadly, some men haven't been. That's why some left not too long ago.

So, again, what an incredible thing to say: **The stone which the builders disallowed.** So there's some who have their own kind of building, the way they want to build it, the way they want to build God's Church, the way they want to see it built. They don't like something; they go out and build something else. So what do they reject? Jesus Christ. They reject the Head of the Church. They really reject God, but again, it's focusing upon what God is using in and through the Church to build the Church, and Jesus Christ is, as it says here, "has been made the head of the corner." Awesome verses.

Verse 8—and a stone of stumbling. See, it's not at me they stumble, as God's apostle. It isn't that some of you, that some have stumbled who were a part of God's Church. They have stumbled with Jesus Christ and they haven't believed. They haven't believed everything they were given Sabbath

by Sabbath or that's been inspired and been written for the Church. So Jesus Christ, to them, has become a stone of stumbling. Now, they don't believe that, but that's what the truth is. ...**and a rock of offence**, because they're *offended* at the *truth*. They're offended at certain things that are given that are true that they don't like. They're *offended* in it, of God's word. Incredible! They're *offended* in what Christ has given to the Church. That's what the truth is. ...**and a rock of offence, even to them who stumble at the word**. So everyone who marches around out in the courtyard acting like they're in the Church, or whatever... and thankfully vast majority of that is now cleansed. The vast majority has been cleansed. I'm excited, because I know what we're getting ready to go in to, and we're going to be more at one, more unified than we have ever been in God's Church - perhaps *ever* in 2,000 years. Because it didn't take very long in the beginning, many had been called, the vast majority of those went by the wayside even in the beginning of the Church in Ephesus.

So again, **being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed**. Well, because why? Was it predestined? We know better than that. It's because, "Many have been called, and few are chosen," because God allows human nature to exist and He doesn't force His way upon us and we have the power of choice and we have the power and we have to become responsible for our own choices. That's why we've gone through some of the sermons we have, etcetera, etcetera, and on and on it goes. And so it's appointed to those who don't believe Jesus Christ, that something else happened to them, they're separated, "whereunto they were appointed." God has law and order and a way of life to be lived, even within the Church in those things that are to be accomplished within the Church. And so there's a way to live in the Church, in the Temple, but not to wander around the courtyard because that's just hypocrisy and not believing Jesus Christ.

Verse 9. Be encouraged! That isn't what it says right there, but that's.... If we understand the process, I think of all the sermons we've been receiving, that we've been addressing and focusing upon certain areas of life, and then *this* is what we're to embrace, *this* is what we're to hold on to, those who are in the Temple, those who are applying themselves within the Temple, those who are thirsty, those who desire the sincere milk of God's word and are seeking to change. With those who remain, that's *exactly* what's taking place in you! You're able to go to the Feast of Tabernacles this year in a Body that has been highly cleansed. Rejoice in that because you can have a far greater spiritual Feast than ever. The more at one the Body is.... Because it only takes a little. It only takes a little here and there to hurt the body. It truly does. It only takes a little bit here and there to drag down the body, like a cancer that can go out and infect and hurt others, put a damper on, put a hard time on, make it difficult for others spiritually, even on a spiritual plane. What an awesome thing to be able to go to the Feast more unified than ever before.

I hope you see it in that light and I hope we strive to do that individually more than ever before in our life. Because then it's not just words, to experience the best Feast ever, it's not just a matter of words then. It's a matter of something you're able to experience in your relationships, first of all, with God Almighty and Jesus Christ, because that's what will give you the spiritual strength

and power that no one can take from you, the excitement for things you hear and what it does to you.

What an incredible thing! Have you had times in your life that you've been closer to God than at others, and there are times that you are so moved by certain things that you hear it just can cause chills to go up and down your spine. It can stir you up inside, motivate you, move you? We have times like that that are greater than others, and the Feast of Tabernacles is a good example because we receive sermons every day. And that's the height of a year. That's the height of any time of a year that we're able to experience on a spiritual plane because we hear this day by day, we're out of the world. You know what? You're not focusing upon all the things you have to deal with on your normal routine week by week. You've left all that behind. God lets you experience something on a spiritual plane pictured in the future, just exactly what we picture, a part of what we're portraying in the sense of what we're able to experience together, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day and looking forward to those things that God is going to do in pouring out His spirit on the whole world. And He's pouring out upon us. He wants to pour out more of His spirit on the Church during the Feast of Tabernacles. We should embrace that! We should be praying about that! And we should be *listening* to the things we've been hearing and seeking to *change* and make changes in our life.

If we're not making changes in our life, if we come to the Day of Atonement and if we don't address, because of what we failed to address in this fast... Because a lot of people, I'll just tell you right now, a lot of people failed to address what they needed to address in that. They participated in it and that's good, but didn't fully grasp the total intent of what was given there, but afterward began to "see" what more the intent was. And now as we come up to Atonement and to a specific fast, an opportunity to become more at-one with God and to have one, especially one thing at the top of your list. Because as you enter into the Day of Atonement you know there is something in your life, number one, that you want to change, that you want out of your life and that you're crying out to God for on *that* day more zealously, more vehemently, more with greater intensity than anything you have done in any fast before. And you can do it! Be encouraged in that. You can do it! Because now you "see" something that God is offering to you during that period of time even more so because He wants to pour out His spirit upon you in a greater way. That's where we are even more so in time if we can grasp it.

And so on the Day of Atonement, to use that opportunity to cry out to God and say, because now you know. If you don't know what the number one thing you're battling in your life, I don't know what to say! Except, go before God on your knees and cry out to God and say, "Father, I know I've got a number one, but I've got several other things here and they're just all kind of jumbling together. What is the number one?" Ask God to help you to see what it is. Maybe you've just got a whole bunch of them just clinging together here, you know, so bogged down here with so many of them they're just all a great big one. One better rise to the surface above all the rest, okay? And then worry about number two and pray to God for help with number two. Do you know what your

number two is? You should! You should know what it is you're battling that is number one in your life. What is number one thing that pops up in your life more than anything else? And if you don't know, ask God. You know what, if you do it in spirit and truth He'll show you. Ask for mercy, too, when you ask, that He be merciful to you. But ask for help to see those things because you've got to know where your battle is. And there is not one person in the Body that doesn't have such battles. Because that's the way our entire spiritual life is from the day you're called to the day you die or change. There's always going to be a number one that you're battling. And hopefully the number one isn't the same thing as what it was when you're called. But it may be. Maybe it's your major weakness in your life and you have to battle it till the end. So be it! So be it! But you're becoming stronger if that's the case.

It's just like repentance. Every time you repent you grow in character, you grow in Godly character. If you grasp that on a spiritual plane, every time you repent of sin, because you're acknowledging God is right and *you are wrong*, that's character, to grow in that. And the more you do that the stronger you become, the more convicted you are of that truth, "I am wrong. God is right. Thank God for His patience and His mercy." Truly! Awesome!

So again here (I don't know where I left off...), **Verse 8—and a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence, to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: and whereunto they were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.** We need to see ourselves for who we are, for what God has given us - to *grasp* what it means to be in the Church of God! To grasp what it means to have the Great God of the universe and His Son to dwell in you on a spiritual plane. Now, that's awesome! And it's hard for us to really see and grasp something like that, but it's true and we need to embrace it with more of our being and be thankful to God that we have such opportunity that's been afforded to so few in 6,000 years! So few in 6,000 years! *How blessed are you?* If you begin to grasp that more deeply be encouraged, be strengthened by that, that the Great God of the universe wants to dwell in you on a spiritual plane. He's called you to cleanse you of all your sins. He doesn't want... He wants them far away. But every once in a while because of that number one and number two, especially, whatever they are, and the others that follow in somewhere behind it, usually because of number one and number two, because those are the one that make you weaker, those are the ones that make you weaker. Whatever number one and number two are, they're the ones that make you weaker. They're the ones that tend to cut you off from God's spirit; therefore, there are a lot of other things that follow in behind it. Maybe on a lesser plane, obviously, but they're there. It's our human nature and human nature just *sucks!* It *stinks!* It is *evil!* Selfishness is evil. And we come to see that in our lives.

Some people can't take that and they just get so tired of hearing every Sabbath how bad I am! I've known of people... I've known of so many people who have left for that very reason, "I'm just tired of hearing how bad I am." Because why? "I'm pretty good. I'm not like that." Just like one person said recently, "I'm at peace. Basically, I'm happy now that I'm leaving. Basically, I'm not

having to listen to that anymore. I'm feeling pretty good. I'm at peace." Think, what kind of a peace do you have? What do you mean? Amazing! Can't give it to anybody.

But you *are* a chosen generation. How blessed to be a part of God's Church, to have the Great God dwell in us on a spiritual plane. "You are a chosen generation." You think of the first 4,000 years. There weren't that many! By the time the flood was over with we're talking about, what was it? Eight? Eight! Incredible! Say, "Well, maybe there were others, a lot of others." No, it wasn't a Church; it was individuals. And God was working in a different manner with people during that time, and even afterwards. Not very many, first 4,000 years. *4,000 years!* There are more in the Church today, I believe, than in the *first 4,000 years*.

Verse 9—But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. That's the way God looks up us because we're a part of spiritual Israel, "a holy nation." That means something has to be reflected in our lives that's not just human nature. How we behave, how our children behave, like I mentioned earlier before I got into the sermon, reflects a lot upon us as individuals. It truly does. So there are many things that reflect upon us as to what we're living and how we're living our life. **But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people,** special because we're special to God, exceedingly, awesomely special to God. It's hard for us to see ourselves like that because we see our human nature and we see our lives and we realize what a struggle this human life is. But understand, special to God. What could be greater than that?

I think of how individuals, how you see movies about it, you see TV shows about it, you see it in the news, we see it in the Church, we see people's lives, our lives, of things we've experienced, and I think of sometimes even on a physical plane how people have a longing for a right relationship that they wish they could have experienced or had with parents, a mother and a father. And we have those things in our lives that mess us up. They just mess us up because of things that have been done wrong. And what happens is that's been going on for 6,000 years because it started with Adam and Eve. They started messing up their children from the very beginning, and their children grew up and they started messing up their children, and their children got messed up, and their children, and their children. By the time you got to the flood what did you have? One man that God could work with because everybody was so messed up. And a lot of that goes back to their life as a child.

So much of what we are, what I am, what I battle happened before I was baptized at 19; made me who I am. Made my battles what they are all the rest of my life. See? And some of us, whatever we've experienced in our life, your battles are unique to you. And there are those longings we have. There are longings that people have, wished they could have had with a father or a mother, or both, that just never was there. And even sometimes as they grow up as adults they still have that desire, and sometimes it's just not even there because they don't know how, because they don't have God's spirit. They haven't been able to change and grow and have what

you have. But you have the responsibility to start making the change. That's why Mr. Armstrong talked about three and four generations. That's how long it really takes to get things leveled to where they're supposed to be! Because we'll still pass things on. You can't help it. Things get passed on!

And so your hope is that the generation that follows you, that they're able to do better than what you did! I've known parents that are jealous because you do better. Horrible! I guess I'd want to share that, cause some experienced that in the Church. I grew up that way, a father that I couldn't share things with because he was jealous. I never could understand that. How could a parent be jealous of their child? Why would you be jealous? Wouldn't you want your child...? Don't you want your child to do better than you? Isn't that the kind of love a parent should have to their child? "I want you to do *better* than what I did! I want you to *excel!*" But to be jealous? Never could understand it. Always had a longing for that; never could have it because it just wasn't there. And he couldn't help it. Passed down from generation to generation to generation. We have been called to change that. We break that. It starts with us. We begin to change those things. We have an effect, then, on other people, and we see the things that have been run wrong in life and we're called to correct that, to change it. We're going to be different! Incredible!

So, I think about that on a physical plane, but what does it mean when God Almighty looks upon you and sees you as special to Him? What does that mean? Shouldn't that, doesn't that mean a whole lot more than what any physical human being could do? Shouldn't that mean more to us? The perfect parent. The perfect Father. The perfect Almighty Eternal Living God. *That's* what we should strive for and have in our life, and *then* we have ability to help other lives around us, truly, in life. We're going to have opportunity in the Millennium to help other lives make those changes generation after generation to where people learn how to live right in relationships, instead of fighting and arguing - where a husband and wife can't get along and throw things at each other and curse each other and use curse words at each other. Does it happen in God's Church? No! To happen in the courtyard, yes. To happen in the courtyard, because it doesn't happen in God's Church - that's where we deceive ourselves - until we repent. And so, you know, if people see those things and repent, then that's good. And those who don't, it's that sayonara thing again, auf wiedersehen, dos vedanya, good-bye, because it's not in the Temple. That doesn't exist in the Temple. It can't happen with God's spirit dwelling in us. We can't have evil speech coming out of our mouths toward a mate, someone we're to - the experience God has given in human life, to be the most precious, most meaningful experience that a human being can experience on a physical plane. And how much more with God's holy spirit in them should that be experienced? Because people in the world are able to experience that on a physical plane, love, on a physical plane, philia, with one another, toward one another, incredibly so. How much *more* in the Body of Christ with God's spirit? So, anyway, boggles the mind.

You're a chosen generation. That's where we have to start to realize that God has chosen us to be a part of His Church, called us to be a part of His Church - not necessarily chosen us for what is

ahead. That's where we have to keep fighting and keep fighting because we want to *remain* a part of that calling, to participate in it, to participate in the sharing. That's what *fellowship* is about, *fellowship* with one another and fellowship with God. **But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people.** Special to God. That's what makes us special. It's God! It's God's holy spirit.

...that you should show forth... I love this part of the verse, one of my favorites. **...that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.** And that word "praises" has to do and means, "the virtues, the moral excellence, the character of God." That's what that word means in the Greek language. It means all of those things. "That we should show forth." What does that mean? Well, we're not to *remain* the way we were when we were called. We're not to *remain* and be like what the world is - to change, to reflect more of God in us. That's what it's taking about. We should be able to reflect more of God in us. And the more we yield to God the more that's what we're going to reflect to those around us in the world - on the job, especially in our homes and in our marriages and our families and so forth. And then in the Body, we're going to reflect that, God in us.

"...that we should show forth the moral *excellence*, the *character*, the virtue, the virtues of God." Those things that are good and right. Not reflecting our human nature, not reflecting bad human nature, selfish human nature. Just the opposite. And that's something we grow in as we yield ourselves to God.

...who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. So we're called into a light, of something we're to reflect in the world, to be a light in the world. And that's what lights up the world. That's what lights up things around us, in that respect, on a spiritual plane. It's how we're able to live our life with God's spirit in us that's true and right, right behavior, right responses to life. **...which in time past *were* not a people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained mercy.** How merciful has God been to us? We should know that. We should grasp that because we see ourselves, we see our human nature. Awesome, what God has blessed us with.

So again, we are at a most unique time in all human history, indeed, and it's far more than we can grasp or comprehend. Far more! And we need to be reminded of another time in human history. Let's turn over there. **Deuteronomy 31:1.** It says, **And Moses went and spoke these words unto all Israel.** So this was coming to the end of his life. It was coming to a time when they're finally approaching the promised land, the physical promised land. We are approaching something totally different. We're blessed to live in a time that parallels this one, but on a spiritual plane where we're at a point in time of something that God said long ago, that He would establish a Messiah on this earth to rule and to reign over mankind. Far, far, far greater than what the Israelites were getting ready to do on a physical plane, going from one location in bondage, physical bondage in Egypt into a nation of their own. We're approaching a time where all the world is going to have an

opportunity to be a part of this, what we just read about in Peter here, "a special nation," if you will, "a nation of God, a special people before God, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." The whole world is going to have opportunity to become part now of a holy nation, to become a part of Israel, spiritual. It's not about a physical Israel.

And so, **Moses went and spoke all these words unto all Israel.**

And then **verse 3** it says, **The Eternal your God, He will go over before you.** I think of the things that are coming and I think of how God leads the way in all this, of what's getting ready to take place. God's in total charge, total control of everything that's taking place, in the sense of allowing certain things to take place for a specific reason, moving certain things to take place for specific reasons.

Just like in this country. Just like in this country, an opportunity for people at some point to begin to be able to begin to see something that they haven't really addressed in a larger way. We can't govern ourselves. There is so much division, so much hatred. And all that's coming to the surface more and more to see how divisive we really are. The spirit of a nation is coming to the surface where people are able to see it in a way that they haven't been able to grasp in times past. Not to the same degree and not to the same level.

And we're able to begin seeing some of these things. Intense hatreds, *evil* in many cases, of things that are done and how they're done. And the hypocrisy that exists in how mankind governs himself! And to realize this can never work! We can't solve our own problems. And it doesn't matter who gets in, it's out of control. Amazing! That's for a purpose. And the purpose is so that people, some, when the time comes, that they're able to see these things even in a magnified way, will have better opportunity to repent, greater opportunity; the potential will be greater. Whether they will or whether they won't, that's up to them. But the potential is being prepared out here for a people, and other things happening in other parts of the world, things that are rising to the surface. And a lot of this has to do too with the ability of communication to a level, to a degree that mankind has never experienced. The media? The ability to communicate, things are on the internet so quick, so fast all over the world, things that are out here. Ability to find everything that is hidden out there that's out there because people are so much of a slave now to technology and to things on the internet that people can hack it and it goes around the world quickly! You may have to go live in another country for a while if you're a part of that and find out that's not so great either. But anyway, some of the crazy things that are going on out there. Hidden things that are becoming revealed. That's good. That's a good thing for mankind, to see what mankind is like even more deeply so.

The Eternal, your God, will go over before you, and He will destroy these nations before you. Do you know that's being said to you? Do we grasp that's being said to us? This isn't just about physical Israel. This is about another time as well. This is about the way God is and the way God

functions and what God is doing in order to bring His Son to this earth, to send His Son to this earth to be the King of kings and Lord of lords. And we *share* in that. We are all a part of that, a special people before God, especially at this time to participate in such a thing. "And He will destroy these nations from before you," because this world, this system, everything that's out here has to be brought to an end in order for God's Kingdom to be established. It's going to be a great whiplash for the earth, truly, for everybody on it.

...and you shall possess them. Think about us, the opportunities we have, those not only who are going to be a part of 144,000, but those who are able to go on and continue on and be the very foundation, if you will, of a Church that continues on. Not many are going to have that opportunity. Incredible! **...and shall possess them; and Joshua, he shall go over before you, as the Eternal has said.**

Down in **verse 6—Be strong and of good courage.** In other words, be encouraged. That's where we are. We need to be encouraged. We need to grasp more deeply *who* we are. We need to grasp what it is God is giving us to share in. We need to see how *awesome* this is! During Philadelphia, yes, we were able to be a part of what it meant for the gospel to go into all the world, "and then shall the end come." But you know what? We didn't see it at the time it was taking place with the way that we're able to see it now. We can see it now in a far greater way, what took place. We can see it now as we go back and review and look at the things God did through Mr. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God during that Philadelphian period. We can see that and we understand it now in ways that we couldn't back then. We see what God did through him, *awesome* things, *incredible* things, and then the Abomination of Desolation. Then we experienced that. Incredible!

Be strong and of good courage. To be here today, to be a part? Look at Toledo and Detroit, those of you who are in this area. What's left? What's left all the hundreds of people in the region? And then the Apostasy, what's left? And all the battles we've had to get to where we are today, amazing! Can't help but drive through Toledo and think about those things. Laugh at my wife, because there's a joke we have every time we drive through a certain part of Toledo. I won't say it. Some of you would go [GASP]! But the battles we've been through and it's just astounding and what people could believe later on and what people have believed because they didn't believe Christ. Exactly what we read earlier. They didn't believe Christ because they lost somewhere how God worked - and perhaps never believed it anyway. Well, too bad. Sad. You can't give it to anyone, can you? But what you have you can hold on to with all of your being. And that's what you need to do, to hold on to what you have with all of your being. It is so incredible what we have. To not let anyone steal it from you, to not let anyone take it from you. And how is that generally done? Because we let others influence us or have influence in our lives or sway us. That's what's happened throughout the history of the Church, of people who have left. Sad.

Be strong and of good courage, and do not fear, nor be afraid of them: for the Eternal your God, He *it is* that goes with you. Now, we haven't really experienced something like that on a physical plane yet. They did. Because they knew what was awaiting them. They knew nations that were out there, and they knew there was going to be war. They knew there was going to be battles. They knew that there were people out there already in these lands that you know right away you've got a problem. And we have just a bit of an understanding of some things that are in front of us, just a bit. Not a whole lot. And thankfully, we don't really see it all. Thankfully, we can't fully grasp it all because it's not going to be pleasant. But God will be with you. If you want God to be with you, God will be with you. He will be your strength. He will be your fortress. He will be your power. He will be your protector. Because it won't come from the world! It won't come from the world.

Be strong and of good courage, be encouraged, and do not fear, nor be afraid of them, for the Eternal your God, He it is who goes with you. That's our strength, brethren, in what we're getting ready to go through. He is now; we understand that. But even more so as we go through things that become more fearful even on a physical plane. **He will not fail you, nor forsake you.** If we don't forsake Him! If we don't turn from Him! And I think, of all times for people to still be leaving the body! Of all times?! It's.... Well, they can't see. But I see it. I see what they're doing and I ache inside because of it. I hate to see people make those kinds of choices.

So we're now going to begin spending a great deal of time in this series in the new book, *Prophecy Against the Nations*. And we're going to focus on a portion of Chapter 6. So the next time when you come together, you might want to copy this portion. You can follow along as we go through the sermon. We won't get very far today into this chapter, but we're going to begin focusing on a portion of Chapter 6 that's entitled, *If You Will Listen, God will Listen*. That's what Chapter 6 is entitled. And again, at the very beginning here mentioned how that applies to us in our lives, doesn't it, in a very powerful way. That's what our lives are about Sabbath by Sabbath by Sabbath. If we will listen, hear what God has, desire it as the sincere milk, you know, that we can *want* all that we can receive in our lives as a babe, as a child, that's what God wants to see, that attitude. Does He see that attitude in us? Does He see it during the week when we pray about it as we approach the Sabbath? Do we pray about it on the Sabbath especially as we're going to services or sometime that morning, whenever that might be, that we be stirred up and inspired, moved, and motivated, that we be able to receive everything that we can out of what we hear, that we be *inspired* by God's words?

Because if we don't pray about them, why would He give it to us? How much will He give to us? How much are we going to be able to take in? I'll just tell you, the more you hunger, the more you desire, the more you cry out, God'll give you more. He'll give you more. And if you're not practicing this Sabbath by Sabbath, start practicing it. You will be amazed! *You* will be inspired! Because I know that not everyone does that Sabbath by Sabbath, because I know human nature. I know the way we are. Do it. Apply it. Sabbath by Sabbath. Apply it even during the week. Tell

God! If that's what you believe, if that's what you want. And if you don't believe that way or have that in you, ask God to stir that up within you. That might be one of your number one's and number two's. I don't know. That you be able to be stirred up mightily and excited, looking forward to the Sabbath, that you have a *desire* for the Sabbath day, *every week* to look forward to it, that it's the most important time of your week. Is it? Because it is, if we understand it. It's the most important time of our week. It's the most important time you can experience.

Awesome! To be in fellowship? You have greater, more direct fellowship with God at this time than any other time of the week. It's a stronger, closer fellowship than what you're able to experience in prayer. Truly! Because you talk to Him in your prayer, you share with Him in your prayer, you cry out to Him in your prayer. But right now He's crying out to us. That's how He does it. He speaks to us. That's why I love that song, "God Speaks to Us, By His Great Power We're Led." That's how God does it. He does it as He inspires His word, as He works with us to focus on the things He wants us to focus on at specific moments in time.

That's why I marvel - I always have - at the flow of sermons and where they go and where they've come over a period of time to lead to a specific time, because it's all by design. It's all a matter of how God molds and fashions us, works with us. I'm deeply inspired by those things, because I never know where they're going. Because I don't know. I don't know how to do it. I look to God to lead, guide, direct, and inspire sermon to sermon. I'm thankful I already have some in my mind, where some things are going because of what was given this morning about where we're going and what we're doing and what we're able to participate in. And so much of it is about exactly what we're going through in this sermon series, about being encouraged and realizing what we're a part of. And to realize what God has given to us, that this is powerful. This is awesome! And where we are, and what God's telling us, a part of a commission. And then God's shown another part of that, which we'll talk about later. I'll mention it, what it means to wait on God, wait on the Eternal.

I'm just going to share with you.... Oh, I can't. I'm sorry. I'd be spilling the beans in something I'm saving for you. Anyway. We're going to just have to wait until the Last Great Day. I'm sorry! I didn't mean to throw out that whole box of carrots that time. That was a biggie if you knew what was coming.

So we're going to go into this chapter, in this particular chapter that's entitled, *If You Will Listen, God Will Listen*. To me, it's so inspiring. That message of the book is so inspiring. It's for the Church. It's for the world. It's for the end-time. It's where we are in time. It's where we're going. It's what God is doing and what God is saying to the world. It has so much meaning to it, it really does.

In the book - you can't turn there yet, but eventually this sermon will be out there - but eventually you'll be able to turn to page 243. Right now you're just going to have to find this section entitled, "The Factor in Determining Christ's Return: The Church." So on what's on the website,

and there has been some editing, by the way. Hopefully those have been edited as well. We can't do that on the book part that's out there. Anyway, there have been some tweaks there on some things, but we'll talk about some of those later. And there is one section I'm really looking forward to telling - another carrot - about some other things that God has revealed about mankind and about the numbers five and six that somebody had asked a question about it, part of it. And I thought it was amazing, how the timing of that. And so I've addressed some of that in the book and added to it that hasn't come out yet. But when you have it, you'll see it, because it hasn't been put on the site.

Anyway, exciting things that God just continues to give. And He'll just give more and more and more. And the more we go forward here and what's coming out in the next few months, should get more and more exciting until we're there. But one of the things that God is showing in a very powerful way is we're going to have to have some patience. Going to have to have some patience. And you'll be able to understand various things about where we are in time simply by what happens... simply by what happens in the world. And so we're not going to pump a bunch of money, and so forth, into putting this out there *until God shows us that it's time*. Okay? And that'll mean more to you later on as we address some of this on the Last Great Day.

Anyway, so in the section entitled, or subtitled, if you will, "The Factor in Determining Christ's Return: The Church." To me some of these things are so inspiring. I've gone back through and gone through the entire book now because of a final editing we did, because we wanted it to be tweaked and everything as much as we can, to have it in the best shape we can. And there are times I just... I wrote it *fast*! I think what was shared with you last year at the Feast and thinking how fast it came together. I think of, what was it, one chapter was written in three days? I mean, that's just crazy! Three and a half days and four days? Absolutely crazy! Insane! And if you saw what I was working with, that's even more insane! But it's there and I've gone back and read some of those things and I realize there are things there...

Every once in a while we get someone thinking that a certain part needs to be addressed or changed in the book and I go back through it and I look at the context of what was said and realize, "Well, you don't understand what's said yet. You're reading it in the wrong way." It's like what we sometimes do with this book here. We can read this, we can pick it up and we can read certain scriptures and certain things, but so often what is our human nature? We read it in the way we see it at the time unless God.... And how much has God given us since the Apostasy, of things that are written here we thought we understood and we didn't understand and we're still... the present truth, where are we at a specific moment in time? Because God just keeps building upon those things. And so it is in the book. So if I don't respond to everyone when they send something in, please understand, there are things you just aren't reading right yet. You don't understand it yet and in time you will. And some things are written in a certain way on occasion on purpose; and sometimes just like it is in this book here. You know, God says some things that are written in here that if people they get to a certain point and if their motive, their intent is

wrong, you know what they do? They'll stumble at it because you can't understand it unless you know the story. And so it is in a few things in the book. Because that's the way it's written. And it's all for a purpose. It's all by design. And to me, it's awesomely exciting. So to be able to go through something that you had written and "see" things and be inspired by things that move and motivate you and become even more exciting and even learn from and build upon even more? That's mind-boggling, truly mind boggling!

Anyway, picking this up in the section again that's entitled, "The Factor in Determining Christ's Return: The Church," on page 243, that you can't turn to yet, but you one day will because it's been put into page format now.

The Factor in Determining Christ's Return: The Church

There is **one factor** in the midst of all this that would determine which date God would send His Son to rule in His Kingdom. The factor was the Church—His Church.

Now, that's awesome to understand, brethren. God's focus is always, and always has been, first and foremost on His people. And in the last 2,000 years now it's been on His Church. That's why even to think back about the seals of Revelation, just to look at that alone and to understand that we didn't grasp that, that we thought that those things at one time were all about physical tribulation in the world. And to come to understand that, no, it's about God's Church!

The 1st Seal being opened was about the things that began with the Apostasy. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Seals, all about the Church! *Nothing* to do with the world! *Incredible* when we were brought to a point to be able to see and to be able to understand those things. But it should show us a whole lot more if we can grab a hold of it. It is that God's focus first and foremost is about His Family, Elohim. And where does that begin? In the Church! Because it's everything that happens here that so much determines what's going to take place everywhere else... everywhere else. Because it's about God's Church. There's a lot more about that, that as time goes on we're going to be dumbfounded to come to see in greater ways. The same way with this little body at the end time. To see all that's written in scripture about this body at the end-time and those who "despise the day of small things," and not to understand, no, this is the time that God reveals His power to the Church, to the world, to the Millennium in such powerful, profound ways. There's been very little, very few times on the earth that God has let mankind see His power, to "see" Him, to come to "see" and understand things about Him. Very, very little, brethren, over 6,000 years. It's all written about, as a whole, in this book. This is where it is, the Bible. Not a whole lot. Individuals here and there throughout the first 4,000 years, certain things that happened at different times, like what we just read about here in Deuteronomy 31 and the message that God gave, to understand that indeed we need to be encouraged. And as I mentioned, that's not just written, wasn't just written for them. It's written for us because of where we are and what we're getting ready to go into and go through and where we're going.

So, sometimes we don't grasp how great it is of what we're a part of! *Please*, think about, pray about, pray about those verses we just read about here in 1 Peter 2 and ask God to ask you to help you come to appreciate more deeply what it means that you're special, a special people, a part of a special people and what it means that the Great God dwells in you and you in Him and in His Son and he in you because it's far greater than what we can comprehend, brethren. You can only see a portion of that, a little bit of it. Ask God to help you see it more. He'll help you see it more. That means the gratitude, the excitement, the stirring that it can do inside of you can be greater. You might not see that. You might not think that's possible. It's possible! Ask God! Ask God! Ask God for greater help to have a deeper ability to see it, to love it, to appreciate it, to embrace it. And if you do it in earnest He'll help you do it, He'll help you see it. That means you'll be more excited, more inspired, more moved, more motivated, more committed, more determined! That's what you want! Especially where we're going!

Before 2008, the world had already been judged that it was worthy of such massive cleansing, and it would have received an even more condemning judgment up to 2012 through an ongoing **final witness**.

It had already gone out to the world, brethren. The gospel was to go into all the world as a witness, and then the end would come. It went out powerfully to the world. And the world, did it listen? That's been the message. That's the message we're getting ready to go into in a more powerful way than ever before. "If you will listen, God will listen. And if you don't..." Powerful. Powerful. Powerful. And so the world rejected, *fully* rejected Mr. Armstrong. Fully rejected him as God's apostle. And sadly, the vast majority of the Church did even. Not just the world, the Church did. Went into Laodicea, the ministry began to reject Mr. Armstrong as God's apostle. And it grew and grew and grew until finally it was so deeply entrenched in so many in the ministry that when one sermon was given it was ripe and ready and because of where we were on a spiritual plane, because we weren't being fed spiritually because of where the vast majority and the leadership of the Church was. And if the Church is there and cut off from the flow of God's spirit - which it was - what do we receive? We went through famine. What happens in famine? You become weak. You become lethargic. You become listless. You're not strong. You need food and you can't have it. So what happens? Exactly what we experienced. *Exactly* what we experienced. Our history is so profound in what we've gone through. Amazing! And so the world rejected it, the Church rejected it, and then God had another time for a period of time that it was going to reap what had been judged for it in the first place, and it was going to be summed up in a little short period of 3½ years. And it was, we just didn't know it, in a book *2008—God's Final Witness*. Going on:

At that time, just before 2008, everything was moving rapidly toward a worldwide economic collapse, WW III, and major catastrophic end-time events.

You look at things now and you think, where is it? Things were far more intense back there than they are now. Do you know that? Do you know that? Do you understand? Have you seen? Have you gone back and looked at some of the things that happened in that period, those periods of time, the tsunami and different things that took place, even things that were happening as far as earthquakes and as far as even things on a physical plane? Now, the weather is definitely upside down, and has been and just gets worse and worse in that respect, where it's dry in one area and then there's flooding in another. And it's one extreme to another back and forth and things are really screwed up in that area. But I'll tell you what, things aren't as intense. And the world doesn't believe it. The world feels like, you know, "The economy is picking up. Stock market is really... NASDAQ, now is the time. If you didn't get in a long time ago, you better do it now because it's going fast! It's just getting bigger and bigger." "And construction," well they can't hold off much longer. You know, "populations grow. I mean, we have a lot of people coming into the country anyway, we've got to build more houses!" And so people are starting... in some area's it's starting to boom! Real estate is starting to go back up in certain areas. In some area's it's booming big time, it really is. We visited some areas - well, it looks like a ghost town in some places, where shopping malls, places are going out of business, but some places the booming is big! Construction? I'll tell you, it's dumbfounding what's happening out there! People are feeling pretty good about it. Just makes for a bigger fall, because what existed in 2008 is still here. It's still there! Being ignored, being rejected, being dealt with in different ways that don't solve the problem. And at some point it just comes back and it'll burst! How far away is that? Well, it's in God's hands and we won't know it until it happens. We don't know when that is. We don't know when it is.

I feel very confident we have another Feast of Tabernacles. I feel exceedingly *strong* about that. And you know what? We may have another Feast of Tabernacles behind that...and that'll be the last, in that respect, of what we're able to do like we do, or have been doing, obviously. But, anyway, let's go on:

At that time, just before 2008, everything was moving rapidly toward a worldwide economic collapse, WW III, and major catastrophic end-time events. Even some thunders were becoming more pronounced and destructive in the time leading up to 2008. Although the world had already been judged as to what would happen at that time, the variable concerning what condition God's remnant Church would be in by this time was unknown. That variable would determine whether God would proceed with great physical tribulation then or whether it could be withheld for seven more years.

As it has been stated, the first five seals of Revelation were about God's own....

Isn't that amazing? That's what we were just talking about. I guess that's probably why it's on my mind.

...the first five seals of Revelation were about God's own Church at the end-time. It was prophesied that it would experience massive destruction on a spiritual plane as it went through great spiritual tribulation. During this period of time, God was going to humble and bring a remnant of His Church through the end-time. That not only included bringing a remnant through the great spiritual tribulation that came upon the Church beginning on the 17th of December in 1994, but also bringing it through the great physical tribulation that would occur just before Christ's actual coming.

In all the end-time events that would lead up to Christ's return, God's first and greatest desire was to send His Son to reign on earth beginning in 2019.

You know, I hope you're as moved and inspired by the things in the timing of events when you go back and look at the dates and the first five periods of 1260 days cycle and then the last two, the sixth and the seventh in Chapter 7. Those are so awesome. Those are so dumbfounding. They truly are.

In all the end-time events that would lead up to Christ's return, God's first and greatest desire was to send His Son to reign on the earth beginning in 2019. This was largely so that He would be able to extend great mercy upon the Church that had become scattered and to offer deliverance to the majority of them so that they might have opportunity to live on into the Millennium.

Because before that it wouldn't have been the same. And I hope we understand that. Not for the world and not for the Church that was scattered. There was a different judgment.

In addition, God also desired to extend mercy and give **greater potential** for many millions more in the world to become humbled so that they could also be saved to live on into that same millennial period.

I can't wait to see if there might be nation or even nations that come through this totally, as a whole. Now, they're all going to... everybody is going to suffer to a certain extent, no matter what. But to be able to come to repentance? That's what's being offered. That's what God is working with. Whether people will choose it or not, we don't know. Just like the 63,000. Knowing human nature even when they see certain things around them happening - and they're going to know. You know, there comes a point in time where they *cannot deny* on a physical plane anymore this is it. When certain things begin to happen on a... WW III? When there are nuclear weapons that go off. When this nation is immobilized? When you can't drive a car down the highway unless it's really old because of... Anyway. When trucks, semis aren't flying up and down the freeway any longer. When people see some of the things they see, there is no way on earth to deny we're there. Some still will! Some still will. But as a whole, it's going to move a lot of people. And we haven't seen anything yet for those individuals. But to think that 63,000 are going to have an opportunity, and that's counting children who were a part before, who have been a part, all the

way up to baptized members. It's not just about baptized members before the Apostasy. This is more than that. Okay? Far more. That means there are an awful lot, obviously, that are not going to have such opportunity granted to them, given to them. Going on:

However, the great variable allowing for any change in all of this rested upon God's own remnant Church and the spiritual condition and shape it would be in by mid-2008.

You know, our history is so astounding and dumbfounding! What you have experienced, if you lived through that period of time, even just before that, 2007 and on, and experienced the things that you have that are set in your mind, of things that you know, this is awesome! Far more than you can grasp, those of you who are new. Going on:

That would be the time when God would make His final judgment as to when Christ should return.

I don't care how many times you read through this section of what we're going to go through now, it's going to take time for it to become deeply embedded - not just embedded, but to create the excitement and the awe because of what we have experienced as God's Church, to have lived through this and to understand what it means because this just doesn't come overnight. Just like what's written in here, this doesn't come overnight. And I'll tell you what, what's written in the book, what's written here is not going to come overnight - not even for those in the Millennium. It takes time. It takes time to truly grasp and to see and to understand God. Because it's a matter of how God works. It's a matter of what God does and why He does it. And that's what God is giving us more and more of. That's why I am so excited when I'm able to see those things in a greater way: why. God's sharing with us in ways He never has in the Church why He does some of the things He does in the manner that He does, and the process -to "see" it, to grasp it.

Just like some of the things that were written about in the fellowship series, to understand what it means that there are people who can become set in their mind without ever being called into God's Church. You don't have to be called into God's Church to make that choice and to have that work in your mind, that you come to a point in your mind where you rejected God already. I hope we understand that, that there are people in history through time - and there are some really atrocious things that people have done - that their minds are so perverted, became so perverted that there is no point in giving them, offering them God's holy spirit. They won't accept it, because their mind.... God knows the spirit essence that's in the mind. And that's an incredible thing to know, what God has even shown us there, that to understand the mind can become so messed up that the receiving, the interjection, if you will, or the injection, or the mixing of God's holy spirit doesn't change it. It's beyond that. That mind is set, as much as what happened to the demons and to Satan. You know, it's an awesome thing that God has shared with us because it has to do with judgment. It has to do with why things are going to be judged and why things are judged in the way that they are.

Just as I mentioned earlier. There may be an evangelist out there who is still alive to this day who will be a part of the 144,000 because he came to a point in time that it may well be, may very well be that God didn't put upon him any more. He had fought the fight and was faithful, but because of what he went through he never understood fully what he'd experienced as far as the Apostasy was concerned. He didn't grasp what he'd experienced and God didn't give him to see it because his time was over, his time of serving. He had served, and he served faithfully, Mr. Armstrong. Awesome to understand that potential.

To me it's an awesome thing to come to understand God's judgment more fully, to understand why things happen the way they do, how God works with us, how we're judged according to what we know at any moment in time - the present truth. And if there comes a point in time where you're not given any more because of a purpose, you're judged according to that truth up to that point in time in what you have and how your mind is toward your God. Awesome! Awesome-awesome-awesome! And the very fact that God is giving it to even talk about today says a whole lot more, if we understand. Going on:

All that is being addressed at this point is only being done as a basic overview. All that was involved in God determining His final judgment for when Christ should return is far from being just a simple matter to explain. It involves factors of God's judgment, planning, the execution of that planning, the spiritual development, growth, and state of His Church that it would be in by mid-2008.

You know, this is awesome that we're even shown this, that we're even able to begin to be given a little grasp of understanding. It's like I think back to the time of the Apostasy, because what happened to so many people during the Apostasy, there was that third that just became so discouraged they just gave up on "religion". That was their mindset. "If this isn't true..." They *knew* the Christmas tree was wrong. They knew Sunday was wrong. They understood those things. They believed those things. And so if this is happening to God's Church and the ministry can do this and Mr. Tkach can get up there and say what he said, then it's like they just couldn't deal with it any longer and they just quit. And they weren't going to have anything to do with anything religious any more. "If this can't be God's true Church..." Because there were no answers for them. "How could this be God's Church and this happen in God's Church?" They just quit.

And then another third who switched so quickly, make your head spin, because they were walking around in the courtyard for a long, long, long time. Not only that, they were trying to pull others out in the courtyard with them to live their hypocritical, lying lives, who wanted to go back into mainstream Christianity, who didn't want to be different from the world, who wanted to be more like others. That's what was in their heart and mind. Incredible! That's why Mr. Tkach gave that sermon. "You don't need the Sabbath anymore. Every day is a day to worship God. Heh Heh Heh " Give me a break! That's what the world teaches, traditional Christianity. "Then why do you keep Sunday?" "Oh, because it works out pretty good for us." "Oh, you don't worship more on Sunday

then, that's not your day of worship? And is every day like that?" "Yeah, we worship God every day... every day is alike." You know the lying. I'm sorry, but I just hate that stuff! Makes me so upset I'd like to throw something through a window, if you know what I'm saying. Not *literally*, just emotionally! When you see a thing, when you see what is true and you see what human nature is like and you see how they lie to themselves, it's just....

It's like... What's this church we passed down there on the freeway coming up this way? "Just Believe Ministries." Big ole church out in the country. I didn't even see the city around there. But there's this huge church that would hold far more than what we have in it. Probably four, five, six times what we could put in it. We just, we kind of like that Greenwood theatre. I don't know how many of you remember the Feast of Tabernacles in the Lee Greenwood Theatre up there in Sevierville area. Here we are up on this great big hill in this gigantic... How many did that place hold? Few thousand? I don't know. I don't know what it held, but they gave it to us. And what did we need, the first two rows? I don't know! We were just up there in one little section, you know. That's all we needed. Basically we had to make sure nobody else went in the back part because there was no point in everybody being back there in the higher sections, and basically we didn't need the two side sections down there, all the way down. So we basically had a small little section that we tried to keep people in that this is where we can kind of be in fellowship together and not scattered all over the place. But that's what this place... And you think, "Just Believe Ministries," this huge church. And my first question is, "Well, believe *what? Just believe what? What do you believe?*" I know what they believe and what they're saying, but you think, shouldn't that be everybody's question? What do you believe? What makes you different from everybody else?

I'm sorry, but things like that just irritate the tar out of me. I can go on and on here, but I better shut up.

It's 4:30. I can't believe this! I'm sorry; I get sidetracked sometimes on some of these little side stories. But I'll tell you what, brethren, to see the difference in who we are, to think about those thirds. A third that did what they did, they just gave up. A third that went back into... A third that wanted to have some resemblance, to hold on to something because... But people didn't know, weren't convicted of.... You think, what a horrible thing.

So the reason I went through some of this is because the obvious question is, and what we should have known, everybody should have known but were too weak to know because of the famine, the spiritual famine, is *this is God's Church!* So if *this* happened to God's Church, where is it in here? Where is it in this book, because it has to be in here because we *are* God's Church. Mr. Armstrong *was* God's apostle, and He did give through him 18 powerful Truths to the Church. Awesome truths! Truths we all believed! So, this being God's Church, what happened?

And that's how God began to teach us some things, "the stones of the temple. They're not going to be one left upon another." The ten virgins - those five wise weren't so wise. Because people use to talk about that. I've heard sermonettes. I've heard it in sermons. "Oh, you want to be a part of the five wise virgins, because the five that went asleep, you don't want to fall asleep. You don't want to be asleep. You want to be one of the five wise. You don't want to be one of the five unwise virgins, you know." So people wanted to be the five wise virgins. And God showed us they weren't too smart. They weren't... if we understand what true wisdom is. You can be a part of God's Church, you can be in the Temple - the unwise weren't in the Temple, they were out in the courtyard messing around - but the ones in the Temple, they messed up big time because they didn't watch. They weren't watching like they should. And that was their downfall. And I don't want to go through... But you understand what I'm saying.

So we see things that happen as a Church. The point, the reason I'm going through all this (and that's why I want to finish this, and we did get started late so I have reason), is that we should be able to see the same things now, in a far more powerful way, *who we are*. This is God's Church. These things that happened, that we're talking about in this chapter, it's not just a nice little story to try to, as some people have thought, as some people tend to think as human beings, "Oh, look what he's written now." See? "To show *why* it didn't happen in 2012 and *why* it's going to happen now in 2019." I don't care when it happens. I know I'm in God's Church. You know you're in God's Church. And if there's more beyond God will show us things that we are going to be inspired by! Now, I surely hope and pray it's not beyond that. My body can't take a lot more, okay? It's just running down too fast. I'm not like Mr. Armstrong was. Course, God can keep me alive that long too, and I... Oh I dread that! Anyway! Dread such a thought! I hurt bad enough at this age, only 67.

Anyway, brethren, next time at least you'll know where we are. You can bring these things along. But, again, if you understand what happened to us back then, if you know where God's Church is, there are things that God will show you. He'll help you to understand why things happened the way they did. Just as we did with the Apostasy, God began to show us things in scripture of a man of sin, the son of perdition. We experienced the Abomination of Desolation. We experienced that as a people. We saw thirds and thirds and thirds scattered! *Awesome!* But it wasn't awesome to the third that quit and were disillusioned by all religious ideas about God. We weren't a part of the third that went back into the world, into traditional Christianity. We were a part of a third that was scattered. We're a part of a third that God protected for a time, times, and a half a time from Satan so that we could get leveled out and God could work with us, to begin to work with a remnant to bring us together and to start and working with His Church again. There are so many things we can learn by just being able to "see" and know where God's Church is and know what God is doing at that moment in time.

And the things we're reading about in this book right now is exactly the same thing. There are things to learn from. There are things to be inspired by. And there is *much* to be built upon.