

Now, last Sabbath we went through a section of scripture that we're going to review quickly today before we get into this. And I want to turn back there again, just reading a few parts of this again to put it in context of where we're going and what we're doing. This is in 1 Peter 2. I want to go through a few of these verses again to help set the stage for why we're going through all this because this helps to summarize a lot of what we've really gone through in the past many sermons leading up to this point in time. And a lot of this has to do with how God works with us, how He molds and fashions us from time to time, going through a specific process. And this year, at this point in time, reflects some of that.

So in 1 Peter 2:1 it says, "Therefore, laying aside all malice," all evil, in other words, things that are just wrong, that don't agree with God's way of life, a way of life that we're to change. We're to turn things around in our life. We're called out of the world to change. We're called out of the world to become something different than what we really are by our nature. We're selfish by nature. That's the way human beings are. God made us this way for a purpose. He made us physical for that very purpose. And as we've read the other scriptures that talk about this, oftentimes that which controls human nature is a matter of "the lust of the flesh, a lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." And that all began with Adam and Eve.

God calls us to change that nature, to transform the way we think, as it talks about there in Romans 12. The mind can actually be changed; the spirit essence that God has given us in our mind can actually become changed. That's why He made us this way. And that's an awesome thing when we understand that. And so He's given us the ability to change! Our nature can be changed. We don't have to remain selfish.

From a young child, babies, very early on, we began to learn selfishness. Because of the fact we were made physical we want something, we desire something. We let others around us know when we're not happy. And as we get older that doesn't change a whole lot! Life continues on like that. We tend to think of self first. That's why all the admonitions and scripture, especially in the New Testament, when you read about some of those, the admonition, the encouragement is to think of others, to remember others before self. Because that's not the way we are. We tend to think of self first. And so God's desire is that we learn His kind of love and not our kind of selfish love, because our love is selfish. And again, I refer to that example Mr. Armstrong gave so many times, referring to what he could see as the best of human love was a mother's love toward her child. And showing then that that is a beautiful love in life for people to have, to have in family, for family and the kind of love that exists in family. But it's still selfish in nature. It isn't God's kind of love because that individual, that person doesn't have the same kind of love for all other children. That's just the way it is. God is different. God's love is totally different and it is totally

giving. Ours is a matter of getting. And that's a hard thing for human beings to come to understand and come to see. It takes much time. It takes a great deal of God's spirit in working with us and helping us to learn those things and to see those things about ourselves.

And so again, God has called us to change, to not only learn about His kind of love, but to desire it so much we want to be a part of that family. We want to be like God in the sense of how He thinks and how He is and how He treats others, how He treats us. Think of how God treats us - the patience. How patient are we with others? The mercy. How merciful are we to others? Forgiving. How forgiving are we to others? Because that begins to show God's kind of love with us and His desire for us to be in His Family. And so again, we are tried and tested as to how we think. And there is so much to be changed.

And so in previous sermons leading up to this point in time we've been going through this, "to lay aside all malice," all evil, all that doesn't agree with God! To change! To seek to change! And you can't do it on your own. You might *want* to change certain things about yourself, but you can't do it. That's why, again, I marvel thinking back about being here at Pentecost and what it pictured, what's pictured in Pentecost. On Pentecost God gave the law to Israel, the 10 Commandments. What an incredible thing! What an incredible... The awesome things we learn through the Holy Days - that is awesome to understand that! To have a history then of Israel. Israel couldn't keep God's law. Their whole history, of an entire nation of people, was one that they couldn't keep that way of life.

The Jews tried the hardest, in that respect, as far as a physical people, as far as a Sabbath and the Holy Days. The rest of Israel that moved to the north, that went to the north and separated from Judah from the nation of Judah, look what they did! They totally turned to other religions around them. They began to worship Baal, and yet they inserted God's name. Awesome! They used the name of God and the experiences of things about God into a religion based on Baal worship, worship of the sun on *Sunday*, the first day of the week. It started way, way, way, way, back then, this whole process. And it's good to be reminded of this. The people of Judah, and a couple of other tribes, part of those tribes, continued to keep the Sabbath day, observe it, and to keep the Holy Days. Israel to the north didn't. They changed the Holy Days to holidays, in essence. They changed from the Holy Days in the fall to a month later. Because the king of the north there was concerned that those individuals of Israel would continue to go down to Jerusalem to observe the Holy Days during that period of time, and they would have a desire to have that king over them once again, to again be reunited with Judah. And he didn't want that so he changed everything. He changed Sabbath worship to Sunday worship. He changed Holy Days, if you will, to holidays, but they used the name of God and experiences of things that they'd been taught in time past.

And God took them captive, He said, for that very reason, took them captive into areas of Europe. Ten tribes scattered throughout Europe. *Awesome* to understand that history. And people in Europe, and the migrations of Israel, they don't ever know who they are because they became

known as the Lost Ten Tribes. That's what God said. Because of that disobedience they lost their identity of who they were. They don't even know who they are to this day, obviously, nor have they for the last 2,000 plus years. But Judah knows. The Jews know who they are because they continued to keep the Sabbath. They had to go into captivity for seventy years and then God brought them back into the nation, to the area of Judah, to Jerusalem. And we're continually reminded of lessons, of things in our life.

And so they were given the 10 Commandments. Their whole history was one that they couldn't keep them. And so on Pentecost 31 A.D., after Jesus Christ had died, had been resurrected, became a part of the God Family, the first of the firstfruits, as it says, who became the head, who became the Head of the Church. And from that point on God gave His holy spirit to the Church, began to pour out His holy spirit upon the Church revealing on a Pentecost, revealing again to us the awesomeness of His plan, that without His spirit man can't change. You have to have the holy spirit. You have to have the impregnation of God's holy spirit. People have to be baptized. They have to receive the baptism and the laying on of hands. And a process begins there then of that impregnation, as little children, as it says throughout the scriptures.

So again here, we have been called to change! And so we begin to address things in our life to get rid of all evil, all those things that don't agree with God's way of life. "...and hypocrisies," as it talks about. So I'm just reading parts of these, this section here. Hypocrisies. You know, to be, as we have focused *so intently* upon here in recent time, of being in the courtyard, making an appearance as though we're in the temple or we're with those that are worshipping in the Temple, and yet we're not worshipping in the temple, we're not doing the things that God desires us to do. Instead, walking around in the courtyard! And ever since I've been in the Church I've seen that. I have seen it, powerfully so, to where it finally led to an Apostasy.

So many who had come along, and in time - and in time - of what we saw through the period of Philadelphia and on into Laodicea, leading up to something that God prophesied had to take place before Christ could come again, before he would come as King of kings, an Apostasy had to take place within God's own Church. And so much of that has to do with hypocrisy, that we get caught up in human life and we can begin to go through the motions, as so much of the world does, as though they're living right, go to church once a week, appeasing their own conscience that somehow they're right with God again, and go right back out living the same old way they lived before without any change.

And God has called us to change. We have to become something different, getting rid of hypocrisy. And so if we're worshipping in the Temple, in the Body of Christ, in the Church of God we should know it!

It goes on to say, and getting rid of, "laying aside all evil speaking," all wrong speaking, wrong kind of speech that comes out of our mouth. So often what's in the mind and what we think, that which has to be changed, comes out in our actions. But the most that comes out in our action has

to do with speech. That's why some words even in the New Testament are translated "conversation" when it has to do with "conduct," because so often it's a matter of what we say. It's a matter of speech that comes out and how we talk to someone, how we say something about someone, and etcetera, that God says has to change. We can't be that way! So wrong talking, wrong speech.

Then verse 2 states that we are to "desire the sincere milk of the word," to understand, to have a desire just what's inside of us, that we want everything that God has to give to us. We *want* His way of life. We want to understand His words. The world is so confused. They read this book. They read things in it and they misconstrue so much! I was reading something someone mentioned about having gone to a funeral here recently, maybe it was this past week, and sitting in the back. And individual was supposedly up in heaven now, and then later they talked about the need for them to be resurrected. It's like, which is it? Are they already there or are they waiting to be resurrected? Why talk about a resurrection if you're already up there? And so things that people just don't see, they just can't grasp because their minds have not yet been drawn, opened up to what is true. And that's the way it is throughout the Bible, people reading into it what they want. That's why there are so many religions in traditional Christianity. And even in Judaism, so many different sects within Judaism because people have so many different ideas about what happened in the Old Testament.

So it is a desire for the "sincere milk of the word," if you will, a desire for God's way of life, a hunger. That's what it's talking about. "So that we may grow," by drinking it in. That's what it's talking about, so that we may grow, that we can grow through that process. We know we need that in order to grow! Without God's word we can't grow, to change.

Then verse 3 speaks of how we, in essence, are following after Christ, behind him in other words. We are the firstfruits. Some are the firstfruits. Others are a part of another harvest but have opportunity to live into a millennial period. But there are those things we are to follow as a matter of what he did and how he lived his life. So, again, as a Body, as a people we are following Christ, who is described as a living stone, who was disallowed by the builders, by those who were supposed to be building. So if you want to look at the priesthood in past times, in the Old Testament, the Levitical system in the Old Testament, and so forth, and Jesus Christ came along and the Jews rejected him as being the Messiah. They knew all the prophecies, or they knew a lot of the prophecies. They didn't understand what they were about. They *certainly* didn't understand that Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Passover. That's why they even changed that later on. They changed the Passover from the 14th to the 15th because they couldn't have Jesus Christ being their Passover. That's why they did it. Incredible things of history, things that have taken place.

I don't know about you, but I am still cold. Is anyone else cold? Am I the only one? If you turn this one again some. Here I try to wear some of these things to show, to set an example here of in the summertime when it's in the 80's, and then I get in here and I think, "Man, I sure wish I wore my suit today." That's why I'm doing this. I'll state it again so that everybody understands. And while

I'm waiting for them to turn the temperature here I do want to mention again, interject this so that everyone hears this, so that this doesn't have to be on the announcements but so that it's in a sermon, that when we come before God our desire is first and foremost to honor God. And within that process then we've had the custom within the Church, for men especially, to wear a tie and a suit. And what I've been trying to help people to understand during the summer months, when I'm visiting different areas, is that you can honor God by change in some of these things, because this *is* going to be changed in the Millennium. People aren't going to be wearing ties around their neck cutting off the blood flow so that you can't get things out of the sermon like you should be. It's not natural. It's not the way it should be. So, anyway, but as a whole, when it's cold, we're still going to continue with that tradition until it's changed at that time. But we're starting a process now that in the summer months when it's in its 80's outside. Just coming back and forth, we have to travel long distances in many cases and just the travel and being in and out of the heat like that can take its wear and tear on people. So again, please feel comfortable in wearing that which is nice, in other words, as far as a short-sleeved shirt if you want, but again, it should be with dress slacks, like with suits. You can wear the bottom part of your suit with a nice dress shirt, but we don't want to let down from those things to where we start just wearing anything. Okay? And so, again, we have to maintain a standard. And that's why I'm doing this and mentioning these things that we first and foremost want to honor God. Now that the temperature's been addressed (hopefully) we'll continue on.

Again, Jesus Christ being spoke of here, who is described as a "living," or a "lively stone," as it's translated here, who was "disallowed"; that word means "rejected by the builders." And again, the Jews rejected him, the leaders at that time, and through time people have rejected, and even in God's own Church people have rejected, disallowed Jesus Christ as being who he is, the lively stone that he is, the living stone that he is. There are things where people stumble.

I remember he first that I began to experience in the early 70's in the Church when Mr. Armstrong began to make comment about that there is a spirit in man. God just revealed that to him in 1972. There is a spirit essence in the mind of human beings that gives us the ability to think and to reason that makes us different than the animal kingdom out here. They're given something different in that regard that's programmed into them, in essence. We are unique for a purpose, for the purpose that God has. And so again here, I remember at that time there were just a few, a handful, a small handful of individuals (of ministers even) who began to say, "Oh, he's teaching the immortality of the soul." Ridiculous. Nothing living in it. Nothing immortal. Nothing that continues on. He didn't say that at all! But there were other things in their life that they didn't like that Mr. Armstrong was teaching, and so they began to reject. They didn't reject Mr. Armstrong; they rejected Jesus Christ - disallowed. They wouldn't build the way God said to build.

Every one of us is to build. Every one of us is called to be a part of a building and we all have, we're a part of what is constructed in the Church. Just like whether we're in the Temple or in the courtyard. So what are we building in our lives? What are we constructing? Because God gives us

that responsibility. And so we follow Jesus Christ who is a lively stone, a living stone and the example that he set for us and the change... Whatever is taught in God's Church is given, indeed, by God Almighty, but it *all* comes through Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church. There isn't one thing as far as major doctrine and changes that take place in the Church that doesn't come... that comes in any other way. It comes from Jesus Christ. And that's the way God works. But sometimes those things are rejected.

So, just like when Pentecost in 1974, when that was addressed and Mr. Armstrong came to understand that it should be observed on a Sunday and not on a Monday as previously thought. And so drawing closer and closer to those things that are true, that as God was revealing them to the Church through Jesus Christ there were a lot of ministers at that time who left for two different reasons. Because Mr. Armstrong didn't take change lightly, especially something having to do with a Holy Day, and he had an intense study into it and had others in the ministry higher up, evangelists and so forth, do study into that, into things about Pentecost. And before he made that change for the Church he wanted to be deeply convicted that this indeed was of God. This is one of the first *major changes* ever made in God's Church in the Philadelphian era and he wanted to do it right. And so there were a lot of ministers who left because he didn't make the change quick enough. Because you could begin to tell, you could tell very early on, as a whole, that yes, it looks like this is exactly where God is leading us, that Sunday appears to be the proper time. And how we always believed it to be Monday, it kind of boggles the mind. But that's what we thought. And then others, because it was changed left and rebelled against the truth. They rejected Jesus Christ. That's what it boils down to. They had other things they wanted to teach within the Church.

And so we always have choices and we have to understand that when we reject something that God gives it goes back to this - Jesus Christ is disallowed as the builder of the temple. He's the one that leads and guides the building of the temple. And then he tells us what we need to do as a part of the building of the temple in our lives and what influence we might have on other people in the building of the temple, etcetera, etcetera. And so on and on it goes. So people have to understand what they disallow or they reject.

So again, "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious," Jesus Christ. Chosen. Predetermined before time ever began, before anything was ever created - the Messiah, the Christ was already predetermined by God that it would have to become fulfilled. So when God gave the Passover over to Israel they never understood that one was going to come and fulfill that, a human being was going to come and die for the sins of mankind. They didn't understand that, who would be the Lamb of God. See, they had to kill a lamb every year. Four days before Passover they had to go out and pick out a lamb and set it aside and then cut its throat after the children got to know the lamb, be around the lamb; because it was special, it was kept aside special. And yet they were to learn from that. The Israelites started that process when they put the blood on the doorposts and Israel was taken out of Egypt. And we learn that process. But what

an incredible thing that Jesus Christ pictures, fulfilled what was pictured (I should say) by those lambs, the spilling of blood to the earth so that sin could be forgiven. Not by physical lambs, but by the Lamb of God. That's why he's called the Lamb of God because he's our Passover. And yet the world keeps Easter. Easter eggs? Bunnies lay eggs? Whatever it is! Rabbits out there and there are eggs out there and you think, "What's that come... Where'd that come from?" Well, you can look it up in an encyclopedia and you can probably find out. Didn't come from the Bible. Didn't come from God. Isn't that incredible, what God has given us?

Verse 5 then starts out by stating that we "also," as Christ is, "as lively/living stones, are being built up a spiritual house." That's the building. That's the construction that's taking place, a spiritual house. "An holy priesthood." How blessed are we? How blessed *are* we? Incredibly blessed to see the things we see that God has given. "...to offer up spiritual sacrifices," not physical ones. Not like they did in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ... Isn't that amazing, too? You read the book of Hebrews. People should be able to see that so easily. And it talks about it's not by the blood of bulls and goats that takes away sin. God makes it clear, as it says there, those things can never take away sin, but by the blood of Christ. Incredible. And so it's not the physical sacrifices that God ever wanted. Incredible!

"To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." We have access to the throne of God through Jesus Christ. Isn't that an awesome thing to understand? That you can go and pray to your God and *know* that the Great God of the universe, the Great God of all creation hears you? And if there be a hundred praying at the same time, a thousand, ten thousand, ten million.... You cannot understand that kind of power, that kind of being, that kind of mind that is able to receive all of that. It's beyond us, so far beyond us. But we're to offer up spiritual sacrifices. What are those? Spiritual sacrifices? Because of change you're seeking to make in your life so that you can be at-one with God to live according to God, according to the flow of His spirit in your life that helps to make changes in how you live your life toward others, learning how to love others the way God loves. "Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

"Therefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he who believes him..." Not "on him!" Not just so people can talk about Jesus in a manger and talk about little stories, or whatever, that he was resurrected Sunday morning when he wasn't, and all those kinds of things, but believe him, believe what he said, believe what he taught.

I'm sorry, but I just, whenever I go through things like this I think some of the first things he had to say, "Don't think that I've come to do away with the law." "Not one jot and one tittle of the law will be done away." Incredible! And yet man says what? "Oh, you're not bound by that any longer." That's what the Apostasy came out and said. "You don't have to keep the Sabbath anymore."

"And he who believes him shall not be confounded." And again, mentioned last Sabbath how that that word "confounded" means "disgraced, put to shame or shamed." You know when you live at

one, you seek to live at-one with God, to become more at-one with God, live His way of life, obey Him, there's no shame in that. There is nothing ever to be ashamed of. But whenever sin hits us, comes into our life, we do things, a lot of shame and disgrace comes with it. It truly does. "Therefore, unto you," who what? "...who believe." Believe what? "...believe him." "Therefore, unto you who believe he is precious. But unto those who are disobedient," you know, who want to do something else, live something different, who don't agree, who want to do their own thing that is in conflict with God's truth and God's law, "but unto those who are disobedient the stone which the builders rejected," that's what the word means, disallowed, rejected, "the same has been made the head of the corner." Jesus Christ.

Then on down in verse 8. So the reason we're going through this is setting the stage for why we're going through some of the things we are and to understand the path that God has brought us on. We are to change. We are to focus on that change more so in our lives that there are certain things that we cannot tolerate and continue to allow in our lives. Because we can get into a rut and begin to allow certain things to exist that shouldn't exist. We can go back and forth from Sabbath services and Holy Days and allow certain things to exist in our lives that we should get rid of! That we should cry out to God for help to get rid of, in some cases, that should never have been a part of our life after baptism, in what might come out of our mouth or how we think toward someone! There are certain things that should change quickly in our life. And even later on in life as we're being refined there are certain things that we should see that this isn't good. This isn't healthy. That needs to be changed. I need to grow on to a higher level in perfection and desire to live God's way of life, becoming more at-one with God. Has to do with the way God thinks, being in unity and harmony with the ways of God.

So again, "a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence, even to them who stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto they also were appointed." So again, we've been going through this process of focusing on some of those things. God has been showing us things that we need to change. And now we're at a time when we need to be encouraged. Because, you see, many have gone by the wayside. Well, I say "many," because for the size we are, worldwide, there have been too many who have had to go by the wayside here, whether by choice or because they were told to, "You're not changing. You're not repenting. You're doing 'this' in defiance to what God says and it can't be allowed within the Temple, within the Church." Sad. I don't like that when things come to that point in time. Don't like to have to do that, but I have a job to do and I have responsibility before God to do it because we should be striving to live at-one with God. And as long as people, and individuals, when they've done things that are wrong, and as long as they're repentant and wanting to change, what does God do? He forgives and lets us continue on. We want this way of life? We fight for it! We want it with all of our being. But we seek to get rid of the sin, of what's wrong in our life.

But others want to hold on to their sin, they don't want to change. They want to hold on to something that's defiant to God's way of life. Well, it doesn't mix in God's Church. God has called

us to repentance, which means God has called us to change. And so those who have, what an awesome thing! You should be encouraged. You should be inspired. You should be *excited* that God loves us so very much that He helps us and is patient with us to see the things that we can change in our life and then works with us over a period of time to help us begin to make those changes. He doesn't just give us a swift kick! He does it because He loves us.

He works with us. How does a parent work with a child? They need to change a certain behaviour in their life, you're patient with them, you know, you work with them. *You* work with them to help them to change and to grow and to do the things they need to as a child that they might have things embedded in their mind and their thinking that will help them when they become adults that will benefit them in life. God, so much more than that, a perfect parent in every way. The Great God of the universe who is able to deal with us in a level, in a plane of perfection. But if we don't yield to the process then what does He say? What did He say to the Church when it had to be spewed out of His mouth as it talks about the prophecy there in Laodicea, a Church that wouldn't obey, a Church that became lukewarm. Because when a person becomes lukewarm and lethargic they're not addressing things that need to be changed in their life. And God' says that's not, "You can't have any place with Me then." Because we must constantly be seeking to change and to grow and overcome. And if you do *be encouraged! Be inspired! Be motivated!* And that's the kind of feedback I'm getting right now, people who are motivated, who are excited because they see certain.... Being very open about certain things. I don't ask for it, but sometimes they just open up and say, "This is what I've been working on. This is what I've seen in my life," and they're excited because they're able to make the change or they're addressing certain things that are.... That's exciting! Now, what's not exciting is when people continue to hold on to their own way, whatever that might be that's offensive to God's way of life. I could go through a list of thing and say them, but they're just the things that human beings get caught up in.

It's just like sex! You know, today because of the ability that man has of being able to click on to something in private in their home, very quickly on a computer screen, that didn't exist twenty-five years ago, thirty years ago, fifty years ago, you know. Somebody might be able to find a magazine, get a magazine somewhere and look at some things and screw up their minds and how they think about women - or men, or whatever it is that happens in people's minds. Today it's so easy, so simple, and people become addicted to it. Young kids, young kids, young children acknowledge they're addicted to it. They can't get away from it. Sad. And what's the saddest of all is what it does to the human mind, especially to a child and as that child is growing up and how they think about women! Horrible! And sometimes then how women think about themselves that gets totally screwed up in life in thinking how they have to act around men in order to, whatever. And even styles and customs come into play then because people's minds become so *messed up!* And we live in a society now that is exceedingly messed up! That's why it talks about in scripture, "as in the days of Noah," that's where we are. And today it's because of technology.

I hope you understand with all of your being why mankind was allowed to live for hundreds of years before the flood to teach some great lessons to human beings. Noah, himself, who lived into his nine hundredth and, what was it, close to nine fifty before he died? Three hundred and fifty years beyond the flood! And he experienced something, and every one of his family members rejected him and rejected God! Every one of his family members, those who went through the flood, who rode the ark! And they were upset with God. They were upset with God! That's what happened! Because all their friends and everyone they knew was destroyed on the earth. Is his own fault but it drove him to drinking too much wine in order to deal with some of it in his own mind and his own life, which he had to deal with and conquer himself. Which, I'll tell you, he did. And then he began to teach another man. Ten generations down the line he was. Because he lived that long, he was able to teach Abraham, Abram. And he was the next then. Very few through the first four thousand years that God worked with.

Why on earth did I go in that direction? Exciting things, our history, things that we can learn from, lessons we can learn from. I think I had more of an objective at the moment, but you know what, it has slipped me. Maybe it'll come back. Can you help me? No? Okay. Incredible, the journey that God takes us on to learn what we need to learn, to change, to become something different. Oh, "as in the days of Noah." Anyway, people lived for hundreds of years and the mind of human beings became so corrupt, so evil, so.... Human nature! I can't comprehend that! That people became so professional, if you will, in evil, hypocritical in evil. Just flat evil! That's where they were. That's why God said what He did. The mind of people became so corrupt that He was going to destroy all mankind except for one family and because of one individual he was still able to work with, *one person* in thousands upon thousands upon tens of thousands of people who lived on the earth. And we don't know fully how many at that time because it doesn't say. Huge population on the earth that lived there at that time. Only one man could be worked with, because the minds of people were so corrupt.

And there we are again today. How long has it been since the flood? Several thousand years. And mankind has never come to that point again until now. Why now? Because God changed the lifespan of man at that time. It quickly went down to about a hundred and twenty years, and then very quickly to seventy years. That was the lifespan that God basically said was given to man, three score and ten years, seventy years of life. Some live shorter; some live longer. That was kind of an average. Seventy years so that man couldn't become so corrupt that they couldn't be saved because that was what was at issue, whether in the Great White Throne they could finally at one time come to a time where they could actually be saved, when they're resurrected back to physical life once again in Gods great plan in Great White Throne.

And so we're there again because of technology. And because of technology today young people can have their minds screwed up, messed up for the *rest of their lives!* Their minds are going to be messed up even into the Millennium in their attitude and their thinking toward women because of what they have digested. Because the speed at which the mind can become corrupted is so

accelerated today compared to what it was fifty years ago, a hundred years ago, a thousand years ago, two-thousand years ago, three thousand years ago, etcetera, etcetera. Because of technology man can sin so easily and so much and it can so distort the human mind. And so there is a need again to cleanse the earth. It just happens to be at the end of six thousand years. That's why.

And I hope you got that out of the book as well. God could have given... Mankind thinks he is so filled with genius and great ability that he can, minds can come up with things of mathematics and engineering and so forth to do the things we're doing today. And it's like, "Look at what we have done!" And the truth is God gave that to them. God has given the matters of mathematics and physics and science to mankind that he didn't have for several thousand years. He withheld it because God had to give it to a few individuals through time. Certain individuals are looked up to as being "great" in science and mathematics and so forth. They didn't do it on their own. God gave a little bit at a time because He's in control of time, to lead us to the end of what He prophesied would exist six days of the week. Six thousand years that's been given to mankind to live his own ways, and at the end of that six thousand years it would become God's time to introduce the seventh day, the Sabbath, the thousand-year reign and rule of God Almighty on the earth. And before He sends the Messiah that's been prophesied from the beginning of time certain things would take place.

And so we're there, the end of six thousand years, the end of an age just before the Messiah returns. This time not as a Lamb, as it says in Revelation, this time as a Lion. Because he's going to take control by power and by might, the might of Almighty God. We just happen to live at that time. And so to be a part of God's Church, a small group of people at the end of an age, how blessed are you that the Great God is working with you? How blessed are you that you understand the Sabbath day? How blessed are you that you understand the time period in which you live? How blessed are you that you see the truths that you do, that you understand the Holy Days and the purpose of God's plan? How blessed are you? Because it's all by the Great God who's given it to you. And so as God gives us some chastening from time to time in life which we need because it's a matter of molding and fashioning us, molding and fashioning the mind because it's precious to Him, to bring it into His family in His time, to become a part of Elohim, the God Family.

I think of how much they hated Christ because he claimed that; claimed that he was the Son of God. Incredible! And they hated him for it. We know we are the sons of God, begotten sons of God waiting for birth, waiting for that time, when it comes. Incredible! Because God has a plan for a great family. How *awesome* is it to know that and to know where you are now?

So, indeed, I hope as we go through things in this sermon that you become more and more *encouraged, excited* by your calling, to know who you are. That's why these verses that we read several months back have come back full swing again, because we've gone through this process here of 1 Peter, of addressing some of these things so we could get to this point again *just before the Feast of Tabernacles*, so we could have a *greater* Feast. God desires we have a greater Feast.

We're getting so close, brethren. So close! So close. So long ago Mr. Armstrong said that Great Britain would not remain, would not be in the European Union at that time or the Common Market - at that time called the Common Market. Back in 1950's even, that Great Britain would not be a part of it. And now we've finally lived through a great portion of prophecy, the Brexit. Now, it's not over with yet, but it's going to speed up at some point here where they're going to be completely out. And so will a few other nations. But Great Britain was never going to be able to be a part of it. What an awesome thing to live through these things and to see them come to pass. So close! Just a little bit of work to do. And we're going to hear more about that a little bit on the Last Great Day and some sermons after that, of where we are and where we're going and what God is doing. Because so much has changed since 2008 up to 2012. So much has changed. Opportunities that God is giving to this world, mercy that God is showing to this world.

But you *are* a chosen generation (verse 9), a royal priesthood. That's how God looks upon the Church, a **holy nation**. That's why it's referred to as "Israel," the Israel of God. It's not about a physical Israel, it's about a spiritual one. It's about Zion. It's about His Family. ...**a special people**. I think it says "peculiar" in some translations. Little peculiar with the world, but to God it's special, a special people. Why? Because we have His holy spirit in us, because we have the impregnation of His holy spirit in us, of something that's changing in our being, in our lives. ...**that you**, I love this part of this verse here. **That you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you.** That word there "praises," is the definition of it, of the Greek language is a matter of "character, the virtues," and it means "the moral excellence." It means all those things. You can't separate any of those three words out of what this word means in the Greek language. "The praises of God." That's a *poor* English word here for what the Greek word says. "That you should show forth the moral *excellence* of God!" Our lives should reflect as a light God's way of life. And it begins with the Sabbath. We begin to change because of the Sabbath. And people see it. They don't understand it. But it begins with some of those big things. And then the Holy Days. And the world doesn't understand what you're doing when you ask time off from work, you take your children out of school right after it just started in the Fall. They think you're nuttier than a fruitcake! But you do it to obey God. Then you show forth that praise, that one day they will see and understand what you did and why you stood up in your job and said, "No. I have to take it off." Even if you lose it! You do it because you obey God, and God will bless you. Has blessed you so much anyway just with what you have up here in the mind. It's not all about what's physical all the time, but God blesses us in those areas as well. He will see you through.

So we're able to show forth the moral excellence, the character, the being of God in our lives. We change. You know, that's something that.... I recall in the seven years, before I became a minister, when I worked in the Houston area. And something that I understood very early on, of what people in the business world and especially colleagues that you worked with, that they respected something that they didn't fully understand, but they knew that they were treated different than they were by other people in the same company. We should. You know how it is sometimes in a corporation, in a company and how people treat each other and talk about each

other and all the garbage that goes on. Drama! Drama! Drama! I don't know if you've ever had a job like that, but I know a lot of people have, where you're around a lot more people and you see that, you experience that and you see how people talk about the boss or different ones. Usually it's about those over them because.... anyway. We should show something different. And if we don't - sad, sad, sad. We should stand out like something's totally different. They may not understand it. They may not appreciate it. But they can see it. You don't do the same things.

That's something that jumped out very quickly on in the camp I was in three years. And those were those who respected it. I didn't talk like everybody else did... I mean, *everybody else*. You talk about something that stands out in that kind of an environment! If you're working in construction, you better be different. Your speech better be totally different. Because I can tell you what it's like on a construction site or a lot of other kinds of sites where people work. Cursing and swearing like you wouldn't believe! And today it's getting worse and worse and worse. And just in a regular... in places where people normally didn't use to swear and curse like they did. Now a day's almost any kind of job site people use the most foul language, and they shouldn't. There should *never be a bad word come out of our mouth EVER* in our lives.

That riles me up when I think of God's people who speak and say something, because we're on the edge when we do that of not being God's people. See? We have to be very careful of what comes out of our mouth. And we better be a different example at work and not get caught up in how we talk about the boss or someone over us or whoever it might be. On the contrary, we better be there to do the best job we can, because we don't work for them, we work for the Great God of the universe. That's who we work for. If we understand it, that's who we work for. See? Strive to do the best we can, the best kind of job we can because we know who we are. We're God's people! And to do less and to not have that kind of character to work hard? That's what God teaches! Not only are we to work, and sometimes we don't *work*. People not always work but we need to be working and we need to work *hard* at what we do. We need to apply ourselves because it's right! If we're hired to put in an eight-hour job, we better do an eight-hour job and we better work hard at it! Because that's who we are! Because it's about God. It's about Jesus Christ. It's not like loafing around like others.

Sometimes you see the jokes that go around, that some of them might be on a road crew out here and you see six people standing around and one guy with a shovel that's throwing a thing of dirt every once in a while. And people joke about things like that, because you know what? That's kind of the way it is! Some union things became so bad that, you know... I don't even want to get into it. The world is sick and we are not to be like the world. So how awesome is it that we can be different? Because we don't do it on our own. That's why we have to cry out to God for help when we see these things in our minds and our character and the way we act or the way we think or the way we talk, when they're wrong to ask God to help to change that, to become so deeply convicted that we hate the evil.

That's why I've given the simple example of smoking, you know. It's obnoxious! And people say, "Well... People can live forever," whatever, "years and years and years." And who was that? George Burns used to smoke the old cigar, you know, and look how old he was and it didn't hurt him! And so it's not a health issue." Well, yeah, it's not a matter of that, it's a matter of how bad it stinks. It just stinks. It's offensive to people who don't. That's not love to your neighbor. And so that's why a lot of places are starting to finally cut it out of restaurants and other places as well of business because it is offensive. It stinks. And so I've made comment like that in times past. We don't do that in God's Church. Because we don't, first of all, because we don't want to be offensive to others. If you don't care about your own health at least begin to think about others, that you don't do it because it stinks. I can't stand it! I hate it when I come into a hotel and someone, because they can't smoke in the hotel, they're standing right by the door [sucking on a cigarette], and you walk by that and you get it on your clothes, you get it in your nostrils, and it just stinks. I can't stand it. I'm sorry.

And I've made comment in times past, well, ever since I've been a minister that if you have that you might as well kind of like, well, it'd be like setting up something, a big round pole out here that looks like a cigarette. Paint it like a cigarette. Put a little fire at the top and then go down and bow down before it, "Oh, holy cigarette." That's what you do on a spiritual plane if you smoke. You've got to come to where you *hate* it because of what it's like, because of what it does. Now, that's a small example of something very small in life. How much more the things that are more important? Because that just really isn't all that important when it comes to the scheme of things. What comes out of our mouth and what we say about others, how we talk to others, that's far, far, far more important. But sometimes we can't even deal with the physical things, the small, little, physical things that must be dealt with.

The point being is you have to come to hate something that is to be changed. You have to come to where you hate the cigarette, the smoking and what it does and how much control it has in your life. Because we're supposed to control it, not it control us. And yet a lot of people have had those battles when they've come into God's Church. We are to be different, to show forth the virtues.

We're not going to get any farther than last week! I was going to do this as a quick introduction to get going here, but hey, we need this and we need to focus upon it and we need to understand where we are and what God's doing with us in our life, how blessed we are. A special people, a holy people; that's the way God looks upon us. We're special to God. That's amazing! Special to God! I love it! We should be. We should desire that with all of our being and do whatever we can to *stay* in that place, in that position, to be special to God. So we have to learn to hate the evil, anything that stands in the way of a right relationship with God, anything that stands in the way, that might otherwise cause us to be cut off from the flow of God's spirit into our life. We don't want that. And yet until something is repented of we get cut off from the flow of God's spirit. He doesn't just give it to us because we go to Sabbath services or because we tithe or because we go

to the Holy Days or whatever. He gives it to us as we live our life day by day in how we're living our life. And so much of that in regard to whether or not we're repenting of our sins as He helps us to see them. Because we really want to change, we want to get rid of that which hurts life and hurts relationships.

So again, to show forth the praises, the virtues, the character, the moral excellence. That's what it means to be a light. We're called to be a light in this world, even if the world doesn't understand it or can't grasp it or see it, they see that.

Of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. And so we're to reflect that light out of our life as well. ...**which in time past were not a people**, before God called us we were in bondage as the rest of the world, in darkness like the rest of the world who just can't "see." You can't see. If you can't "see," you can't "see." And only God can help one to "see." Only God can begin to draw someone and begin to give them the ability to see things on a spiritual plane. Because that which is on a spiritual plane only God can reveal. ...**so which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God.** That's the way we should go to the Feast, the people of God. That's the way we should come to Sabbath services, the people of God. We dress, as I mentioned earlier here, because we honor God, we want to honor God, we want to please God, to serve God, to reflect God, the quality, the character. I think of Mr. Armstrong talking about even quality - that's embedded in my mind as a way of thinking - to the degree we're able to.

...**which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.** You know, that's one area of my life that I've come to love God more and more and more, is because I see and I know the kind of mercy He's shown to me. That has endeared me more to God. That's helped me to grow. I think I've mentioned it in times past, my life was so screwed up (and if we can all admit that as human beings) before I was called into God's Church. And it wasn't until I was ordained that I was able to tell God in spirit and in truth, "I love You." But in the Church from 1969 to 1981, before I could finally come to that point, because I wasn't going to say it unless it was in spirit and in truth. Not just words. Not just something fake that somebody might say to someone else. But something that's true to the depth of it's being, "I love You." Now, that's to me, kind of astounding. I think of Paul talking about after twenty-five years in the ministry still able to say, "Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death." Because he could see his human nature. And that's what we have to see, to see the mercy of God. Well, that's what endears us to God. That's what helps us to come to understand His love. If you know who you are and what you have to battle and what you've had to battle to get to where you are at this point in your life, this level of growth, whatever that is for you, then you have experienced awesome mercy through that period of time. How *merciful* God is. How *patient* God is with us. We know who we are, well, He's helping us to know who we are. We really don't even know ourselves until God begins to show us what we're really like.

So again, we are in a most unique time of all human history; and it's far more than what we can begin to grasp and comprehend. It truly is. We really can't grasp this. We know it. We know it. Just like in the Church, I remember hearing sermons in the 1970's and into the 1980's that there would come a time where there would be a great falling away. That's how it's mentioned as far as the King James version is concerned, but it's the word in the Greek language, "apostasy." So we knew in 2 Thessalonians 2 that in the end-time in time within God's Church there would be a great falling away. We had *no idea* what that meant. We had *no idea* how harsh, how vast, how all encompassing that was going to be! We had *no idea* that when Jesus Christ said at the end and the disciples were asking him then, "What's going to be the sign of your coming?" there in Matthew 24, "What can we see?" And he said, basically, the very beginning of it, "Not one stone will be left upon another," speaking of the temple that they were around. But they thought physically and so did we in the Church. We didn't understand that was about the Church. We would be so shaken! And what it said to the Church in Laodicea in Revelation there, that God would come to a point in time where the Church would become so lax, so lukewarm that it would have to be spewed out, vomited out of His mouth, separated from Him, not having access to His holy spirit anymore? We had no idea!

And I'm telling you in the same manner, we know that we're at the end of an age. We know. We can see things. Russia. China. Why all of a sudden? We've known this for a long, long [time], and yet we've been able to watch this connection become stronger to where they have military exercises together, to where they share military intelligence to a certain degree, where they have a bonding. Which we've always known was always going to be there because we know that's what's going to be at the end, because we understand the third world war and what will take place. How awesome to understand that out of Europe we've always known that there would eventually be ten nations and that Great Britain would not be a part of it! I think of, what an incredible thing, in 1950 Mr. Armstrong sent the editor, different ones to be there in Europe when the European Union first came together, when they were having their first meetings, to report on it in *The Plain Truth* magazine because he understood those prophecies, because God gave it to him, that at the end-time, in the seventh revival, there would be ten nations that would come together in Europe in a common bond. At that time it was called the European Common Market. They began to do it first. And he said they'll have a common currency! That happened long after his death! Mr. Armstrong didn't even see that common currency! But you did. A part of prophecy! The Euro. The Euro. Europe, again. Europa. Go look it up and what it means, those things that are there and the woman that rides the bull. The Greek coin for the Euro, that's what they picture on it. Awesome! The Greek Euro has the bull and the woman riding on it because that's Europa! Europe! And those ten nations that would rise up at the end-time.

Incredible what we've seen come together. Because Mr. Armstrong knew they'd have a common currency, they'd have a common government, and they would have a common military. And only now are some beginning to grasp what that means. Only some are beginning to grasp right now what it means when you invite Turkey into an alliance, an allegiance ... and all those *nukes* that

are right there in Turkey that can be taken over. And some say, "Well, now we know that they've been shipped out already to another place. They don't know that because Erdogan wasn't going to allow them to be taken by land or air off of that airbase. Incredible! That's all it takes. Ten nations when they come together, they already have nukes; a lot of them. They don't have to have their own made. They're already there. They only have to take control. We live in scary times, brethren. We live in sick times.

And it only takes one EMP over the central part of this nation to bring us to our knees. Semi's will not travel up and down the highways. There will be no communication. Nothing will fly. Nothing will drive unless you have something older that has an electronic system that's a little bit different than what we have today. Otherwise everything else is fried. No cell phones. No fast communication here in this country. Other countries, yes. But not here. One day is all it takes for this entire world to change. And that's just the beginning. Because you know what? That's *exactly what is going to take place*.

That's why in the end-time it's not the United States that's in the picture in World War III, because they're taken out of the picture at the very beginning. It's ten nations in Europe and it's Russia and China. And so if you tell that to people they'll laugh at you and mock. So that's why you don't even bother telling them. It'll come to pass exactly that way.

And so we watch China and Russia get closer and closer together, and some of those other nations down there and what they're doing economically amongst themselves. Scary times, brethren. So just as much as we couldn't know about the Apostasy, how great it was going to be, how shattering it was going to be, neither can we really grasp - we know it, but we can't grasp what's coming. And thank God it doesn't have to last very long. Thank God. That's why I've talked about I feel very confident we have another Feast of Tabernacles... and likely, another one before we suffer. Think about it. Because everyone is going to suffer in the world, it's just that we have the blessing of God Almighty helping us, intervening for us, bringing us through certain things, plus multiple millions of others on this earth that God's going to bring through this at the end-time. Just like it says in the book, "If you will listen, God will listen."

So again, we are in a most unique time, again, in all human history. Far more than we can really grasp and comprehend. And we need to be reminded of another time in human history. It's what I went to when we talked about here some of what's covered in the book and I mentioned Deuteronomy 31:6. Again, this is still part of a review here of what we went through. But again, we need this, brethren. We need this at this time in our lives. And that's why we're going through it a second time, I know. I wasn't planning on this, but I know, because God does things by design and by purpose. And I'll just read it to you again in verse 6, where this is in Deuteronomy. This is not in Joshua, but it was a message that He began to give. And that's why I mentioned this verse is for us. This verse is for us. What they did was physical in a physical world in a physical time, going into a physical nation of Israel going into a promised land. We're getting ready to go into the one that God has prophesied in various forms one of another for the last 6,000 years now.

Deuteronomy 31:6—Be strong and of good courage. Be encouraged. Be encouraged by the calling you have, by the relationship you're able to have with your Great God and by the things you know that are coming on this world. Because it's going to catch the world off guard. So off guard - asleep. ...**and do not fear.** There is no fear in it. The Great God is with you. ...**nor be afraid of them,** whoever the "them" is in this case, those that we might think of that individuals might fear, and hard times, harsh times that are coming. ...**for the Eternal your God, He it is who goes with you.**

Now, if He went with the physical Israel and did what He did; you think about what He did with Joshua and the children of Israel as they went into the promised land, the things He revealed to them, the waters parting again, or the Jordan River when it was flooding. That didn't go unnoticed by them, exactly what was taking place. You talk about being inspired! They came through the Red Sea forty years earlier. And to come to that juncture in their lives, that the river was flooding and they couldn't cross it and God told them they were going to cross over the other side to Jericho, and then all of a sudden the water was held back and they crossed over, just as they had forty years earlier coming through the Red Sea. And then the marching around Jericho that they did - seven days, seven times on the seventh day. Awesome! Awesome, what God did. And we read stories like that and we're moved by them, we're inspired by them, we can go through them and think, "That had to be so incredible to experience that, to see what they saw, to see the walls..." They didn't have to do any fighting, God brought the walls down Himself, the walls of Jericho. Incredible! Now, they did fighting, but God gave them the victory of that, brought the walls down, the defences down. They were to take over a nation. They were to take over a land. They were to move into a promised land.

How much more? How much *more* for where we are in time and for what God intends for a world that's coming. Jesus Christ, that's why he comes back as a Lion. He's not coming back as a Lamb, to be in silence, to not speak out and to let people kill him. On the contrary! This time he comes with great power, and that power God will share with us to bring us through what we need to go through.

He *it is* that goes with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you. The only way that that last part can ever become is if we forsake Him, if we reject Him, the builder, the ones the builder's rejected. If we're part of a building and we reject the way God says to build, that's the only thing that can stand in the way. And I feel for those who at the very end still come to a point in time where they reject God. They reject a Millennium. They reject opportunity to live into a new age. Because so many of them are not going to have an opportunity because of what they've done. That's between them and God. But it's not good.

So we went on then, barely get started in covering a portion of the new book, *Prophesy Against the Nations*, and that's going to be the way it is today. We're barely going to get started, but we're going to continue on a bit here. But again, there is so much in Chapter 6. And I don't know if all of you brought that with you, but you can follow along. That chapter that is entitled, "If You Will

Listen, God Will Listen." And I mentioned how that that's for us too. That's the way our life is. We have to listen to God. We have to choose to listen and to respond to the things He gives to us. So, and when we do and we repent God is there. He wants to hear us. He wants us to come before Him in prayer on a regular basis, on a daily basis in our lives. Awesome to understand that.

So, anyway, the section of that chapter that we were going through was called, "The Factor in Determining Christ's Return: The Church." Now, this is profound to me, and I hope it becomes more and more profound to you and more deeply embedded in your being the more you grow and the more you come to see what is recorded there and what is written there. Because it is awesome! It truly is! What God... and I've mentioned this before as well. Think about the Seals. Think about the first four Seals, the first five Seals in Revelation, how the Church in times past, we, and the world believes this is all about physical tribulation on the earth and it's not. It's about God's Church. And they're already past. Those things have already been fulfilled, accomplished, done.

So we're now going to pick upon on the last paragraph that was covered, and it's only a few paragraphs down from where we began, because we just barely got started. Anyway, I'm picking it up:

The Factor in Determining Christ's Return: The Church

... 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.

And I marvel as I go back and look at the process of which God even revealed it. Even through 2013 and we still didn't know what was going on. Thought, well, maybe it's the Day of the Lord. I don't know! What is it? When is it? And we had to go through some things before God began to reveal them to us. Going on:

It involves factors of God's judgment, planning, the execution of that planning, and the spiritual development, growth, and state that His Church would be in by mid-2008.

So I'm going back and talking about *how* things developed, *how* they changed, as far as what God's primary purpose was in the first place, but that there was a factor that wasn't known and couldn't be determined. And that is about us. It's about where we would be at specific moments in time. When you talk about an Apostasy and what the Church went through, when you talk about being hit so hard spiritually that God had to keep Satan back for 3½ years after it happened, for a scattered group that was out here so that he could not continue to attack and devour? Because we couldn't have made it through that. If he'd had the same power that he exercised leading up to the Apostasy and exercised that afterwards, we wouldn't have survived. That's why it talks about in Revelation 12 there that God had to give certain protection and separated him and kept him away, that he wasn't.... that we were protected for that period of time, time, times, and a

half a time, 3½ years, that first 1260 days after the Apostasy until God could work with us to a point He began... Do you know what He began to do? He began to, first of all, one of the major things that He showed us in the very outset was the Passover. Because one organization, the largest organization, found out later on that about 50% of the ministry was already believing in a 14th/15th Passover. And so God began to show the first battle. What an incredible thing! Passover! That's where it all begins. It begins with Jesus Christ.

After that He began to reveal so many different things. He began to reveal to us, helped us to understand about the man of sin. The first time I mentioned who the man of sin was it was very uncomfortable. My wife was exceedingly uncomfortable when I mentioned it. Because that was something that was not done, as a whole, in God's Church. And yet we go back and see where Paul mentioned specific names, specific people. We see where Judas Iscariot is specifically mentioned in scripture. But it was like you can't mention someone's name because that would be kind of.... kind of became the way of the Church in time, something like that. But we never had anything happen like that where the Church had to be warned to that level, to that degree. Then we came to a point in time where the Church needed to be warned and God began to use and give specific names, especially of the man of sin, the son of perdition that was far worse than Judas Iscariot ever was - far worse than what he did, than what Judas Iscariot did. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ, but God prophesied at the end that there would be a man of sin and a son of perdition who would betray Jesus Christ on a spiritual plane, not a physical one. And that's far worse.

That's why it's so much worse what we did during the Apostasy, what led up to the Apostasy than what the Israelites ever did. It's so easy to shake our heads and say, "How?" As soon as they got across on the other side they were already murmuring and complaining. They were already talking about going back to Egypt, back to the flesh pots when they had plenty to eat. And there wasn't much water out there like there was before and they were taken care of, and it's like, "Oh, we long for the good old days." Think, "Give me a break! You were in bondage, you were in slavery, it was getting worse, Pharaoh was coming down on you harder and harder...and how soon we forget." And we look at the Israelites and by the time, it wasn't very long, they were at Mount Sinai. They were already up to Mount Sinai, and again, murmuring and complaining because there wasn't the food like they...and so God gave them quail. All the things they went through and we shake our heads and think, "Those bull-headed, stubborn, hard-headed Israelites!" And then what we do on a spiritual plane is far, far worse. Because they couldn't help it, they're just carnal human beings. A nation of them! I can't grasp how it might have been for three to six million people that came out of Egypt - which it's guesstimated those numbers. I've heard all those. We don't know exactly, but because of the time period and the length of time and the things that they were working on and doing and the other people's who joined them, that there could have been from three to six million people that came out of Egypt. I can't comprehend that. Travelling, just food alone, providing food, having food, the things that were necessary? Carnal human beings.

But what we did and what we do is spiritual - to reject God, to deny God, to fight against Jesus Christ, to fight against what he gives to the Church? That's far, far worse than any complaining the Israelites ever did. So again, picking this up in the book:

The highly complex process in the ability to coordinate nations....

Now, we're speaking of God and what God's going to do at the end of an age. So we look at a period of time from 2008 and 2012 where it's already been stated that specific judgment had already been passed upon the world. It was already there as far as what the world had done. There had already been a witness through what God gave through Mr. Armstrong. The world had been judged and they rejected that message. And so God gave that at the end, "This witness of the gospel will go unto all the kingdoms and then shall the end come." And then God gave a condensed witness through 3½ years and through a book, and so forth to sum it all up - 6,000 years all summed up in a very short period of time. Again, knowing the outcome of that - still reject it, except for a few that God called into the Church. But for God to coordinate time, events, just like I mentioned earlier, to give certain ability in the matters of technology, science and so forth, individuals minds like Einstein and so forth. It wasn't him.

Just like you when you're called into God's Church - you don't understand any of the truth until God gives it to you. You didn't figure it out. I've known people in times past who used to talk about, oh, they came to understand certain truths and they knew certain truths. You might have come to a point where you recognized certain things were wrong in the world around you and you came to see... but don't omit God showing it to you. That's a big mistake. If God's drawing you and leading you He did it. We didn't do it. So sometimes people are lifted up by how much they think they know. And so is mankind. And Einstein didn't do what he did on his own. Read some of his history, of what kind of intelligence he had beforehand and what he had as time went on...and so many others through time. Incredible. God gave a little here. And the matter... we can't grasp things like that. How long will it take for different ones, for the dissemination of certain kind of knowledge and certain kind of... just on a physical plane to a point in time where somebody can come to understand things about the atom. World War II and a push that was put on and God opening up more minds.

Because, brethren, I want you to understand something. *God* did that. He gave the ability for mankind during that period of time to begin to piece - because of a process of time - to piece certain things together. And mankind has always desired, first and foremost, weapons, to use things as a matter of weapons. Militaries that get involved in governments. That's the way it's always been. And now it became the matter of the atom. God led mankind up to that point in time to that ability. He didn't make them use it. He didn't make us drop it on Japan, but He knows the nature of man and He feeds him and He gives him knowledge. What are you going to do with it? And what have we always done with everything we've ever been given? We've always misused it. Mankind has always misused everything that God has ever given him except for the Church and those who God has called out of the world. But as a whole mankind misuses everything he's been

given. Every bit of wealth? How's it used? Generally to oppress others. To oppress others in the world. That's the way human beings are. That's the way government's are.

That's why the world hates the United States right now. It's sick and tired of being oppressed. It's sick and tired of being told, "Our way is the best and you need to do it our way." That, "Democracy, our kind of democracy is the best for you." And we try to instill that in different countries and you can't make certain kinds of minds have certain kinds of things in life. It doesn't work. And we find that out to our chagrin. And so, unlike what we're told by some leaders, that the world loves us more than any other time in human history, that's not true. It doesn't take much traveling around the world to come to learn and understand their hatred's pretty deep. They are tired of being told, "You do it our way." And not only that, what they're really tired of is being manipulated in those things and the pressure and the stress that's put in their lives to do it a certain way.

That's why China has finally come up with a different system in a banking system rather than the IMF being in control. They have their own banking system now where most of the world has joined in, because they want to fight against what the U.S. has, as the IMF and so forth, the International Monetary Fund and the control that's there. And that's why the U.S. tried to keep every nation they could out of it. But slowly but surely - even our next door neighbor, Canada - different ones began to join in. They didn't want to be left out. Sad, the world we're in, the condition we're in. Going on.... Just the time we live in. It says:

...Yet all this is something that God is doing as He prepares to end mankind's self-rule and establish His Kingdom on earth.

In other words, God's in control and God knows how to work with peoples and nations. I can't begin...we can't begin to comprehend this. How do you gauge how fast 10 nations come together? Is it left to chance? *No! No! No!* It's on a time frame. God brings things together. He works with nations and peoples and leaders and He raises them up and puts them down. And different ones, because He knows their nature, He knows how they think, and He allows them then to do certain things. He doesn't make them, He allows them, just like He allowed a nation to develop two big bombs that were dropped in Japan in WWII. Because it came to a point in time rather than a lot of other soldiers dying over another year or two or three to end the war, they determined, they decided (certain ones) to just drop those to end it. I wish I could remember the amount of bombings and so forth that have taken place and the numbers that were killed. But to my knowledge, if I recall this, that's come out even in recent time, that there were more killed in some of those things than what were in those two bombs. But those were so powerful and so devastating that it shook the world. Truly did. But God didn't make them do it. It's just the way man is. Man uses those things that he has.

And so ten nations? The Brexit? God's timing. The Brexit - God's timing. It's what it is. On and on it's going to go here and speed up as time goes along here. Putting things in place so that they

happen more quickly - God's timing. What you're going to watch unfold is God's timing. He doesn't make mankind do it, but when certain things are triggered in the world, God knows exactly what nations and people do because they've always done it. They've done it for 6,000 years because man's nature is one of selfishness and control and power, politics and the things that are involved there and the things that people do when it comes to that.

So going on here:

Human ingenuity, design, planning, coordination in massive building projects cannot truly be compared to this; [in other words, what God is doing]; however, that is the only kind of physical example that I can give as a comparison whereby some might begin to better grasp the enormity of what is being said here. A comparison between man's ability to plan and build and that of God's would be like comparing a child using a few blocks of wood to make what they conceive as a building to that of the most prestigious, well-constructed building that mankind has ever built. [Which is probably in Dubai.] Yet even in this, there is really no way to compare the two.

Some of those buildings that have been constructed, there are things that engineers have never done, never built before, that they had to engineer; as one building that was on Discovery and showing how they had to engineer it as they went along. That nothing had ever been done like that. Just like those islands out there that they built. Incredible. Nothing had ever been done like that. And so even to compare minds, where lots of money is used and the best of minds and construction companies in the world come together to build the most enormous... can't be compared to the things that God does. It's like the child with the blocks compared to that kind of a building. You can't compare it, the vastness and the difference. And on a plane compared to God? This is so far beyond. Going on:

God's final judgment as to when His Son should return rested upon a great **unknown**. It was a question as to the exact state the Church would be in by mid-2008.

The Church had never gone through anything like that. God's people had never gone through anything like that. God prophesied we'd go through an Apostasy. He talked about different era's of the Church, a Philadelphian era that would be given great understanding and great knowledge, many truths, and a group that would come along later behind that and begin to think they're rich and increased with goods because of what had been given to them before. Lifted up and get to a point then where it became lukewarm, lethargic spiritually. God prophesied it all because of human nature. God knows human nature. He knows what we'll do when we're given great knowledge. What did we do? Given great knowledge and a period of a lull of about three years. We began to do on a small plane what led on a much larger plane during Laodicea. And for the purpose of learning from that, that we can get to a point where we being to coast and we can begin to let down. And that is exceedingly dangerous. And so God gave us a bit of a shaking to

say, "Don't ever let that happen in your life. Fight! Fight to the end for this way of life." Going on. So, again "the great unknown":

It was a question as to the exact state the Church would be in by mid-2008. That is when such a judgment would have to be made one way or the other. The condition of the Church could not be guaranteed, and therefore, such a judgment could not be made until this was clearly established.

The exact state of the Church could not be foreknown due to all the suffering it would experience after the Apostasy and all the spiritual tribulation that would follow.

I want to stop there and just mention that God - and that's been a hard thing to grasp until God began to reveal it - that God said that there would be a certain number of people, in essence, when you look at Ezekiel and you look at things that took place there and a certain percentage of individuals that would be given an opportunity to be a part of a remnant. And yet we never saw it. And I never understood that for so long until God began to reveal why, and even why with 63,000 that are going to be given an opportunity, that there are going to be a lot of them, and we don't know how many, that will say no. 63,000 from our past right up until the end that have opportunity to see what's happening with Russian and China, and 10 nations in Europe - who can no longer deny this is happening. How could you deny, with all that you've been taught in times past, that there would be ten nations exactly who would be engaged in a world war against Russia and China? How could anyone who has known that for the length of time they have known it in Worldwide and on come to a point in time where they could deny this is the end? This is the last war. They can deny an Apostasy ever occurred, which they do. That is astounding! When you look at the numbers of people, though small compared to the world's religions, but you look at a number of people that were baptized at the time all this took place - close to a hundred thousand people, ninety-some thousand baptized members - and you look at the thirds and the things that took place...to believe that the third who had a resemblance, at least, of holding on to the Sabbath, to the Holy Days, and scattered into over 600 different organizations, that they would still deny to this day that an Apostasy occurred?

Even on a physical plane this kind of blows my mind. I don't know about you, but this somewhat astounds me. Their very existence *screams out* where, what, what happened, where is God's Church! But there are some who believe they have to become larger in order to have this Apostasy take place. They truly believe they have to become much larger than what Worldwide was so that they can come to a time where an Apostasy like this can occur. Because why? I hope you understand why. Because there is still the belief there has to be 144,000 that come out of the Church. So you have to be a *whole lot larger* than that. You have to be 200-230-300,000 people total to have at least 144,000 who are baptized members in good standing whom God can change at the end of the age, be called the 144,000. Incredible! Incredible. Incredible. Incredible. What do you see and what do you understand that others are totally blind to? They can't grasp that they've already had an Apostasy. The man of sin, the son of perdition, who do they think is going

to fill those shoes, that it hasn't already happened? Even on a physical plane, I'll be candid with you, that boggles my mind! And yet people still deny.

So when 63,000 are given an opportunity to repent, to live on into a new age? See the great lesson of what's happened to us tells me very powerfully that there won't be 63,000. And I hope you understand that. They're going to be given the opportunity, but there is going to be far, far, *far* too many who are going to say no. "No. They're not the Church." "I'm not going to be associated with them!" "No, there's no such prophet." "No, there's no such apostle." Because they can't humble themselves, because then they have to say, "We were wrong the whole time. We were asleep the whole time." And too many have too much pride to do that.

So just like what happened with us. God said there would be a certain amount - a lot more than what's here today in the Church. And what's left? 3,000 plus people? They're not there. Why? They've come and gone, as a whole. There have been so many who have gone by the wayside. I think of so many areas we visit, and just over the last many years of seeing people that God called and people are already gone, let alone those that God brought through the Apostasy and some of the things that took place there and the battles that took place on a spiritual plane. Incredible, the mind of human beings. So again:

The exact state of the Church could not be foreknown due to all the suffering it would experience after the Apostasy and all the spiritual tribulation that would follow.

Have you been through spiritual tribulation? I think of what Mr. Armstrong said in 1978 in that Bible study (that I never read), that I mentioned last Sabbath, when he talked about everyone that was out there and all the evangelists and everyone in the Church and he was addressing the Church, and he was primarily addressing the ministry at that time in that Bible study and he said, "You have not gone through the hell I have!" That's pretty strong language. He wanted to get the point across. Some say, "Oh, how could you say something like that? How could he use a word like that and say that?" Incredible! And he made the point. People had no idea what he went through as God's apostle to do what had to be done in working with the Church, to raise up the Church, the battles that a lot of people never knew about, the battles I never knew about until after the Apostasy when I came to learn what all those evangelists who'd been taught by him, who sat at Ambassador College, who turned against him, who turned against truth that was revealed through him, began to believe and teach other things to the students right at Ambassador College. You think, "What gall!" How sick! To teach a 14th/15th Passover to students at Ambassador College when you know that Mr. Armstrong has written a book where he makes very clear in the heading itself "14th/15th?" showing by three basic scriptures there cannot be any such thing as a 14th/15th Passover?! Basic scripture. Basic truths. And yet an evangelist did that right at Ambassador College. And there were others who taught other things as well. Incredible, our history and what we have gone through and what we have experienced.

And I think of our battles. That's why I mention that. Since the Apostasy there has been battle after battle after battle after battle after battle, because part of those Seals that followed meant continual battles all the way to the end, of people who would reject and fight against Jesus Christ - the stone who was the corner of the entire building, of the building that's taking place. So we've had battles over every kind of doctrine you can imagine. Some I fought against. I didn't want to have to preach about. Something simple... Oh, I don't even want to go into it, I'll never get done here, never get any farther.

Some of you, don't forget the battles. Don't forget the battles that have come up - that happened in Detroit and Toledo. Don't forget the battles that came up time and time again after that in our own midst on a spiritual plane. We've gone through a lot for you to be here. That's why I was so inspired - I always am - and we don't probably visit them enough, but we were blessed to be out in Lubbock the other day here. Had a meal with the group out there. And I told them, "I don't have to worry about coming out here. You all have been around. You've fought through the battles." One woman I've known there since, my, 1972, 1971, 1970, probably in the Church. The one I've known the longest in God's Church out in Lubbock, Texas, Jean-Anne. And I look at those faces and the battles they have fought - because I've known them very early on, I knew them very early on when we were hired in the ministry. That's where we were sent, Lubbock and Midland, Texas. And I think of those who came through that, because all the rest went by the wayside. But those few faithful individuals who have fought battles have remained. Now, for me, as God's servant, that's incredibly inspiring when I see that! And I see the age that's followed with it - because it's taken its toll. I mean, we've been around for a while. And I was young at that age, at that stage. Matter of fact, what were you, Laura, when we went there? 27. My, that was a long time ago, babe. I was older by about seven years, she reminds me. So she was 27, I was 34ish. And I think of the years and the struggles. And God's people, we've always had to fight battles. And the big battles are the spiritual battles. And when I see people like that that have gone through all those battles and remain, awesomely encouraging and exciting to me. And people who are going to be a part of the 144,000 is always inspiring to me. They're from Church area to Church area. Don't know who they all are, but I know they're there and that's an awesome thing to know and to understand.

But I think of the battles we have gone through. I think of the battles we've had to wage over different doctrines, different things that have come along, different people who tried to take control of God's Church, people who tried to destroy God's Church. And it's nothing new to God's Church, see? Just like what I went through - took it in stride. Learned from my elder brother what I'm supposed to do. Take it and don't fight back, because there is no point in it. Take it. There are lessons we all need to learn from things like that, what Jesus Christ did. When he was reviled, he didn't revile back. He didn't fight back. He didn't try to defend himself. He didn't try to say, "Well, no, that's a lie." Well, we did to a certain point, but it didn't do any good. That's because it wasn't meant to be, see. Incredible. So we've been through a lot of battles. And it's not over with yet. You've got to keep fighting until you're through it. That's what it's about - battle after battle.

And so again here, I mention this because this paragraph, I hope it comes through to us in a very powerful way, because sometimes we've gone through things and we don't realize the magnitude of it. See, I know the magnitude because I know there's not been much that's come through it compared to all that had opportunity to come through it. I've known of hundreds and hundreds and thousands of people, personally, who have gone by the wayside, who aren't a part of all this. But you have a part in it. You have opportunity. You should be encouraged that you're sitting here today, because my knowledge, my ability to see certain things, I see so much that has never been able to continue on. See? And wish it could have, but know because of human nature it can't be. But that which remains, awesome! You should be awesomely inspired. You should be awesomely thankful. You should be awesomely encouraged that you've made it this far! Because we have had to wage spiritual wars that have, to a degree, and on a plane that have never been fought in God's Church. I hope you understand what I'm saying. Never been fought.

There's been a lot of suffering, been a lot of people killed. All the disciples, except one, that we know of, John, we believe, as a matter of history, they were all killed by their governments. Every one of them. John is the only one who went to the Isle of Patmos for the period of time he did, was given the book of Revelation, but died an old man. All the rest, and many in the Church in the beginning of the Church, they died because of what they believed. They were killed. Because those were different times than what we have today, by far. And if you disagreed with government and you said something against the government at that time, when there was a certain state religion that came along especially and the Roman Empire in 325 A.D., and a little after that. And you have rulers who say the Sabbath and Passover are not longer to be kept and this is now the state religion, Easter and Sunday, and if you don't do it, you die. That's what the punishment was. You die if you go against the Roman government at that time. We don't have that today. We have a *measure* of a freedom of religion. We talk about freedom of religion and you have certain religious rights. But sometimes you come down to your job and so forth and you find out, "I don't have too many religious rights."

So I hope this is magnified in our minds when I read this and you hear it.

The exact state of the Church could not be foreknown due to all the suffering it would experience after the Apostasy...

How many have gone by the wayside and how many remain? It screams out, brethren, volumes.

...that it would experience after the Apostasy and all the spiritual tribulation that would follow. The necessary strength that the Church would need to have and where people would be spiritually by mid-2008 would determine how things could proceed forward in the fulfillment of end-time prophetic events.

This is profound; truly is!

The true condition of the Church would be the final deciding factor for when God would send His Son to reign on the earth.

It could have all been over with by now. It could have all been over with by now. But it wasn't God's desire. Why? Is that our desire; we wish it would have all been over with by now? Or that millions more, hundreds of millions more have opportunity to be saved at the end-time, to live into a new age, that 63,000 - who the vast majority would have died because so much was already judged and would not have opportunity to live into the Millennium - now have opportunity to repent and live into the Millennium? Awesome! Is that worth fighting for? Is that worth dying for? Think about what Jesus Christ died for. He saw something greater, didn't he? Think of all those in the early Church, that lives were taken. They knew how dangerous their lives were at that time, how dangerous it would be to do certain things and be in certain places. And they did it, like it says in Hebrews, "Because they looked for a City whose builder and maker is God." That's our focus. And now we live at the end of an age, but we have opportunity to *live* into a new age. We have opportunity to be protected to live into a new age. How incredible is that? To go through the worst times, God says, that have ever happened in all human history.

The true condition of the Church would be the final deciding factor for when God would send His Son to reign on earth. This would **reveal** whether things were to proceed to a conclusion by Pentecost of 2012 or whether seven more years could be granted to mankind and to the Church that had been scattered.

Awesome! And we'll stop there for today. We didn't get very far. Next week, hopefully, we don't have to have a review again to get back to this point.