

It's a marvel indeed that God has given us this kind of a focus that He has in this series that we're going through right now that we started yesterday at this year's Feast of Tabernacles. This is now continuing with *Part 2* of a feast series entitled *Revelation of the Messiah*.

In *Part 1* we focused upon how God began to reveal so much more about the Messiah and the importance of his name that He gave His own Son, that of Joshua. God chose a name that reflects His great purpose of delivering, of saving mankind from himself so that a complete creation could be accomplished in us, that of bringing us into Elohim, into His family, into His Kingdom.

Yesterday I cut off a little early, well, I ran out of time and we had more to cover there so I'm going to go ahead and go through parts of that as well today in Luke 2. I have a few more things that I think would be good to cover before we continue on with some of the things prepared in this particular portion.

You know, we are so blessed to see and understand that God's first great purpose in His Messiah was to come as our Passover. That's a very strong message at this year's Feast of Tabernacles, that we understand that and that we use that in our lives. That's what it's about. It's about the blessing and the ability to repent of sin and to be forgiven of sin. That's an incredible thing. It is a process. That's why he came and suffered for us, so that we could have that. This year, in essence, God is crying out to us, pleading with us in many respects, to yield to Him, to learn, to receive what He's offered to us because He's offered us more than any other human beings ever on the earth as far as insight, knowledge, and understanding, save for one, and that is the Messiah.

So we are incredibly blessed to have what we have, incredibly blessed to see the things that God is showing us even in this particular series, everything that we go through at the Feast of Tabernacles.

**Luke 2:1—And it came to pass in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, unto Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. So they went back to their regions so that they could pay these taxes and be accounted accordingly.**

**As it says here, because he was of the house of, the lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary, his betrothed wife, being great or far along with child. And so it was that while they**

were there, the days were accomplished, in other words, the time had come for delivery, that Mary should be delivered.

**Verse 7—And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped him in narrow bands of cloth, which is what it's about (translated in different ways), and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

I read a story like this and I think of some of the crazy scenes sometimes around Christmas and the ones who are there, supposedly the wise men who are there by the manger, and so forth and that didn't happen. It didn't happen at all that way! There are a lot of scholars who understand that, but they don't address it because this has gone on for generation after generation, century after century in this world. So they just like to keep it there as a nice, sweet little story that they make and don't grasp and comprehend what really took place that has such incredible meaning. They don't look at the depth of the meaning of it.

It's about Christmas. It's about giving gifts. It's about receiving gifts. It's about the tree. It's about the lights. It's about this old fat man that goes down through a chimney and you wonder how in the world can he do that when he's so much bigger than any chimney out there, you know? So anyway, they believe in fables and stories and the whole thing is like that.

Here is another one. **Because, it says, there was no room at the inn. And there were in that country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.** Another one. They didn't do that in December. They don't do that in December. They don't do it in November. They've already brought the sheep in by that time. Most scholars grasp, comprehend this was most assuredly in the spring time or the fall. Well, we grasp and understand things about God's plan and purpose and things that fit into the fall.

**And behold, the angel of the LORD came upon them, and the glory of the LORD was shining round about them, and they were greatly afraid.** So all these accounts, it doesn't matter who it was, whether it was Zechariah that we read about yesterday, whenever an angel appears like that you haven't seen it, you've heard about them, and so forth, it'll scare the tar out of you. There is a power and a might there and a glory of something they grasp and comprehend, and it is far beyond our human lives, and that glory is manifested. They're able to see it. They're able to grasp and comprehend what's taking place. They're also told, as a whole.

It says, **and they were greatly afraid. And the angel said to them, Don't be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Messiah.** That's what they were told; he's the Messiah, the Lord. Can you imagine? Knowing that the prophets for so long since the beginning and through the time that they have their history, their knowledge of those things that took place through the reign of the various kings, David and on, and then the different prophets that were there, that spoke about this, about a Messiah that was coming, and now they're out there doing what they're doing, herding sheep, and an angel appears and tells them the Messiah is being born

and is in the city of David, a Savior. Awesome! We can't grasp things like that. We read stories like this and the more we think about it, try to place ourselves there in thinking what would it be like the more inspiring and awesome it is.

**Verse 12—And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes,** which is how it's translated, but it's those thin areas of cloth that the baby was wrapped in, **lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace...** So again, this is the process whereby the earth is going to be given peace. This is the beginning of something so incredible. The angelic realm that was given this, those angels who were given this as well, to be able to praise God and thanking God and seeing this finally come to pass because they've heard about it for a long, long time and now it's taking place. They're excited. They're inspired. They're moved and they're motivated for God's way of life.

So it says here, **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,** and it's not "goodwill toward men," it's **to men of good will!** Because there is that which comes as a process, that if people strive to live right, strive to live God's way of life, peace will be the result. The more you obey God, the more you live by God's way of life that's what you're given. Again, some of the songs, some of the things that are done that are syrupy, that have no great meaning to it whatsoever that children sing and learn at a very young age, it has no depth of meaning in sense of the truth.

**Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace to men of good will! And it came to pass as the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even to Bethlehem.** You'd have some strong motivation. Wouldn't you want to go right away if angels came and told you something like that and here a Messiah that they've heard about for so long and they've known a history there of different ones that have spoken of a Messiah, and now he's being born in Bethlehem? ...**and see this thing which has come to pass, which the LORD has made known to us.** "Why us, of all people?"

Think about us. Why us? You have to come to the point in life where you realize it just is. God chooses, it's God's purpose. He calls people, He draws people to Him and we're just blessed to share. They were blessed to share in something awesome and incredible and they did.

**And they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they had seen this they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.** Probably a lot of people thought they were nuts, crazy. "Oh, yeah, to you, shepherds out in the field there herding sheep? Sure, that's what God would do." People mock and make fun of things they don't grasp, don't comprehend. Others would listen and wonder, especially if they knew them.

**Verse 18—And all they who heard wondered at those things which were told to them of the shepherds.** So speaking of, again, the language that's used here, there are those that did listen,

there were those who did wonder at what was said, but there were those who didn't. Sometimes the word "all" here is not properly translated at all in what's being said.

**But Mary kept all these things and considered *them* in her heart.** She thought about them. What does all this mean? She didn't have answers to everything. "What does this mean? What is taking place?"

**And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, and it was told them.**

**Verse 21—And when eight days were completed for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Joshua, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. That's what his name was to be.**

There is more to the story here, the rest of Chapter 2. But again, what an incredible event that took place.

I mentioned about the shepherds. You know, by the time it came to the wise men that were told and they came they weren't there anymore. He wasn't in a manger. That is a story in itself, and the gifts that were brought. How they mess things up so badly, it's mind boggling. But they hold on to the tradition, the story that's been told for so, so long and the accounts of what are recorded in the Bible aren't paid much mind.

So today we're going to go on now from where we left off yesterday. I wanted to go through and read that part of it and complete that in Luke talking, again, about his name and the focus that was there and the fact that it was given by an angel from God before he was conceived.

Acts 3. We're going to look more at this revelation about the Messiah as the Church was just beginning and what's said here. **Acts 3:1—Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being about the ninth *hour*, and about 3:00 PM then in the afternoon, and a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask donations of those who entered into the temple.** So this was a regular routine day by day and they would carry him up there because he wasn't able to be mobile himself. ...**who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked a donation. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave attention to them expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said...** Now, he did this by the power of God's spirit. It's the only way things like this happen. People can't decide for themselves what they're going to do in God's name, by God's power.

When God does something and He gives His power to accomplish something He gives His spirit so that a person can know and they knew. They already had enough experience by this time to know how God was working in their lives. They'd experienced this. They were able to verbalize something, say something that they knew came from God.

You know, it's good to know these things because there are people out there sometimes and people who have come along in the Church who have different ideas about special things that God has called them to accomplish, special things that God has called them to do, and they had these things in their mind about something grander than just being called. I mean, what's that, just being called to be in God's Family, to have the opportunity to change now? I'm saying these things because these things have happened in recent time, not a long time ago, okay? Recent time even, of people sometimes who get these grandiose ideas that God is doing something special with them.

Well, isn't it special enough that we're called? See? Because I know that some of those ideas still exist. Isn't it special enough that we are called? If to be a part of the 144,000, that's mindboggling, but for the vast majority to live on into the Millennium, isn't that special enough? Is there something special that we have to do in order to be seen by others in the world?

Candidly, at this point in time I don't need to be seen by anybody in the world! Okay? There'll be things written, there are things said and so forth on a very small scale. It doesn't have to be something great and big. There are a lot of things that happened in the Bible that were in a very specific area. So what God is doing right now doesn't have to be something where it happens worldwide and everybody, "Oh, look at that! Look what he's saying." It's out there, it's written. That's all that needs to be there for a witness and to fulfill prophecy. We learn as we go along. God reveals more and more to us. Things are different now than what they were before. They are different than if God had followed through with a judgment the world deserved back in 2012.

To be called, to have what we have is far beyond anything that we can comprehend, let alone thinking there is something special that should happen with us or that we should do. Anyway, I mention that because, well, because I was supposed to.

So this event was happening. They were talking to him and he said here in **verse 6—I don't have silver and gold to give to you, but such as I do have I'll give it to you. In the name of Joshua the Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.** Again, I can't stress enough he didn't do this because he was an apostle, because he knew he was an apostle, or whatever. He did it because God gave it to him to give at that moment. He was inspired by God's spirit to speak those words and to have the confidence of knowing that he was supposed to do that. There is no doubt in the mind when those things happen, when God is there.

Sometimes we as human beings, we get in the way and we think there are other things going on. And sadly, sometimes there really are, but they're not from God. We have to be careful. There is a deceitful being out there, and beings, that like to mess with God's people. So you've got to be careful. You've got to be on guard because they're going to try us in more things. They're not finished by any measure within the Body. This isn't over with by a long shot, see? They're going to come at different ways that they can because they'll see certain things, they know certain things already about where things are, and they still want to destroy everything that God is doing, in their perverted, distorted, sick minds.

In the name of Joshua the Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and his ankle bones received strength. He jumped up, stood, and then walked and entered with them into the temple—walking, and jumping, and praising God. Forty years of age, whatever the age exactly was that it talks about, incredible! You have to be carried up there every day, you'd be excited, you'd be stirred up to all of a sudden you can walk, you can jump, you have perfect mobility as anybody else. It would be hard to take that lightly and he didn't.

And all the people saw him walking and praising. They knew who it was! They'd seen him out there. Any time they came to the temple they saw him out there. They knew in that area as they went to the temple that he was the one that was at the gate, and here he is, look at this. Wow.

Verse 10—And they knew that it was he who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with amazement, they were dumbfounded, and astonished (bewildered) at that which had happened. Now as the lame man who was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, wondering greatly. Again, dumbfounded, wondering what was going on, what was taking place, what was happening. They wanted to know what has happened. They're going to be told what happened. That's why they were doing this.

This individual holding on to these two, making it very clear there is something special they have done, there is something special that came from them, and he was thankful, he was grateful, and he knew where it came from.

And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people, You men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? And why do you look so earnestly on us, as though by our power or holiness we have made this man to walk? "We didn't do it! It's God that does it." If we're able to share in something that God gives to us, whatever it is in life, that's awesome, and we have some of the most awesome things ever given to human beings on this earth. An opportunity now, way ahead of those in the Millennium, the vast billions going to be called, in the Great White Throne billions and billions and billions. We get an opportunity to start so early. We are so exceedingly blessed above all people on earth.

And Peter saw it so he asked this of them, Why do you marvel as though we did it? As though by our power or holiness we made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His Son Joshua, who you delivered up... Now, he's being inspired in every word he's saying. This isn't just his decision, his choice as to what he's saying here. He knows these things. He's experienced it. He's been there. He knows the history. God's bringing it through through inspiration for him to now tell them exactly what was taking place and what had happened, very specifically so.

It says here, whom you delivered up, and denied him... "You denied him." That's what he told them. ...in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. Pilate wanted to let

him go and you are guilty of this. Wow! **But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.** “See how sick you were in what you did?” That’s pretty tough for them to take but they listen. This is the message that was given to them inspired by God Almighty, “Look what you did to the Son of God. Look what you did to the Christ. Leader of this region wanted to let him go but you wouldn’t do it. You wanted a murderer to be released rather than him.”

Incredible how much hatred people can have toward God. They don’t realize sometimes how that gets so stirred up. They don’t realize there is a spirit world out there that stirs them up more because they don’t like what they hear and then that being comes along.

Just like what can happen to any of us if we get jealous, envious of someone and then they come along and broadcast more of that kind of spirit, and then the person begins thinking about those things and they become more envious and their attitude begins to change and they begin to have a kind of wrong thought and evil in their heart and their mind toward someone else and they begin to judge them, “Who are you?”

Well, if God works through someone, if God gives something to someone it’s God who does it. And if we resist that and fight against that?

The reason I mention that is because those things so often have happened and do happen in God’s Church toward the ministry, toward different ones who are ordained. It’s always been that way in God’s Church. It should never be that way in God’s Church but it exists to this day where there are people who are jealous of, envious of, judge harshly, because, “Oh, you don’t know this,” or “You don’t know that and I do, you know,” or whatever it might be sometimes that comes up, or look down upon them, “How could you?” “You should be better than that.” “You should be a better example than that.” “You shouldn’t make mistakes,” or whatever it is that people do and they judge. I’d like to say more but that’s enough on that one.

We have to be careful how we think because these things exist to this day in God’s Church. Jealousies toward people in the ministry. And why is that? “Because I think I should be there.” That’s what happens. “Because I think I should be able to do that. I think I would be better suited to do that.” Are you going to argue with God if God has a choice to work with somebody? No, “You did that,” or I did that. “You ordained them because of...” whatever. Be careful. Be careful how you think. Be careful when you judge. Be careful when you criticize because it’s still happening in God’s Church, where people are willing to criticize to others in God’s Church about God’s ministry. Boy, if that ever crosses your lips you cut yourself off immediately at that moment from God. Don’t deceive yourself because these things have happened all the way up to the Feast of Tabernacles this year, okay? Because it’s human nature and it sucks, it stinks, and we shouldn’t do that in God’s Church. God is striving to clean up His Church. There are certain things that should never happen. And if we can’t grasp and comprehend government and authority within God’s Church and how God’s spirit works then we are fully missing the mark and we don’t belong here.

This is the dividing time in God's Church, this Feast of Tabernacles. I'm amazed at that message, how it keeps coming out.

So, with that we'll continue on.

Peter was inspired in these words that he spoke, very moved by God's spirit to tell them this story. "You prefer to have a murderer." It's amazing how perverted the mind can be in some of these kinds of things. ...and you killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name... It's a matter of belief. It's a matter you live by what you've been given to believe which has to come from God, that strength and that power to believe he is who we see him to be, the Messiah, to have that ability to believe that and then to live by that.

**And his name, through faith in his name, has made this man strong...** Now, the man didn't have that faith, not one slightest little bit! He had no faith! He had no belief in the sense of what is true. It was through Peter and John because of what they believed and because God was working with them and God's spirit was working with them and there is a message that's going to begin going out to the world as the Church is established, as the name of Joshua is going to be spread around the world as time goes on.

So this was a very powerful thing because of what Peter and John believed that God performed this. They didn't do it, God did it. **Yes, and the faith which is/by through him...** It was theirs. It was what they believed, and then God was able to use them in His service. They were called to serve God. ...has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. It came through, from, if you will, Joshua.

**Verse 17—Yet now, brethren, I know that through ignorance you did it, as *did* your rulers also.** So bringing it full circle, "You did it out of ignorance. You didn't know. You didn't understand. But you did it. You made the choices." **But those things which God before had shown by/through the mouth of His prophets, that Christ should suffer, that the Messiah should suffer (that's what they were saying), He has also fulfilled.** God has fulfilled those things, those things which He said would come to pass written by the prophets.

**Therefore, repent and be converted...** Think differently and change. That's what those words mean. Think differently and change. The change is a choice. Repentance is a choice. Repentance comes first. The desire to repent, to not be the same way, to be more on guard, to be careful of things we say, to be careful of the judgments that come out of our foolish mouths sometimes and the things that condemn us and cut us off from God's spirit. Brethren, they do.

There are people who are weak out here because of that, and there are some who may very well be asleep because of that one thing alone that I've just gone through, okay? Those are the kinds of things we need to repent of. If we're guilty of it I would place myself out before God on the ground and say, "Holy Father, forgive me for being so stupid, for being against You and against



your purpose and against the purpose of Your Son who died for me, for all of us,” and beg for mercy. I truly would.

You talk about when they went and grabbed the horns and prayed for God’s mercy that God wouldn’t destroy them, to take it that seriously. That’s how serious you should take it, it really is. To resist God, to fight against God after everything we’ve been given is no small thing.

I, candidly, after this Feast of Tabernacles do not ever want to hear again that someone has spoken against any in God’s ministry. You will be disfellowshipped! I don’t care what it is, I’m just telling you, you will be disfellowshipped. I don’t care who you are you will be disfellowshipped immediately. This has come to an end in God’s Church. You’re not afraid of the words you speak against different of God’s ministers? You’re not afraid to judge them, to tear them down, to cut them down, to say nasty things about them? You should tremble in your shoes! Because it’s not about them it’s about the Great God of this universe and our attitude toward Him and our understanding of the first truth attributed to Mr. Armstrong - government! How does God work? And if we don’t get that one what do all the rest of the truths mean? Diddly-squat!

We’re being corrected pretty severely at this Feast of Tabernacles. I don’t like this. I don’t like doing it! But I also can’t help it because I have to do what’s given to me. And I know, as much as John and Peter knew what was being given to them, what I’m to speak by inspiration of God’s holy spirit, okay? It’s from God. It’s not my thoughts. It’s not my thinking and what I want to tell everybody. I don’t decide what I want to tell everybody. I don’t give a flip about what I want to tell everybody because that’s not important. But to yield myself before God and ask for help to know what to give to His people? Because you belong to Him and I want to serve in that capacity, and I am. We either believe that or we don’t. I know it with all my being.

Now, every time I get worked up like this to say these things I lose my spot. But I’ll find it.

**...spoken of by the prophets that Christ should suffer, He has fulfilled. Therefore, repent** (think differently), **and change.** Change the way you think. You know, the only way you can do that is starting to repent. Cry out to God to think differently. “Help me to think differently. My thinking is messed up. I don’t want to think that way. I want to think right towards You. I want to think right towards Your Church. I want to think right towards Your people. I want to think right towards Your ministry. I want to have a right attitude because I know that has to do with thinking right towards You. I can deceive myself in thinking I’m thinking right toward You and Your Son but I’m not having interaction with You on a regular basis. It’s with Your people who have Your holy spirit, and that’s where I’m being tried and tested as to what’s really inside of me. Cleanse me. Change me. Help me to grow. Help me to think right so I can change. I want to change.”

**... that your sins may be blotted out,** because that’s how the sins are blotted out. It’s not enough just to say, well, I did something wrong. It’s a matter that you start making some changes in your life and that certain things don’t happen anymore and that when they do you repent mightily and greatly before God Almighty.

So it goes on here... **your sins may be blotted out**, and the word is “so that” not “when,” **so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord**. So what does that mean? Well, if God’s called us then that’s your time. If He has blessed you to be able to repent that’s your time. The times of refreshing have come to you to where you can receive peace from God, where you can receive of God’s spirit, where you can receive of His life in you and yours in His. ...**may come from the presence of the Lord, and also**, as the word is in the Greek, not just “and.” ...**and also He shall send Joshua the Christ, who before was preached unto you**. Now, he’s going into something here that doesn’t specifically apply to them, but he’s preaching these things, he’s saying these things that have been inspired by God’s spirit because they’re going to be recorded and they’re for the Church. They’re for the Church that started on Pentecost of 31 A.D., so that we can read such things and as God’s spirit works with us to learn what we must do because that time has come to us.

...**whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken of by the mouth of the holy prophets since the world began**. So there is coming that time, see, and it all is about that which is fulfilled in Elohim as time goes on, because that’s where the fullness of peace exists, holy Jerusalem.

**Verse 22—For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord Your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me. Him shall you hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say to you.** The Prophet of all time, Joshua the Christ. **And it shall come to pass that every living person who will not hear that Prophet**, not hear the words that are recorded, that are given there, and when I read something like this in thinking about what we’re addressing at this Feast of Tabernacles, I’m sorry, but I think, it’s not about the world! They can’t hear right now. They’re not even being called to hear. Now, soon it’s going to be shaken and people are going to be humbled and they’re going to be able to be drawn by God’s spirit to begin to respond to what they’re hearing. They don’t have that yet. They’ve got to be humbled first, massively so, by incredibly horrible things on this earth to shake them, to humble them, to take everything away from them that they trust and rely in.

Everything to do with the economy of this world is about to go down the tubes! If you don’t grasp what happened yesterday in a speech at the United Nations and how the world hates what’s taking place and hates that country more than ever before? There is a reason why these things are happening right now and there’s a reason it’s going to fall first. It’s because of the rest of the world that hates it, hates what’s being done to them because it’s taking away some things that are real close. You know, money is really close to people. Prosperity is really close to people, and when you start screwing with that you’re doing something that nations aren’t going to take much longer. How long is this going to last? It doesn’t have to take very long; they’re riled up!

Every tariff that goes out there, they’re riled up. Everything he says, they’re being riled up. He is saying what he’s supposed to say! Sometimes we judge it “Well, he’s haughty! He’s proud!” Well, who isn’t? That’s not the point. He’s doing a job that he’s supposed to do. He’s been placed there

for a reason and it's going to be disastrous when it's all said and done. All for a purpose - to unite the world in a common cause for a little while. Then the world suddenly turns on each other. Incredible! Another sermon.

**Every living soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.** In time, no matter what that period of time is, so I think of the Church. I think of people right now who have opportunity and we don't listen, we don't hear. Of all people we won't do what we're admonished to do, we won't cry out to God for help to do what He's telling us Sabbath by Sabbath, holy day to holy day, the Feast of Tabernacles period?

**Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who followed after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, In your seed shall all the kindred's of the earth be blessed.** That is so incredibly awesome - a prophecy that was given through Abraham, what was told to him, "Of your seed all the world is going to be able to be blessed." Now, sadly, all won't receive it, all won't listen. That's what we've just read about.

**Unto you first has God raised up His Son Joshua, and sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.** In other words, "to save you from sin. That's his purpose, but you're still not listening." You know, you can't until you're called. You can't until you're drawn. So these things happen, we learn from them, God calls, works with different ones in the midst of it all.

**Acts 4:1—And as they spoke to the people, the priests, and the ruler of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being disturbed that they taught the people.** They were disturbed all right because people were rather listening to them and they were jealous. That's all it was. "People would listen to you and not come to us for answers?" Jealousy. That's what it was. So they were disturbed all right, they were threatened by this.

**...being disturbed that they taught the people and preached through Joshua the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold (in custody) until the next day.** Nice greeting. Nice to get along like that and you know it's a miracle that took place, yet because of your sick, filthy, evil pride you still put them away. You know it. You know they didn't do it. You know there is something more powerful here. A miracle comes from God. But, "We've got our own ways and God works through us" and so you're going to take certain action and this is the way it should be. You think, how can the mind be so perverted? So sick? So distorted? But it is.

**...and they laid hands upon them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was now evening. However, many of them who heard the word believed; and the number of them was about five thousand.** So it doesn't mean they were called to be baptized at that moment in time but they believed what they saw. They believed what they had to say. How? Well, God gave them that ability to that point in time. Some may very well have been drawn on to become a part of the Church a time went along there, but for those they were moved by what they saw because

they knew that a miracle had taken place. But not the Sadducees, not the priests; they didn't want to believe it. They refused, even though they acknowledged it. You think, how can that be?

**Verse 5—And it came to pass on the next day that their rulers, elders, and scribes, the rulers, the elders, the scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest...** Likely that's stated this way, likely of the descendants of Aaron, the Levitical line. That's why it's kind of stated this way, **were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power...** Duh! You acknowledge it's a miracle. Where do you think? By what power do you think it was done? **By what power or by what name**, basically asking here now, by what authority, **have you done this?** "Do you have that right? Do you have that authority? God established the Levitical system as the priesthood. You're not a Levite. Who are you?" They were so lifted up with pride. You think, how could they be so blind? But the pride was so strong that they were blind and were determined to stay blind! You think, how can a human, physical, carnal mind, even at that, think that way? But it happens.

**How have you done this? Then Peter, filled with the holy spirit...** So again here, makes it really clear where these things come from. It comes from God. The holy spirit that they had, it's by the power of God they were able to say and do the things that they did, preach the things they preached. It didn't come out of them. It wasn't a story that they just wanted to tell everybody. They were moved what to say and at what times to say them.

**Then Peter, filled with the holy spirit, said to them, You rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if this day we are being examined of the good deed *done* to this impotent man, by what means he was made whole...** "Now, isn't that the reason we're here, of why he's been made whole? Why he is able to walk and jump and he hadn't been able to for all those years and everyone saw him as they went to the temple?" **Be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Joshua the Christ of Nazareth, whom you nailed to the pole...** "You did it!" They were the ones who did do it, those leaders and those rulers, when they were brought in front of them. "You! You nailed him to the pole. You insisted upon that. You're guilty! And yet it's by his power, by his might, by his authority. Take that and chew on that for a little while." Basically, that's what they're being told. **...whom you nailed to the pole, whom God raised from the dead...** "How are you going to argue with that one, priests? How are you going to argue with that one? God raised him from the dead!" Well, they didn't believe it.

**...even by him does this man stand before you whole.** What they do afterwards, it just blows the mind, it really does. Human beings are so sick. Carnal nature is, referring to that; selfish, carnal, egotistical, haughty, proud spirit of mankind is so ugly.

**Verse 11—He went on to say, This is the stone...** They knew exactly what he was saying. He was inspired by God's spirit. They knew these things were written. They knew what he was talking about. They didn't like it one bit. **This is 'the stone which was rejected by you builders,'** hmmm, **'which has become the chief cornerstone.'** **Neither is there salvation in any other.**

Now, these are powerful things being said. They just had to be fuming because they hated it. They hated that something wasn't being done through them. They were the leaders, they were the priests, I mean, that is obvious, they were there descendants of Aaron! "How can you tell us something different that God established hundreds of years ago when you came out of Egypt?" That's how haughty they were. They couldn't see through it.

**There is salvation in no other name**, in essence is what he's saying, **for there is no other name under heaven given among men by/through which we must be saved**. It's the only name through which people can be saved.

**Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men...** People like to look upon that. Well, he doesn't speak with really good English or Dutch or French or German or Russian or whatever it might be, it doesn't matter, and not as well educated as, what they're saying, as we are. But they have such boldness in what they're saying. They're so strong. I mean, it comes across with some authority, it seems. That's what's in the mind. They're kind of dumbfounded by that even though it's not perfect in the way that they would say it because they're educated.

**Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Joshua.** So by what was being said here they knew then that this had to be the case. Perhaps others talking and saying that. **And seeing the man who was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.** He's healed. It's obvious.

**But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves.** So now they get to have their little pow wow. They get to talk this over of what just took place and how are they going to deal with this because they do want to deal with it because this takes away from their authority. This takes away from the way they think about themselves, being all puffed up and lifted up of how great they are. **...saying, What shall we do to these men?** They knew they wanted to do something. They all agreed on that. There is no problem there. So before they kill them later on... Well, they didn't get to kill John; they sure did the rest.

**What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all those who dwell in Jerusalem... 5,000? ...and we can't deny it. But so that it spreads no further...** "We don't want what they're saying about this resurrection from the dead and about us being the ones who nailed him to a pole, and that they're saying he was the Messiah, we don't want that message to go out anymore. We don't believe that, that he was the Messiah...although there is a person healed here." Hypocrisy. Lying. The way human beings are.

I think of politics today where people openly lie and twist and distort more than I've ever seen in my lifetime. Politics has always been ugly. People do some nasty things. They start nasty, lying rumors. They'll do anything to defame, to tear away, to try to move people. All sides of politics,

they all have done it. They all do it all the time. It's an evil world out there. Think about this, how evil this is. Same sort of thing.

**Verse 17—But so that it spread no further among the people, let us severely threaten them.**

“We have authority. We have power.” They had power to put them away and lock them up. They had power to do a whole lot more. ...**that from now on they speak to no man in this name.** Joshua the Christ. Well, they didn't say that part, but, “We don't want them to speak that way anymore. Don't use that name anymore.”

**So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor to teach in the name of Joshua.** And the logical answer? Well, it should be quite obvious, but they have to say it. **But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it would be right in the sight of God to listen to you...** Now, they probably didn't say it quite that way, but they said it. ...**in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.** “What do you think we're going to do?” I love it! Put them in their place, in essence. “You judge. What do you think's going to happen here?”

**For we cannot speak but the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them...** So they weren't done. They threatened them some more. ...**they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people...** They were afraid of the people. It wasn't because they wouldn't have done more if they could have but they were more fearful of the people.

I can't help it but I can't help but think of politics all the time. That's about the only that would cause people to do certain things because they fear a majority, what is the majority, what do they think, and we want to say what they think. Then after it's all over with and I got my place then pfft with them, you know.

...**for all men glorified God for that which was done.** So they understood here that something was taking place and the people were glorifying God because of what they saw as a miracle. So how do you deal with that one? Boy, that's a dilemma, isn't it?

**Verse 22—For the man was over forty years old to whom this miracle of healing had been performed.** Incredible.

Let's turn over now to 2 Timothy 1. You know, at the beginning of God's Church through the original apostles and Paul God magnified the importance of the life, again here, of the name of Joshua the Christ to His Church because the message is not for the world, it's for the Church. Yet the world has heard much and don't understand it, twisted and distorted various things, have been deceived by so much. It's incredible here what's been given to us, to the Church, because we're the only ones that can really hear what's being said. The world can't comprehend and understand what's taken place.

So here in 2 Timothy, something that Paul had to say. **2 Timothy 1:1—Paul, an apostle of Joshua the Christ by the will of God.** So he lets them know he's an apostle. God is the one who places us

in the Body. God is the one who calls us to share, to be a part of the Body, to be a part of the Church and within the structure then God is the one who does it all. It's just the way it is.

So any opposition to any of that places us against God, in opposition to God and what God is doing. Any word that goes out against anyone that God has placed to serve, to be in a particular area, you're just speaking against God. Any stupid, dumb, negative, wrong remark that comes out of the mouth, any degrading type of thing that comes out of the mouth, you might as well just tell it to God: "That's the way you are, God. That's what I think about You." "Oh, but I wouldn't say that to God or about God." Well, you just did.

**Paul, an apostle of Joshua the Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Joshua.** It's in him, meaning, basically by that, that that's the only way you can have it, that's the only way you can experience it. You have to be in him and he in you. That's where you have to dwell on a spiritual plane by the power of the holy spirit because of begetting of the holy spirit in the mind.

**To Timothy, my dearly beloved son.** It means what it says. **Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Joshua our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, and without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith...** Not pretentious, not put on, genuine. None of us have to put on anything. None of us have to try to act as though we're spiritual or something. We just live this way of life. We just live this way of life and we don't have to put on anything that tries to convey that "I'm really with the program and I'm spiritual." I hope you understand what I just said.

**...when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith,** in other words, genuine, honest, **that is in you, which dwelt first...** It dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, **and I am persuaded that in you also.** A lot has been lost through time in history and things that people think the scriptures say. There is a lot being said here that will come at another time.

**Verse 6—Therefore, I want to remind you to stir up the gift of God.** That's what we should all strive to do always. But here is something special being said as well in more ways than one. **Therefore, I want to remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given you the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.** Now, whether be speaking of baptism, which it may well not be, because he was called to minister and there were those who ordained. And Paul, in this particular case, did the ordination, and it's about a job that Timothy had to do toward the Church and so he's telling him to "stir up this gift that you've been given because you have God's spirit dwelling in you, you have this power living in you, and you have a job to do. Use it. Stir it up. God is giving you more for a particular purpose and reason."

**For God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.**

**Therefore, do not be ashamed at the testimony (their witness) of the Lord, nor of me his**

**prisoner.** Means what it says, okay? He's telling them don't be ashamed of those things because in the world some of these things are a shame and how people think about them, see, when it come to things about talking about God or something of that nature. As far as a minister is concerned if they have that job, and if they have in any time that responsibility to say it and others hear it in the world so be it, whether sometimes they're ashamed of those things, are afraid maybe in family or maybe on the job. You don't have to preach. You don't have to be preachy, but there are times you just have to stand for God's way of life.

"Going to the Feast of Tabernacles; I need to take this time off." Or "I need to take this time off. I need the next week and a half off," or hopefully you let them know before the week before and you let them know that you have to take this time off. "What is it you're doing?" "Well, I have this holy day, these holy days that I observe every year and they come at different times in the year in the fall and I need to be there." Well, maybe they ask some more questions because this happens. So we answer, you give an answer. You don't have to unload the whole load about what you believe, but if they ask some more questions you may have to tell them some more. Oftentimes it comes up, "Well, the Old Testament? What is this Feast of Tabernacles? What are you? Are you a Messianic Jew or whatever it might be? Don't you believe in Jesus?" in this case. It might be best to answer, rather than saying Joshua at this point, for your sake, it might be best to say, "Yes, we believe in Christ. We believe in Christ, we just have things in the Old and New." So you have to simplify things a lot. "Oh." So different things will sometimes appease people.

But again here, it's a point that you're not embarrassed to do it. You're not ashamed to do it. You're not ashamed to talk about what you're doing as a holy day. I know too often, and it still happens in God's Church, that sometimes people are kind of, well, they don't want people to think about them as being, you know, whatever it might be, and so, "I don't really want to talk about God and I don't want to talk about Joshua." "I sure don't want to use that name right now," which is fine, "but I'll use the name Christ." But sometimes people don't want to use that name either because they're kind of embarrassed around other people and maybe don't want to talk too much about it within their own family, or whatever it might be, or what they believe and what they're doing and try to justify why they're doing what they are.

No, you don't have to justify anything to anyone. You just obey God and if they want an answer you give them an answer. "No, I'm putting this aside because this is my income and I'm commanded that I save aside a second tithe so I can go to that Feast of Tabernacles that you have talked to me about in times past." Stand to your mate and tell them what you're to do, what you're going to do, without embarrassment, without shame, without trying to justify it somehow to put it in a better light. It is what it is.

Blows my mind sometimes how we can be called and be ashamed of what we've been given. If God's first we'll uphold that no matter where the chips fall, no matter what anybody else thinks.



He's telling Timothy: "You have a job to do. There are going to be times that it's going to be difficult." He's not just talking about being in the Church. He's talking about his job as a minister. He's reminding him of this, what he's been called to do.

So, "Don't be ashamed of the witness, of those things that you have witnessed, of those things that I have told you that I have witnessed, but to pass those things along that are true for those who will hear them." Now, back then they did it a little differently than what we do as well because they would speak more openly, or they were supposed to speak more openly. Those who would be drawn to it they would have that opportunity then to speak to them more clearly, those who wanted to hear more. But that was a world that didn't even know the name, or maybe it heard just a few things, maybe they heard some rumors of what had happened in Jerusalem. So this was a period of time, during Ephesus, of the name going out there and God performed these miracles to draw people's attention to, like the lame individual, that here, there is a power here, there is something taking place here. They are more willing to listen. Then through that process God drew some on into the Church, okay? Not like it was done during Philadelphia, in the same regard, but it was more about this name, Joshua the Christ, that the Messiah had come.

So again, **Don't be ashamed of that or me his prisoner**, you know, in other words, "Those things that I've given to you speak clearly and boldly about me, your teacher, and how God has worked through me to work with the gentiles as an apostle to the gentiles, and teach those things to them." So it's a point of saying here, in essence here, "This is what you'll pass along to them and let them know who gave it to you." Things were done differently back there, but still it had to show that authority that it came from an apostle, it came from Paul. That's Timothy; that was what Timothy was given to talk about. So he said, in essence, don't be ashamed of me that I'm in prison, that I'm in Rome.

**...but be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.** There are going to be things come your way because you're going to have situations where people hate you and they're going to treat you in a bad way." I've had people have greater hatred for me, many times over, that have been a part of God's Church, than ever in the world! I mean, hatred, deep, deep, deep hatred. I understand that. It is what it is. It's not a fun thing when people hate you so much and say all manner of evil against you.

This is what he's telling Timothy. "It's going to happen. Things are going to take place. It's not going to be a pleasant walk." And sadly, so much of it isn't. I think of Mr. Armstrong, the hatred that existed toward him, the jealousies and the envying because they were waiting for him to die. Can you imagine this? Within the Church, supposedly, because as soon as those thoughts and ideas entered into people's minds they were no longer a part of God's Church. They were separated from God's spirit and they were just going along with things they'd learned at Ambassador College and what they'd learned while God inspired them and blessed them when they were doing their job right through the ministry. These things were in their human mind, but no longer inspired by God's spirit and so they just continued to teach something they had been

taught, just as anyone would when they go to a cemetery, a seminary. I'm sorry; they used to use that as a joke.

Anyway, they are taught a certain thing to teach and so they go out and teach that, the doctrines. That's what they did. It just didn't have God's spirit in it anymore. They grew to a point where they were just waiting for him to die! Who? Who is going to be the next one? GTA? (Garner Ted Armstrong) C. Wayne Cole? Dr. Meredith? Who is it that's going to be the next one, because it's going to have to be, surely, among them? So different ones were lining up behind, giving their loyalties to, if you will. Not to God, but to some man, because, see, it's all about positioning. When you get in that state you're in politics! It's about positioning. Where can I receive favor? Who can I butter up next to in order to get some more favor maybe to be ordained or maybe to have a special blessing or a certain job being given to me? "Where is the money? I'm sorry. I mean, where are the jobs going?" I'm sorry; you understand what I'm saying? Where can I get something special out of this? Who is it I'm going to butter up next to? Who is it that I'm going to side with in the sense of things that I'm talking about and share my gossip with them about others?

It's hard to imagine that that happened in God's Church, but it was in every bit of the highest leadership of God's Church. Every one of them, as a whole. My wife and I have talked about this a lot. There may be two that may have come through all that who were different, who reacted different. Leroy Neff being one because he didn't play that kind of game. He didn't play politics. And prayerfully, though he wasn't given the ability to see that it was an apostasy, God judged him to that point in time because He didn't let him see the rest. See, it's up to God who He lets see whatever they're able to see on a spiritual plane. So it's my hope, and I believe very likely so, that he came on through it though he lived on into the period of what we know as PKG.

Human nature really is bad. Our human nature is so bad. Sometimes we get caught in these things, even within God's Church today, of being seen with someone, to maybe receive certain favor or whatever. We have to be careful that that's not our heart or our motive, if you will, and that we just do it because we love them and we're friends and of the same family, not to get something from it.

So he's telling Timothy here about these things that are going to take place, and so he's saying, **You also enter into the afflictions of the gospel.** Because it's not the most fun road to walk down, because you're going to have people hate you, you're going to have people talk about you in a bad way. These things are going to happen, and especially for them because the world was different at that time because they, the leadership coming out of Jerusalem, they hated this and they wanted to persecute them. Then there's Rome and the love they had towards the Church and how they came after the Church through time. So it's going to be a tough thing. It's not going to be an easy job and task you have in front of you.

So that's what he tells him. **...but be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.** Do it. God gives you the power. Do it. It comes from God. **...who has saved us**

**and called us with a holy calling.** So all of us have a holy calling... **...not according to our works.** That would be great if from the very beginning we could see that from the beginning and believe it with all of our being, that there is nothing special about us, it's just a matter of God's calling. It's not because we're better than anyone else. On the contrary, generally it's because it's the opposite, because God takes the weak things of the world to confound the things that think it's mighty, that think they're great. That's why He's called us, to dumbfound them in time, to show what God can do. Just like the individuals when they were talking there, "Oh, they're untrained and unlearned men. They're inexperienced but boy, they speak with boldness in what they have to say." So what's more important? The way it's said or what is said, who has said it or where it comes from if it's God?

**...not according to our - our - works, but according to His own purpose and grace,** for it's a very merciful thing when God reaches down and pours out upon us that kind of grace. To be so blessed, to be able to come to repentance, to be able to be forgiven of sin, to be able to have our minds opened up to see things on a spiritual plane that the vast majority of the world has to wait until the Great White Throne to see. You see it in part, but you don't see it fully, for if you did you would never have a sin in your life, but we just don't have that because we're so carnal.

**...not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Joshua before the world began.** That's why I love what we read about in Hebrews. It was all settled from the beginning, even in that part. Not just when man was put here on the earth, but this was all determined before it ever began. Before anything was ever created this was all established, how we are going to be able to become a part of Elohim and the process God was going to use. He had the 6,000 years mapped out. He had a 1,000 years mapped out. He had the Great White Throne mapped out and how people were going to be able to be changed in time and become a part of Elohim, to be born into His Family.

**...before the world began, but has now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Joshua the Christ.** So the very beginning of it has to do with our Passover, the ability to be saved that is in Joshua's name, "the Eternal's salvation," "the Eternal is salvation." Awesome! Not Jésus. Incredible!

**...the appearing of our Savior Joshua the Christ, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the good news.** So he's going back and talking about, "Look, after 4,000 years..." He didn't say it that way; he didn't know that. "He's here. He came. He died. He was resurrected and this power exists now within the Church, within us."

**Verse 11—thereby I was appointed a preacher and an apostle.** I'm amazed how often it says that. He just keep reminding, you know. When they write the books that they did they remind, "This is not from me, it's from God." That's what that is saying. It's the job of an apostle. If we can't hear that then we can't hear!

...thereby I was appointed a preacher and an apostle. Those things were hard to come to. Those things were hard to accept, to be able to speak them. The first times that I did begin to do some of that I was criticized by an individual, minister who was with us from the beginning, "Why do you have to tell people this?" That was the context of it, "Aren't you kind of lifting yourself up?" I mean, it's like, "Why do people have to be told that you're a prophet? Why do you have to say that? It's embarrassing." It's like (he didn't say it) but it's like, "It's embarrassing." Ashamed of? That's exactly what Paul was telling Timothy. "Don't be ashamed of. Who cares what people think! If the truth is the truth embrace it!"

For which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I believe and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I committed unto him against this day. Hold fast the form of sound words... Hold on with all of your being the sound words which you have heard from me, with what I have taught you, Timothy. He was very close to Timothy, closer than most know. ...which you have heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Joshua. That's where the power is. That's where the life is. That's where the strength is, meaning we are in him and he is in us.

...which is in Christ Joshua. That good thing which was committed unto you, keep through the holy spirit. That's how we do it. It's because we have to have a continual flow of the holy spirit into our life. It's like that umbilical cord that we've talked about and if we ever start squeezing that off because of sin or whatever it is, after a while we can cut it off totally and we're not there anymore. We may be going through the motions of something, but we're not in the Body. But we have to be in the Body, in Christ, and he in us. ...committed unto you, to keep through the holy spirit which dwells in us.

2 Thessalonians 1. I guess you know where 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians goes when it gets into Chapter 2, something profoundly prophetic that we all should know.

But in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 it says, **And to you who are troubled and suffer affliction, rest with us when the Lord Joshua shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them who do not know God, and that obey not, or do not obey the gospel of our Lord Joshua the Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord...** So there is that which ends up in judgment. We understand that. When it's final it's final, it's everlasting. It doesn't mean something just goes on and on and on like the Protestant world sometimes has a hard time, and sometimes when people are first called it's hard. "What is this ever burning fire or everlasting fire?" Well, it's a simple thing. It's the judgment. It's about a judgment. When it's all gone it's gone and when the fire is out it's done its job. It's over with, but it's age-lasting. It's done. It's just a final judgment.

So again here, talk about **who do not know God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Joshua the Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when he shall come to be glorified in His saints.** What an awesome thing. It's talking about, in essence here, what comes first, first resurrection

and then the resurrections that follow later, but here is a beginning of it, beginning of God's plan. **When he, Joshua, shall come and be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.** Then it says, talks about, "in that day."

So all these things lead up to a particular time. For the Church we understand what is being spoken of here. I'm sorry, in Thessalonians as Paul is speaking here, it's leading up to a particular time when Christ returns.

**Therefore also we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling.** The point is we're not worthy of a calling. We're just not. But that we might be accounted of what we're doing and how we're responding to it, in a worthy manner, if you will, of this calling. That's a matter of totally yielding ourselves because that's the only way that worthiness can be attributed to us, if you will. So we have to do it in a worthy manner. In other words, we're striving to respond the way God has given us to be able to. He's made the way totally possible. It's all there, a paved road easy to travel down. It's just our human nature gets in the way.

**...worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power.** So again, it's a work. We have to put ourselves into this. It doesn't just happen. We can't just kind of level out like what happened in Laodicea and somehow think that we can just go through the motions of things. It doesn't work that way. It takes work. Day by day it takes work to fight against this. It really does. It just takes a lot of work. This thing about being on guard, you may see it in part but you don't "see" it. You think you see it fully? You don't! This thing of being able to grow and what it means to be on guard, to be alert? Well, the more you come to see your human nature, the more you see it on a spiritual plane, the more you recognize and grasp the need to constantly fight and to constantly be on guard, watchful, to be alert spiritually, because we're a mess.

Our human nature is really a mess and only God can save it through Christ. That's what we're shown here. The way is possible and the first thing that always has to be there is this desire to repent when we see the error - repent, repent, repent and cry out to God for mercy. What a blessing to be forgiven then, and then just to go on, leave that behind, and don't let it weigh you down anymore. Don't keep dragging your rocks behind you. Let it go!

**Verse 12—that the name of our Lord Joshua the Christ may be glorified in you, so you in him and he in you. ...in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Joshua the Christ.**

Now Chapter 2:1—**Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Joshua the Christ.** What do you think the Church was looking for? The disciples were looking for this right away! He appeared in front of them and what did they ask him about? "When are you going to restore the Kingdom?" They were dumbfounded that he died, that he was killed. It's like, "What are we going to do now, go back to fishing, go back to something that we can do because it's over

with?" They didn't know what to do. "The Messiah! He was the Messiah! We know! We believe he was the Messiah and he's dead! He was going to come; the Messiah is prophesied to come to bless Israel, to bless us with rulership, to take the foreign powers away, to conquer them so that we reign, and it didn't happen, he's dead." We learn through time. So their heart and their desire was, "When is that kingdom going to be established? You're the Messiah!" Even after he was resurrected and he just pops up, he's right there in front of them. They thought it was a ghost. Then all of a sudden he starts talking to them and they realize who he is and they're dumbfounded by it and realize he was resurrected from the dead, he is alive, he is the Messiah!

Christ didn't tell them, "Well, it's going to be 2,000 years yet so don't get too excited. It's going to be 2,000 years before I return." He didn't give them a timeline whatsoever. He didn't tell them anything about it, in that respect, as far as a time. Otherwise, what would happen in the Church? "It's not for another 2,000 years..." We have a hard enough time from 3½ more or seven more, or whatever it might be that we've gone through.

**Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Joshua the Christ.** That's what their eyes have been on. The desire to see the Messiah, through all the prophets, has always been there. When is it going to be? Every time there was a war, every time there was a conflict with other nations you know what they wanted, what they desired, what they prayed about even carnally so? The Messiah. "Please send us the Messiah that You promised." It was in their minds through time. It's in the apostle's minds, the Church's mind. Their focus was on when he's returning, when he's coming back so that we can complete this job, so that we complete the work that's to be done in us.

**...the coming of our Lord Joshua the Christ and by our gathering together unto him.** So they knew that, speaking of the first resurrection, because that's all they focused upon primarily. Things about the Millennium and the Great White Throne, candidly, weren't fully known, of the timing of those things and how they all fit into place. But here with what they knew and what they understood they recognized something was to take place and there is going to be a gathering together unto him. They didn't know there was going to be 144,000! They had no comprehension! It only says tens of thousands of saints in the Old Testament, okay? That's all they knew. There is going to be a lot of people, a lot of different ones that are going to be a part of that, but they didn't know how many let alone how long. So they were looking to be in "this gathering together unto him," because they knew there was going to be a first resurrection, a great resurrection that, candidly, is spoken of in Thessalonians as well, earlier.

**...that you do not become soon shaken in mind or troubled, neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter, as from us, as though the day of Christ is at hand.** That coming. That return. That time when he's going to establish the Kingdom, when we're going to be gathered together unto him. That's the context.

**Let no one deceive you by any means; for except there come a falling away first, that word “apostasy,” “except there’s an apostasy” in the Church. It can’t be in the world. It’s in the Church. That hasn’t really been fully understood in times past either.**

**...now except there come a falling away first, an apostasy, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.** We’re living it. Who else believes that? There was one group for a time that thought it was Joseph Tkach, and then he died so it can’t be him, they thought, and so it has to be his son. But at least there was acknowledgement something major has happened within the Church, even on a physical plane, to see something like that. I mean, when certain weapons go off and things happen to a particular country even those who are scattered by that time, even on a physical plane, without being awakened yet, are going to be able to acknowledge things are happening, it’s happening.

He continues to talk about these things, an apostasy, the man of sin, the son of perdition. So what scattered groups out there, what people know it? That one truth alone about the return of Joshua the Christ, who has it?

Yet we have people constantly giving up, leaving, going back to what they came out of, back to United or going to some other group or starting their own out of God’s Church. It just boggles the mind the number of people who have just gone through PKG. Hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of people who have gone through PKG since it began. You think just this one truth alone ought to be enough for people to say, “Yes, it was the man of sin, the son of perdition, and it’s pretty clear what happened to us. We had a scattering. The Church was scattered. The Church blew up. Where is the Church?” That was the problem, where did the Church go? “If we’re the Church how could this have happened to God’s Church?” Well, you didn’t have any understanding what the Apostasy was going to be like, obviously. We didn’t.

I say these things because there are going to be those who are here, there are going to be those who are listening at the Feast of Tabernacles who are going to go by the wayside before he returns. There are going to be some as there are every year. Every year in God’s Church since I’ve been in it, since 1969, people have left. People who have been called by God’s spirit, receive a holy calling, who have let it go. Every year. It’s guaranteed to happen. That is absolute. It’s absolute except for one thing, you repent.

All of us repent more zealously than ever before, cry out to God for great mercy, cry out that He be able to reveal to us, that He will reveal to us where we’re lacking, what we’re ignoring because a lot of things come down to the fact that people just ignore certain things they’re doing that are wrong and they just continue in the same way of life. The same carnal self just keeps coming out concerning things that are spiritual, on a spiritual plane. We’re being called to great repentance at this Feast, to embrace what we’ve been given with all of our being, to seek to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our life, dedicating our lives more fully to God, that God is indeed first, that nothing else is going to stand in the way. Don’t care who it is or what it is, God comes first.

And you know what? It has to be in the mind even to your own life. Now, that might sound extreme, but that's a reality. If it were required, if God had a purpose in that, so be it. So be it.

So these things were spoken. There is going to be a great apostasy and we've experienced it. Then Ezekiel thankfully spoke of a remnant, a small group, a small amount left over. What an awesome thing to be awakened or to be called to that.

So all this was just the beginning of God's Church and how He began a process of magnifying His Son. It's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful thing to go through and read the stories in the four gospels and on into Acts and the gospels, of what their focus was at that time because the name wasn't known in the world like it is today. It's a wrong name. They speak of Christ. They speak of those kinds of things and they read the scriptures or things, or talk about the scriptures, but to grasp the plan of God, to grasp the truth, they're not called to that yet. Just like many of us have come out of so many backgrounds and God calls us and begins to help us to see things - the Sabbath, the Feast, the holy days and what they mean and there's a plan for 7,100 years - and all of a sudden, it's like this is so incredible. We're able to see it. It's so clear in our minds and only because of God's spirit.

So those things bringing us right up to the present through the prophecy, this prophecy given by Paul in Thessalonians here, because that brought us to where we are now, an apostasy. Don't be concerned, he told them, of hearing certain rumors or whatever, that he's returning or that he has returned because it can't happen, it will not happen until this apostasy, a falling away from the truth within the Church takes place. Even though that was preached during the period of Philadelphia and told to God's Church that there would be an apostasy, we had no comprehension that it was so massive and so powerful, or what the state of the Church would be when it would actually occur. Yet we've lived through it. We have witnessed things that we have opportunity to witness of in the future. There aren't very many that get to witness that and what God did with a remnant. How blessed are you? You really can't comprehend that.

But again, not long after the Church began, there was only one Church called the Church of God. I marvel at that one there alone. He said that it was to be by His name. Whose Church is it? It's God's Church. We have different ones pop along and it's become some kind of Catholicism, I don't know; that's probably not the right word, but there is a word for catholic. Then certain ones in time, through several hundred years, begin to break off from that one because that was the second church that started in calling itself after Christ (Christian), and there were only two then for hundreds and hundreds of years. Then all of a sudden Martin Luther goes up and bangs some things on a door, supposedly and so they call themselves Lutheran to follow Luther and what he believed. You think, "No, it's not Luther's Church! Give me a break, okay?! Sorry! It's not some other kind of system or whatever. It's not a Methodist. It's not an Episcopalian. It's not the Seventh-Day Adventists. It's not. It's the Church of God." Then we have Satan pull a big one and he gives the Church of God that's big, that keeps Sunday, these unique things like "speaking in tongues." That really goes over well for the Church. That looks good for us when you say the



Church of God. I almost feel bad. That can be a little embarrassing. “Oh, you’re the Church of God down in Tennessee there?” NO! That’s the last one I want to be affiliated with, you know; they meet on Sunday and they speak in tongues. But I just say, “No, it’s the Church of God. It’s a different group. It’s non-denominational.” So that’s all you do is tell them that, but you hate to think that that’s what’s in their minds because they associate you with them.

So Satan has done a number. He really has done a number over hundreds and hundreds of years here concerning God’s Church.

So Council of Nicaea, incredible. The Catholic Church began. The Roman government gave it authority. Popes - like the way it was kind of pronounced over here at one time, that I kind of heard, I felt like I heard, it’s the “Poop.” Anyway, sorry. Awesome what took place, the power they took unto themselves. “Call no man your Father.” So they have fathers all over the place, literal fathers in some cases because of their sins. That’s sad. That’s sick. The things that are coming right now are prophetic. The things that are coming out are very prophetic because it’s a diminishing of that body, a shame in that body until finally there is that which turns against it right here in Europe. When it’s all said and done, because of what they do, and it’s started already.

Who wants to be affiliated with that? Child molesting people, priests that are moved from one area to another. How can anyone want to be associated with anything of that knowing that’s taking place? It’s covered up by the highest cardinals and so forth, and other birds... I’m sorry. Nothing that came out of the Bible. Nothing about evangelists and apostles, though they claim to be in the place of Christ, apostolic and so forth. But they don’t call themselves apostles.

I’m not trying to make fun of them in any fashion or form, but some things are funny that human beings do because they’re so weird, so far out there, so sick. That body there, what it did by instituting Easter and outlawing Passover, I mean that just boggles the mind. That a Roman government backed a church because the leader of the Roman government at that time, Constantine, had a desire for whatever purpose (well, we know), but to establish one group, one religion that was going to be called church, or of Christian, if you will, and it was going to be after his liking and his mind and what he thought it should be like. So they came up with Easter and they came up with Sunday, the day of the sun.

All these things just so boggle the mind, of what happened in the world. All from one being. All from one being who has hated God from the beginning, who hated the idea that God was going to have a family and create something greater than he was, Elohim.

Revelation 12, because this brings us up to date where we are in time, what’s taking place. For the last 2,000 years things have taken place, we’ve lived through an apostasy. That’s happened. We haven’t known fully what’s taking place but a countdown began because that’s what God inspired here in Thessalonians. This is it; then you know he’s coming. That’s the sign. That’s the

sign of his coming. An apostasy had to take place. Little did we know the periods of time that would be a part of that, but those periods of time are so incredible, inspiring to know.

**Revelation 12:9—And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent called Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast out unto the earth, and the angels were cast out with him.** As time has gone along I thought about what Mr. Armstrong said about that. He felt very well that that could have been when the Church was attacked, in that respect, in his time, and the State of California tried to take it over. Certain laws later in California were changed because of that, because of how wrong it was and what took place because at that time there was more time going to be and so God gave battle through certain lawyers that had ability that God gave to them to fight that fight and to fight against the man named George Deukmejian, or whatever it was, I think, that became a governor in time. He was the, I think, Attorney General, and then he became governor later on, but he was the instrument through which God used to try to destroy the Church.

So Mr. Armstrong lived in Arizona for a time to be away from that so there were things protected. Tithes came to a point in time when I remember sending them in to Arizona to “Herbert W. Armstrong, a Corporation Sole,” because they placed a judge who had no knowledge of anything about the church to be over the church, to administer the things in the church.

And all this happened because of individuals who betrayed God, evangelists who betrayed God Almighty, to bring something like that in because they wanted the power. Maybe because, you suppose, that someone else was clear to take the place if he died - Garner Ted, you suppose? Hmmm. So if it's someone else, then, maybe we can take control of it. Sick. So disgusting what took place. You think, they deceived themselves. You think it's not easy to deceive yourself? You think you're in God's Church and you're out there in the courtyard. You're not even in the courtyard anymore; you've gone way past that. That's what happened to most, that part of the leadership. Most of the leadership of the Church by that time they'd already condemned themselves. They were already condemned for what they were doing. They were already judged for what they were doing, and God didn't forget it, what they did, the betrayals that took place against Mr. Armstrong, God's apostle.

Mr. Armstrong felt this was when this happened. That's why I'm mentioning this, when this account took place. And I believe that, truly do, that this was the period of time in what's being spoken of here.

It says, “Satan was cast out and his angels were cast out with him.” **Verse 10—And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Now salvation has come...**

**Verse 10—And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Now salvation has come and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night.** “Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Look at what Your people are doing here.” He didn't grasp repentance. That's why there is this

controversy. I love those scriptures that talk about the controversy. It's a controversy of whether God's going to perform what He said He's going to perform and this other being back there in the background and a third of the angelic realm that harp against it constantly. They continue to fight against what God is working to accomplish and God's going to do it. So that controversy over Zion. Is God going to be able to perform what He said? Yes, He is.

**And I heard a loud voice saying, from heaven, Now salvation has come, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them day and night before God. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.** How do you overcome? How do you conquer? You have to repent; repent, repent, repent, repent, repent. It's the beginning and it's the continuation because you have to do it all your life. As long as you're in this physical body you have to repent of sin, you have to repent of the wrong things that come out of your mouth. You have to repent of the wrong things you allow in your mind that are wrong, in your thinking. There are times just to stop that and say, "No! I'm not going to..." You just stop. The wrong words that come out then about whatever it is that leads to sin and how things are said about others generally, to tear down, to accuse, to do what Satan did, to be an accuser. These situations where people are "accuser of the brethren" on a spiritual plane. I wouldn't want to be there.

**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.** Satan. That's the only power and strength. That is the strength we have in the beginning process through Christ our Passover, is to repent "through the blood of the Lamb" because he died for us. ...**and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their own lives, if you will here, it says, even unto the death. Therefore, rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.**

Satan knew. He understood there had already been six resurrections of the Roman Empire. He knows exactly what God gave to John in those things and that there was one more remaining. He knew exactly what Mr. Armstrong was inspired to preach, because the angelic realm, including Satan and the demons, want to know what God is giving to the Church because he knows that's how revelation comes, of knowledge of things they haven't known. So when God gave those things there he is. And they know! When this happened he knew! "You are attacking the Church? You've inspired this thing to take place? You're trying to destroy it in Philadelphia? Cast down to the earth!" Powerful.

**Verse 13—and when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child, and to the woman, as it's translated here it's awkward, it's not right. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle.** You know, symbolically used here of protection and deliverance in scripture. ...**that she might fly into the wilderness into her place where she is nourished for a time, time, and a half a time from the face of the serpent. 1260 days. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman,**

**that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.** So this takes us right up to the time of the Apostasy and what took place at that time. He hated the Church. He continued to attack it and worked with it in this period of Laodicea, a lukewarm spirit, until finally the entire Church was lukewarm. Incredible what took place! This is a powerful being we're talking about, exceedingly powerful in his sway and his broadcastings and his manoeuvrings with human nature and human beings. It brought us to that time and point where finally within that which was given after Mr. Armstrong's death, an administration of God's own Church, that those individuals then began to turn away from what had been given to them and the Church got weaker and weaker and weaker until it finally happened. But for 1260 days after it happened God protected us, otherwise everything would have been destroyed.

God was working with, waking up different ones out of that sleep, giving them help, protecting them, and that help came, as he talks about here (I love that, how it's explained here), a great flood. A great flood. And what happens in a flood? People can be swept up in one area if they survive, or grab a hold of something whereby they're able to survive, and all the rest drown.

**And the earth opened up.** It's because we were so scattered, as it talks about in the Old Testament, so scattered in different places in the earth and so small in remote areas. God worked with some here, some over there, some there, making Satan's job difficult in this particular case because of what God was doing, because Satan wasn't threatened by that. Amazing. He wasn't threatened by that because look at all this that's out there, and they're gone too. Everything is gone. No, it's not. There are some out here, different areas, and God's working with them. Incredible.

**Verse 16—And the earth helped the woman and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman (angry) and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.** Incredible! The Old Testament, in Ezekiel, and here it talks about "a remnant of her seed," what was left over. It wasn't very much. ...**who keep the commandments of God.** Who is able to do that? ...**who have the testimony of Joshua the Christ,** the witness, the truth...the truth. It's about the truth. Who has that? Well, just about the Apostasy itself, who has that? It's a testimony of Christ. Incredible.

Well, I was going to go on and read some more things in Revelation 18. We just didn't get there. It'll have to be in another sermon sometime.

But it's incredible where we are. It's incredible what has taken place. It's incredible what you have experienced. But I'll tell you what, even though you've experienced it, even though you can see that there was an apostasy, even though you can understand that, the man of sin, the son of perdition, and even though you believe that, just one truth in itself, you can let all this slip through your fingers. It's already slipped through some and unless they're able to be awakened they're not going to be around much longer.

So it's a time to examine one's self. It's a time to examine yourself. Where are you? "Where am I? Am I right with God? Is God first? Is God truly first in my life? Are my actions, my thinking, my speech, do they reflect what God has given to me in truth and how I think about others, especially within the Body?" This is our arena. Do we really love one another or do we judge, condemn, criticise? Because if we do we're missing the mark. We love one another with a pure heart fervently, as God says.