

The Millennium Is Not Far off, Pt. 1

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Feast of Tabernacles Sermon

This will be my first sermon for the Feast of Tabernacles. People are hearing this at different times because of the eastern time zone. We have different ones that will be listening now, maybe some in the central. Everyone else around the world will be listening to it a couple days later the way things are set up.

And so, we begin. We already did begin here with the opening service this morning, but again, this is my first one so I'm beginning.

I was thinking yesterday as I was out in this particular area in our subdivision, walking through it and thinking about the Feast and the Feast season because this time of year when you're in an environment like that, we tend to think about the Feast. The seasons are changing and it's just something that after you've done this for many, many years it means a lot to you. I couldn't help but think about what an awesome God we serve.

Because of even the timing, if you think about it, why the Feast of Tabernacles is at this time of the year in the northern hemisphere, but in the southern hemisphere it's different. Up here we're going out of the hot months into the fall, obviously. It's a period of time that on the other side they're doing the reverse of that. Again, when you think about the timing of something here we're kind of in the middle of a period of time that before long it's going to be cold out there and we're going to wonder, "Where did the warmer time go? I'd like to have some of that back." So, we complain during the summer and we complain during the winter.

Anyway, God has set a time that's kind of in the middle there, yet unique in itself as far as the time in the northern hemisphere. But what about all those in the southern hemisphere? So, their timing is different, and if I can work at this to make sure that I get it right, their period of time is entering into, after a cold winter, they're moving into the spring. So, I got that right.

But anyway, here we are. They're going into a period of time where that cold weather is starting to leave but not in a hot season either. So, we have either the Feast of Tabernacles period, the fall Holy Days, or whether it be the spring Holy Days, in both the southern and the northern parts we have a uniqueness of a period of time that gives a relative period of good weather.

What would it be like if we had it in the wintertime up here, the Feast of Tabernacles, and down there, and so reverse it then for the period of Unleavened Bread? It wouldn't be nearly as enjoyable. It really wouldn't. If you had to go out, what would you do during the wintertime where people like to be out as much as they can and can't do it then because it may be blizzarding in certain parts, it's cold, and who wants to be outside? So, it's awesome to me and I hope it's awesome to you.

So, rejoice in the timing, because I think God's included people all over the world, not just those in the northern part. Because when you tend to read through scriptures in the Bible you tend to think of a certain period of time that we relate to. But those in the southern part don't tend to relate to the same thing as far as the period of time of harvest and the like. It's a little reversed for them. So, again, what an incredible God we serve to have established His commanded assemblies at the time that He did. Awesome, truly is.

I wanted to include something else at the beginning of this, my sermon, for the Feast, even though others will be hearing it later. I do want people to be exceptionally careful right now because we have to think about everyone else who may be meeting together with us, because of this COVID thing. You want to be wise; you want to be careful, and a lot more so than normal.

I remember a few years back. I don't remember - three or four years ago—here in the Cincinnati area you all started doing this, using elbows to not touch, because it was the flu, that went through the group. And it was bad! So, Johnny had to establish some guidelines there, and so forth, just because of the flu and how bad it was and how that can go through a congregation. And of course, at that time many more than what we have meeting here.

So, we had a situation I'm going to use as an example. I feel badly, but an individual coming into the area here had symptoms of a cold, basically, and anyway, at this point in time any kind of symptom that comes along we have to be very careful of it. Okay? And so, he kept back from going with a group of people last night, but not to a point that I really had to make a decision and a choice, a need to carry it a little bit farther.

I think this is good for everyone to hear at the beginning of the Feast. If you have or your children have, because this is the time of year children can begin having all kinds of things, allergies this time of year, so whether it be allergies, whether it be a cold, especially if it were a flu, possibilities of achiness and so forth, quarantine yourself. Quarantine yourself. Get away from everybody else and if need be in certain symptoms—well, actually, you should do this—go and get tested.

Here in the States, I don't know what it's like in Australia and other places, over in Europe, but here you can easily go to, I believe, it is Walgreens or to a CVS, many of those kinds of places have testing areas. Otherwise, you may have to go to an urgent clinic or something or even to a hospital emergency, whatever it is. But as a whole, there are places you can go to get tested and get your results back fairly fast.

I want to be on the safe side. That's the point of all this. I want everybody to be on the safe side because this could ruin an entire Feast for people. That's the last thing we need right now, even though, like in this case here, I'm sure the individual only has the slightest symptoms of a cold, that's it. But we can't take that chance. Whatever comes along, this will serve as that example for everybody, to encourage everyone, do your part.

Make sure that you don't have a temperature. Make sure that you don't have the beginnings of something that's in your chest or in your throat, a sore throat. If you have that, I don't care what's causing it. In times past I've had a lot of problems with my throat because of allergies and won't go into all that. But anyway, even if you have that where your throat is starting to get sore, be concerned. It may just be allergies, but it may not. God wants us to use wisdom with what we have.

So, let's strive to do that during this Feast, thinking about others and not taking any chances. Quarantine yourself if need be until you get checked out, and if it comes back negative, that's great! Not a problem. But until that time, be cautious, be careful.

Now the sermon. But I wanted that at the beginning so everyone can hear it.

As God has worked to prepare the Church for this end-time, for this particular age, it's incredible what we've gone through, and talking to Johnny after the opening sermon there about how that certain phrases he used, even right at the title of some of what I'm going to talk about, I'm always inspired by that, how things tie right into each other in some of the things discussed.

But again, as God has worked to prepare the Church for the end of this age much truth began to be given to it through Herbert Armstrong. As most truth had been lost throughout the period or through the period of Thyatira, a period that went nearly a thousand years or more, we don't know exactly, but somewhere in that neighborhood. Then the era of Sardis that we know a little more about in the sense of what happened during that period, but basically, about the time that printing press began and Bibles began to be translated into things other than Latin, as a whole, as what was being done by that great church, now, in other words, what you could read that had been done by hand.

But now, because of the printing press, things were being translated into different languages and different ideas and beliefs and a Protestant reformation, if you will. Protestantism emerged and came out of that because of the ability to now do this and people having in their hands a Bible in their own language. Before, you would have to be schooled in certain other things.

Anyway, it's an incredible process, but it did incredible damage to God's people. Nothing like that had ever existed. You could have a book; you could open it up and read pages. Now, exceedingly expensive, as a whole, but more plentiful, and different ideas as teachers began to look at various things. Luther came along and posted his objections to what he saw between the Catholic church and what he could see in a physical plane of what he was reading. Because this Bible hasn't been used a whole lot in many cases by that one particular church, organization.

So again, God's truth began to be lost during that period of time because of all these different ideas out there, and it was difficult, in that regard, for God's Church to survive, and so what

God allowed to happen because of what was taking place in the world around them, just like He did with the Church as far as Laodicea, God allowed it to happen for a purpose, to reveal things, to teach things to us.

The same thing happened during Sardis. Over the time of Sardis, by the time we came to the end, by the time God raised up an apostle to begin bringing the truth to the world once again because of a job that was there that He was going to give to him, awesome what took place. Only three basic truths remained. All the rest had been lost! Things that the apostles knew and understood, the things that were in here, an understanding of God's plan, they were gone!

The matter of the weekly Sabbath - the Holy Days? What are they? By the end of Sardis, they didn't know what Holy Days were in the sense of annual Holy Days. All they knew about was the weekly Sabbath. Tithing. Tithing, and the name that God gave to His Church, the Church of God! Not a system. Not a Catholic system. Not a Protestant system named after an individual or any other system. God's Church belongs to God Almighty and it bears His name. A basic truth in the Bible. Awesome that God has given you to know and to understand those things.

But the Church, as it says in the letters that were written to the seven Church eras, Sardis being one of those eras. So about in the 1930's then God began (a little before that), God began to raise up an apostle. The Church didn't have one. God began to raise up an apostle through whom He would begin to reveal truth once more to His Church. He would begin to raise up an end-time Church to do a great and mighty work because of the commission He gave to His servant Herbert Armstrong, that the gospel was to go into all the world, to preach the gospel, to publish the gospel into all the world.

It got published all right. Millions and millions of monthly *Plain Truth* magazines, up 8 million plus going out to the world. Larger than any other magazine at the time. Time Magazine, which has the next largest amount wasn't close to what was being done by the Church of God with Herbert Armstrong at it's helm, in the sense, of an apostle, and *The Plain Truth* being published in different languages around the world.

The radio broadcast, hundreds and hundreds of stations around the world. That television, finally, later on. The marvel of technology. (I don't know if I'm going to get into the sermon). The marvel of technology itself! Radio came along. New to the world! The world would laugh and scorn at how it came about because God gave the technology. It was time for technology to come along. It was time to work up to a time of other technology that mankind would misuse because mankind has always used any kind of technology for war, for fighting, for killing and destroying others, to have power over other nations! Anything that's ever come along mankind has misused.

God knew that about mankind, so He reserved technology. People lift up and elevate different ones of science and so forth, of how great they were. God gave it to them. God opened the door of their minds to be able to know things. Individuals that were really bad in school, who could—Einstein himself—do marvelous things. Came into his mind to know and to understand.

God reserved it so that another part of prophecy could be fulfilled at the end-time, that God was going to allow mankind to come to a point where it could destroy itself if God did not intervene.

Mankind can destroy itself. The nuclear weapons out there today can destroy all living things on earth several times over if it's all used. Thankfully, God says He's going to intervene before that happens, at exactly when a third of mankind has been destroyed. At exactly that point God's going to intervene and begin stopping it.

Now, there are some things that happen before that, but a third, I should say, that's a result of the Sixth Trumpet because that's when China, Russia, Europe, and all of them arise and begin to lob nuclear weapons toward each other on such a massive scale that finally, at the end of that period, in that Sixth Trumpet one-third are destroyed. There are quite a few destroyed before that. It's hard for the human mind to comprehend that.

God gave radio to begin sending a message out of what's coming. Herbert Armstrong began to preach about some of these things long before the amount of nuclear weapons that were developed were developed around the world, telling how mankind was going to come to a point where he would annihilate himself if God did not intervene and cut it short. Awesome to know what was given, especially around 1950. Incredible!

The marvel of radio was so great do you know what the Church was called? All of you do. For a period of time, because it was such an awesome thing of getting the message out to the world, it was called the Radio Church of God. God's Church, but the Radio Church of God. Then it began to go around the world and began to realize, Mr. Armstrong did, this is a worldwide work. God is fulfilling a commission mentioned in Matthew 24 that he knew was his, about this gospel going into all the world. Then, it says after that, once it's gone into all the world to the degree God wanted to, then the end would come.

Awesome, to know those things. Just like you heard in the sermon this morning. Awesome to know the things you know! That sometimes we don't grasp the magnitude of what God has revealed to us after He has called us and opened up our minds to receive everything that He has given us to that point in time, progressive truth. More and more is given. We are so richly blessed. We have so much to rejoice in. This Feast, as we go along, has everything to do with this process, it truly does, and knowing it and seeing it and understanding it, and because of that, rejoicing in that, being thankful to God and telling Him so. Awesome!

Again here, this period of time God raised him up. So, as a result of truth beginning to be restored not everything of a basic truth that began to be restored was given all at once, was not revealed all at once. We know that about the Holy Days. It took him and his wife, Loma, seven years to observe what he was coming to understand in the Old Testament about annual Holy Days. They did that for seven years on their own before he began to teach it to God's Church. Awesome!

But everything about those Holy Days, only an outline of that was given. He didn't know what it all meant yet. Over the years that was able to be built upon more and more, God just revealed more and more to him, and a picture began to come together of what they all represent and what it's all about. Not just to observe it on a physical plane because God commands it to be observed, which is how it began; that's how you do it, you just obey God. Then as you do God will begin to reveal the spiritual purpose, intent, and meaning of what it's all about. That's exactly what the Church of God began to experience during the period of time of Philadelphia.

And so, because, again, basic truth is not revealed all at once, we go through many things. We go through kind of a maturing process because in so much as what we were at a particular time, we were very immature. It's like a little child. You can only teach a child so much. The child grows up more and more and then it begins to grasp more and begins to develop. That's the way we were as a Church because there wasn't much. Only three basic truths out there, and those even had to be built upon, they truly did, to understand more about what was there, what it all meant.

So again, basic truth is not revealed all at once, but they're gradually established within the Church so that we can come to a stronger understanding and conviction. It's a marvel to know the mind of God as God reveals. He's revealing to us His mind. That's why you come to learn to love God. Because you love His truth. You realize what an awesome God we serve! To know that it's through His word, His truth. It reveals His mind, His being, His character, the awesomeness of such a God.

That's hard for us as human beings to fully grasp so God reveals that to us. We grow in that more and more through time. We come to greater convictions over time. All this doesn't come to us all at once, not even when we first are beginning to be drawn into, called into, God's Church at any point in time, even when there is a lot of truth out here.

So again, we can come to a stronger understanding and conviction as we are blessed to build upon the foundation of the truth once it begins to be given. It takes time. It takes maturity. God doesn't just throw the truth out there at us all at once as a Church through time. I think of all the truth we have now. But they can't drink it all in. They can't put it altogether.

As you come along, whatever time you came into the Church, whether it was before the Apostasy or after, especially afterward, and all this truth that was being revealed, and by the time 2005, 2006, that period of time, the things that were taking place, the truth that God was giving, it takes time to grow and understand all that truth. There is a lot there. There is a lot there.

That's why we continue to build upon those things. You can't know them all at once just as you can't know this all at once. We go through the meaning of the Holy Days every Holy Day, and as a whole every Holy Day God adds more.

So, we begin to build upon the foundation of a truth once it begins to be given. This process is awesome to understand. The more you learn about it, the more in awe you are of God Almighty.

We're going to focus on much of this process in the manner that we have grown in God's Church as we go through this series entitled *The Millennium Is Not Far Off*. As we were told today, it's on the horizon. A new age, it's almost here. It's on the horizon now. This, of course, is *Part 1*.

Let's first begin by looking at some of the meaning of the purpose for the Old Testament observance of this particular day, as we are commanded to do, to look at these things. Again, Leviticus 23.

We're going to look at these things on a spiritual plane, of what we are to be practicing spiritually in our lives, because this isn't just a physical observance. We know that, mightily so. For the Israelites it was always and only a physical observance. Even in the beginning of the Church it's been more of a physical observance in many ways. That depended upon the growth of individuals and the growth of truth that was being given throughout the period of Philadelphia.

It was a growing process even there. And so, we didn't know it all. We still are far from knowing it all! There is so much more that God's going to give to us through time about these things, especially during the Millennium.

Leviticus 23:39—Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land... So again, referring to the northern hemisphere because everything was located around the region of Jerusalem and Israel, and so forth, modern day Israel today. So again, it's addressing these things, Old Testament.

“When you have gathered in the fruit of the land,” and it's always good to ask at this point here, “What is the fruit that God has given me?” We can look at physical things and we are blessed. We are blessed! Sometimes it's difficult for us to grasp how blessed we are even in that area of life.

But how much more when we grasp the spiritual, the fruit, the fruit of God's spirit that we can have in our lives, of what we're able to build upon, what we're able to do in our own lives, what we can live and how our minds are being transformed and the changes that are taking place there. Because that's what's happening to us. It's a long process as we yield to and desire God's spirit, His word, to dwell in our lives. We practice, we seek to live His truth, His word. So much of it, as we understand, is about relationships.

We learn, and we've been learning a lot in the last few years about the mind, of where it all begins, the thinking there that leads to every action of life. The intent of our thinking, what is it? And we recognize, as far as carnal human beings, it's always selfish. But with God's spirit we can begin to recognize the selfishness and begin to change those things with God's help. Because you can't do it on your own. You have to have God's spirit.

That's why we're to cry out to God and ask Him for help in those things. When He reveals sin in our life we have to ask for help to address it, to get it changed, to get self changed, because this is where it's happening.

You shall keep a Feast unto the Eternal seven days. So, we're keeping the Feast unto the Eternal Almighty God! Beautiful! It's a very meaningful time to God Almighty, to look down upon His people around the world as small and as scattered as we are. It's exceedingly pleasing to Him, it truly is, those who are seeking to change in a very adverse times, especially considering all that God's Church has been through since the Apostasy. It has not been, in that sense, on a physical plane, a pleasant journey. Spiritually, it has been. Because those are the things that help us to change. Those are the things that truly help us to grow - the fire, the trials, the hardship. Beautiful.

You shall keep a Feast unto the Eternal seven days. On the first day shall be a Sabbath (today), and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath, the Last Great Day tied into the meaning of the Millennial period of the 1,000-year reign of Christ on this earth, and then that hundred years that follows. So, it's eight days of the Feast, but the first seven days are the Feast of Tabernacles. The last day, the Last Great Day, the last time, the last day for human life to exist. Awesome to understand those things.

Who knows that out here? Who knows and understands? I marvel at that when I read through it, every time I read about in Revelation 20 when it talks about a second death. Nobody will address it in the world! Why? How can you die twice? It's like Nicodemus asking Christ when Christ was telling him (in John 3 there), about being born again and it's like, "Do I climb back into my mother's womb and am I to be born again?" What does this mean? He didn't grasp it because it's spiritual.

On the first day shall be a Sabbath, on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And you shall take unto you on the first day boughs of goodly trees. Now, the Hebrew word, this Hebrew word (I love explaining this when I go through it), is only translated once as "boughs." Here. Because it's the word for "fruit." It's not anything about boughs at this point, it's about fruit. It has great meaning in it, and it should have very great meaning for us. What kind of fruit do we have to be thankful for in our lives? Awesome!

Verse 40—And you shall take unto you on the first day the boughs of good trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days.

Verse 41—You shall keep it, the Feast of Tabernacles, a Feast unto the Eternal seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You celebrate! You're rejoicing! Incredible!

You shall dwell in booths. Even in God's Church in times past many have felt that by having certain assigned sites in different areas, that by staying in a motel room or somewhere else,

that they're in a booth, a temporary dwelling. But that's not the meaning of all this. Yes, you can draw some analogies from that and learn from that and it can teach you as you grow, but that's still a very immature plane of growth.

The scattered Body out there today, that's how they think. But there is so much more to it. There truly is. God has blessed us with that.

"You shall dwell in booths." Meaning, again, to dwell in, just like it's used in the New Testament, to continue in, to abide in, yes, to dwell in, but also carries with it in the use of the Hebrew language "to sit." That's how it's being used in this case here because of what God is getting ready to tell them, because of these things that they are to do on a physical plane, to build this thing that they can sit in with fruit beside them in a container.

That's what they were to do. But all for a purpose and a reason. They didn't live in it. They didn't have to go there and be there 24-hours a day, bring along your knapsack, your whatever, and put it out here. I mean, it's just a little, small thing. We can't get the family in here under this. So, it's not like being in a hotel. There's more meaning here, a lot more.

You shall dwell in booths seven days; and all who are born Israelites shall dwell (sit) in booths. There was something God commanded them to do. They were to build these little things on the rooftops, in the streets, wherever they were when they came together, especially in Jerusalem when that time came along and the things that they were to go through, and they were to have a specific ritual (physical), to observe this period of time.

...that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell (to continue in, to abide) in booths, temporary dwellings. It's not meant to be there very long. Temporary dwellings. ...when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Eternal your God.

So, there's was very physical, obviously, because God wasn't calling them for a spiritual purpose. They weren't being called to be worked with on a spiritual plane. They were simply a physical nation. Only a few individuals like Moses, like Joshua, like a few others that are mentioned in scripture, were called and being worked with spiritually by God. The rest, they were just a physical nation. Incredible.

Here we go through this particular story here. And so, this is what they were to do. It's what He's telling them. "You are to remember where you came from! You are to know where you came from! You are to know that I, the Great God, the Eternal God am the one who brought you out of Egypt and took you through the wilderness forty years and you dwelt in temporary dwellings until you came to this place of riches, this promised land!" Even all that is physical.

Because we understand the spiritual part of it. We know that Israel is about the Israel of God in the future, within the family of God, a spirit life. It's a name that God uses that identifies God's purpose. But for the Israelites and for a physical people...?

That's why I think about even early within the Church people were more enamoured by, oftentimes moved by, "Well, I think I'm maybe... Am I Manasseh? Maybe I have some Jewish...? Maybe I'm Judah!" Because it's like, "If I'm part of Judah that's really great!" Well, what's so great about it?

What's better than Manasseh? What's better than being a part of Ephraim? What's better than Gad? Whatever! Naphtali? What tribe do you want to be a part of? That's not what it's about. It's not about physical things. It's not about a physical lineage.

I think of how many times, almost blue in the face, some had to address that in scripture in the New Testament. It's not about where you descended from! It's not about a matter about if you were one of the tribes of Israel or you're a gentile when it comes to God's truth in here. Paul had to talk a lot about that because people were so physically minded.

That's what we are when, as a whole, when we're first called. Even the growth of the Church through time is very much like what we're like when we're first called. It takes time to grow. You can't absorb it all at once.

Because you can read about it, you can read about all the truth, you can go through the last book and you can read it and know it pretty well just by knowledge by what's written. But you don't understand it yet. You don't grasp it yet! It takes time to grow in and understand those things that are on a spiritual plane. Because we tend to think physically first. Sometimes that's very difficult to grasp and to understand.

Let's look at Nehemiah and see how the Israelites observed this period of time, because, again, there's much to learn through this process that teaches that which is spiritual. We have learned that. God has taught us that within the Church, especially in the last several years. We went through this a few years ago, but it's good to include it here today in what we're discussing. Nehemiah 8:14.

Here is a period of time they'd been in captivity, the Jewish nation, as a whole, and a few of others that were with them, Levi and so forth, of those who were scattered. But they were taken in captivity and now they were coming back, and certain things were going to build. We've read stories then about the walls being rebuilt and various things in Jerusalem being rebuilt, and the excitement they had after seventy years in captivity to come back and begin rebuilding. An incredible, physical history, and so, this is cutting into a point of time of something that happened during this process.

Nehemiah 8:14—And they found written in the law which the Eternal had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel... They didn't know. They'd lost so much. They had certain knowledge of who they were, that God had brought them out of Egypt, some of the stories, but they didn't know all these things about the law and what God had given to them.

...that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the Feast on the seventh month. They understood what this was about and the purpose of it, so they did it.

Verse 15—They shall publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle trees, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, and make booths, as it is written. So, now they were going to do something that they hadn't done in ages.

So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths for themselves. Again, not to live in but for a purpose. ...every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. They had this place where they had to spread out because of the numbers of people and this is what they were to do, to build these. So again, something that they were to use for a purpose.

Verse 17—All the congregation of those who had come out of the captivity made booths. Now, this had to be moving to them on a very physical plane because now they'd been in captivity again. Not to Egypt, Babylon, and they were blessed to be able to come back. This is the process of what we're talking about here.

...and sat under the booths. So again, for what purpose? These things here as we go through this, it's a matter of judgment. It's a matter of "to consider, to contemplate, to meditate" on the meaning of all this, of why God had them do this, as it said in Leviticus, "To know who I am, that I am the one who brought you out of Egypt." Now they know they've been brought out of captivity again and they had to be exceedingly thankful, rejoicing.

When you see God at work in your life and what He's giving to you it means so much more the more you can grasp. This was on a physical plane. They rejoiced. How can you help but rejoice when you know and see what God is doing?

That's why we've had sermons leading up to the Feast here to know your calling, to remember your calling, to know how God has worked with you, how He brought you into His Church. Because these are the things when you see them, when you know them, what you have been blessed to have, if you seek to hold on to them with all of your being, of what lies at the end of all this, the hope you have for what's just on the horizon, as we heard this morning.

It's just on the horizon now. You can see the glimmer of it. Boy, can you see it, things between nations. That's the Last Great Day sermon. We'll wait.

For since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day the children of Israel had not done so. Then there was very great gladness and rejoicing. How could it be otherwise? Because all this, in a sense, was overwhelming to them.

I think of when we went through the Apostasy, and the truth and what happened to it, and some struggling, people struggling to hold on to something that they'd been given before. And once you're able to begin grabbing a hold of that again and realize you were spared, you were awakened out of spiritual sleep, and to know how blessed you are, how can you but do anything

else but rejoice before God, to thank God, when you see so many others and what's happened to them? How blessed are you?

Verse 18—Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the Feast seven days; then on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the manner. So, they were seeing these things. They were going to do what God had told them to do back in Leviticus 23. That's where they got it! Awesome!

The greater lesson for us spiritually in all this, again, is to understand the thing about booths, the thing about temporary dwellings, to carry it to the full degree God wants us to grasp it, that's what we're in. This here. I have learned over the last several years to know that this is a very temporary dwelling. Knocked on the door several times of being asleep until Christ returns or whenever. But I believe that's what it is, so I hold to that.

Again, we understand we're in this for a short time. What awesome things God has revealed to us in the last several years. To understand the depth of that, we're in temporary dwellings and what God desires is that it be permanent, and what it takes to get from here to there, to be able to live (we can't comprehend), forever in God's Family, in Elohim, to be a part of God's Family, that that's the purpose of all creation is to create the God Family and what it takes to create it.

I still marvel. I mean, you can't help but marvel. God commands certain things to come into existence on a physical plane, or a spirit plane, because He created the spirit realm, the spirit world, and then He created spirit beings to dwell in it! Then, later on, the angels rejoiced when He began to create a physical universe and they had part in that. To know the awesomeness of all that was being done.

God can command and none of it resisted Him. It all came into being. But we resist Him. What God's creating is us, we resist because of our carnal human nature, and God made us that way for a purpose. It's all about Satan and never developing that mind, understanding the ugliness and the hideousness of being selfish.

We get to experience drama, drama, drama, drama throughout our life. From the time we're born to the time we die, people experience and live nothing but selfishness. Because that's our spirit. We don't have God's spirit unless God calls us out of it and something else can begin to be made in the mind. What a beautiful picture.

God is revealing that His purpose for Israel, spiritual Israel, is that we not always live in a temporary dwelling. I'm not in a hurry for this to go but I want the other far more. I'd like to see certain things come to pass and sometimes we can carry that too far to where we go through any kind of suffering because we want to see certain things. Well, sometimes it's better to die and God will give us those things later on.

We look at life differently sometimes, we hold on to certain things differently. But what an awesome process we go through. To understand you're in God's hands—what could be more

beautiful—no matter what happens in your physical life? So, whenever death comes, I'm not concerned. No one should be concerned. You know why? Because that's it. You don't know anything. You don't suffer anymore. You don't know anything about what's going on. It's only those around you have a difficult time sometimes. Some don't. Some are glad to see people go. Sick world we live in, human beings and how we think. But anyway.

We live in temporary dwellings and the Feast of Tabernacles tells us a lot about that. Yes, it pictures the Millennium. It pictures the government of God on earth for a thousand years and what God's going to do, but it also has to do with everyone who has that opportunity to be called and a transformation that begins to take place in their mind, like has happened in the last 6,000 years with some over time. Then during the Millennium with everyone has the opportunity then, though all will not choose it, and in the Great White Throne everyone who has ever lived.

As I said a moment ago about the second death, people don't want to talk about it because that means you have to live a second time to die twice. They just can't get that because they teach that at death you go up there or you go to that place down there that's just hot as all get out and you're being chased around by these little things with pitchforks that are hot too. Anyway, weird.

Because they don't know. They just don't know until God opens their mind. Then they can begin to see the foolishness of man's ideas about a god, about God, or gods, or whatever is in the mind and what is true.

So again, the Israelites were to look back. We're not. We're to look forward. They were to look back when they dwelt and sat in a booth. When God calls us and teaches us what the booth is all about, we're a temporary dwelling, we're to look forward. We're to look at what God has promised and what this is all about and the opportunity we have of this mind being changed and transformed. If people don't hold on to it with all their being, well, as a whole most have an opportunity for another resurrection to live in this body again a second time around. To me, that's a nightmare, once you've been given the truth.

But I think of how many people in the last 2,000 years have been called into God's Church and have rejected God, have become antiChrist, working against the purpose of why Christ died. So that he and his Father could dwell in us spiritually, to dwell in us, in these temporary dwellings, to transform and change this mind up here by being begotten of God's holy spirit, and so that God can dwell in that and transform the mind. It's the creation of God. That's the creation that we resist.

Some have not only resisted, they have turned against it. That's a horrible, horrible thing that happens. Every year at the Feast of Tabernacles I mention someone, some will not be here. So the longer we go along, unless there is something that God begins to draw others in, which is likely not to happen until certain events take place on this earth, and then by that time it's

going to be too late to be worked with and molded and fashioned. Their molding and fashioning will come in the Millennium.

But I think about what we're living through and what we're going through, and to give this all up? Because every year I have to mention someone will not be here. Is it you, whoever you are? Are you determined? Do you love God and you're rejoicing in the meaning of this Feast and what God is offering you and you are looking forward to something and you're going to hold on to the truth with all of your being knowing that you can only do so much but that it requires a relationship with the Great God of this universe, and for you to develop that relationship and to cry out to God you desire what He's placed before you, you want what He's placed before you. To understand you're so close now! You don't know when it is, but you are so close!

We know what has to take place, and it's the sealing, 144,000. Why? Because some turned against Christ. Some gave up their crown. Some became antiChrist, so God has called others, working with others, perhaps some of those now because of what we've gone through, perhaps more than just a matter of some who had been in this up to the time of the Apostasy, and because of what's happened, perhaps? I don't know. God knows.

Regardless of whether it's that purpose that you have opportunity for or to go on into that millennial period, how worth the fight is it? To stand strong, to stand up to anything that comes your way regardless of what anyone says or does toward you for what you believe. People can do some pretty hideous things, believe you me, that hurt, that cut deep. But they make us stronger when you understand the purpose in it all and that is being done and what God is doing.

We're to be forward looking and to desire to hold on to what God has given us, again, with all of our might and with all of our being. So, we are to know, we are to understand that we are to think about while we're here, and that's why we're being told some of these things, and that's why we're reminded of some of these things, of what this period of time is all about. We're to think about our calling at this end-time, how blessed we are.

The more you really see that you can't help but rejoice before God and to thank God for what He's given you, and by doing this, we're able to experience a greater meaning and purpose of what this is all about.

You're living something that's awesome. You're living, if you do these things, the sitting in booths. You're living the Feast of Tabernacles. If you grasp what I'm saying here on a spiritual plane. To understand that we're so close, how incredible is that?

Let's turn over to **1 Peter 1:1—Peter, an apostle of Joshua the Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect...** So, he's addressing people who are scattered all over the place at that time because we're not all called in one place. We're called in many different places. There's a purpose behind these things and what God is doing and how He does it this way.

He says, referring to them, **you who are the elect**. Who are we and where were we when God began to draw us and call us? “Elect,” meaning “the chosen; the selected.” Now, it’s not a final selection in the sense of a sealing, but the process. God chooses to call us. How blessed are we? What are we? We didn’t do anything to deserve anything. That’s what grace and mercy is all about.

We learn those things and we come to love God even more so because we know who we are. The more God shows us about our selves, about our human nature, the more detestable it becomes in our thinking, in our mind. I loathe human nature. I loathe selfishness. That’s something we have to grow in. I loathe drama, drama, drama, drama. You know that. Because it’s the opposite of peace, it’s the opposite of living God’s way of life.

It’s the opposite of living God’s way of life, so we have to reject those kinds of things. We have to reject the things that get a hold of us and begin to turn us away from the Great God of the universe! Because drama will do it every time! It just does. You’ve got to fight for this way of life and stand firm in what God has given you to believe and cry out to God to deliver you. If you want it, He’ll give it to you, but you have to go through that process, don’t you? Because if you don’t, things can distract you through time, whatever it might be, and whatever it is will always involve some form of drama. It’s just the way it is because it involves sin, it involves things that can take our mind off of, away from God.

Especially, if you think about the Feast of Tabernacles, we’re not just to do this during the Feast of Tabernacles, we’re to do this all year long. Remember your calling. Know who you are. Think about the things that God has given to you. Know how blessed you are. Ask God to help you to always see how blessed you are to have His truth, His word dwell in your mind, in your being, and your life will be much richer. The more you do that this year, the richer your life will be on a spiritual plane, the more thankfulness, gratefulness, and rejoicing you will be able to do throughout the year, less drama that will be a part of your life.

So again, **elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, because He’s the one who does the calling, **through sanctification of the spirit**. God makes a choice to begin to pour out upon us grace, to be able to come to the knowledge of our Passover and to know the importance, the awesomeness of being able to be baptized, coming up out of the watery grave, and putting the old self to death and keeping it in that watery grave, and having the blessing then of our Passover in our life every day of our life.

Because you will sin every day of your life, and if you don’t understand that, you have something to grow in. You cannot think perfectly every day as a human being without wrong thinking somewhere at some point. You cannot help it. There is something you will do or think or say on a selfish plane because you are selfish. I’m selfish by nature.

That’s why Paul talked about this and revealed this. God gave it to the Church. Christ gave it to Paul to know and to understand there’s a battle going on in the mind and you’ve got to enter into that fight, to know that you’re battling there, first and foremost. He said there’s a war

going on, in essence, and we have to make choices. That's what he's saying in essence. You have to make choices all along the way. What are you willing to battle? The way is paved for us, we just have to accept it and walk in it and God will give us what we need.

So again here, **elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience.** Because that's where it starts. You have to start to obey in order to understand the truth. There are certain things you have to begin to obey, and then in time, as you obey them God gives you conviction. And you know what? In the beginning they feel very unnatural. They're not a part of you yet because the mind hasn't changed yet. But you start by obeying whatever laws that God has given. The more you obey them, the more you begin to understand them because of God's spirit, the more convicted in time you become of why God says what He does. Because your mind is changing; it's being transformed the more you yield to that process. It's a maturing process. You can't have it all at once, but you will mature if you keep fighting. Just as the Church has matured from the time of Philadelphia and now.

...through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience. That's what it's all about. God has set us apart so that we can obey. Because you can't just do it physically, you have to have His help! You have to be set apart by God's spirit and receive of His spirit in order to see and live what He's placed before you.

The Israelites tried. They didn't try too hard, but they tried at different times, to live by what God had given to them, and then it didn't last very long. Something would come along, and life, trials, temptations, and they begin to drift away. So, it was always back and forth because they didn't have God's spirit. They have been a testament, a testimony, a witness that without God's spirit you can't keep God's way of life. You'll lose it.

...and the sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ. That's where it is for us. That's where it starts and that's how it's going to be completed. Because you can repent at any time you sin, and God will wipe it away. If you are true and sincere before God, if you'll just keep fighting, this is what this is about. You don't quit fighting. You keep fighting and you keep repenting of the wrong and the wrong thinking and the wrong actions that so often follow the wrong thinking.

Because that's what happens. If the thinking is not right, the actions will follow, wrong actions. God wants us to catch it more and more in the mind before it gets into the action, to where you're more in control and yielded to God's spirit, at one with God Almighty. That's a beautiful thing. The more at one you are with God, the mind of God, the being of God, the richer, the more meaningful, the more exciting God's way of life becomes.

Grace unto you. That's what God has given to us, grace. It starts with the forgiveness of sin, being brought to Christ, being able to understand that that Passover sacrifice can be and needs to be every day in our life so that we have access, for the purpose of why he died. He didn't just die so that we can be forgiven of sin. He died, the purpose, the primary focus that the

world doesn't get. They know he died, and they read these things and they talk about them, but they don't know that it's so that God the Father and Christ can dwell in us in the truth, in the mind of God, the being of God that He puts into our minds.

...and the sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ, grace unto you, and peace... That's a fruit. That comes as a result of less drama in our life. The less drama there is in our life the more peace of God that we experience, and God and His way of life becomes more beautiful and we become more thankful of that. Anything that comes along that tries to work against that or hits us, and in a wrong way, we're able to stand stronger.

The more peace we have, the less drama there will be. That's why you really have to hate drama. You have to come to where you hate it and know how it originates and how it can knock you off your feet, how it can hurt your thinking in your mind and your life and your joy of life.

Nothing on earth should come between you and your God and His Son Joshua the Christ! Nothing, no one, nothing, nada! And if it does, well, you have to do something.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Joshua the Christ, according to His abundant mercy. You can't measure it. It's so great, so mighty, and we continually receive of it if we cry out to God.

...has begotten us again unto a lively hope. Begotten of God's spirit, begetting of God's spirit, the beginning, that portion of God's spirit that He places into the mind. It's a spirit essence. It's not just a physical glob under this cranium, or whatever you call it. What is this thing? Anyway, this bone. Anyway, there's that brain, that grey matter, and what an incredible thing to understand there's a spirit essence in there that gives us the ability to think and reason above and beyond the animal kingdom, and to talk about and discuss and do things, invent, whatever it might be in life that the human mind is given capacity for. But then God gives an essence attached to that. It is, it's referred to, a beginning part of new birth, a begetting of God Himself that can work in the mind to change you, to change your thinking and make you something different - Elohim.

If we don't want Elohim with all our being, we won't get there. We'll have to go through more suffering in life! Perhaps death and another resurrection later on. Then we can look back and think, "Oh, if only 1,005 years ago, 1,001 years ago," whatever it might be, "and listened and fought for this." Well, that's why it talks about there's going to be weeping and gnashing of teeth in that resurrection. Primarily, for those who have been given the truth. That's what it's about. Because those who don't know, don't know, but those who knew, and they let it go by the wayside?

We know that since the time of Christ, since the Church began in 31 A.D., only a few have come through this. Many have been called by God, few have been chosen, in the sense of the sealing and the elect of God that have come through it. Are you? Are you determined to be one of those?

Because you have to be determined. You have to be determined in your mind. You have to be convicted of that, that nothing is going to stand in your way and you know that you have the help of the Great God of the universe to help you to stand. But you have got to do the action of it that might come out of your lips or in other things that you have to do in your life to stand, to stand against evil. Because there is much evil in this world that wants to pull you away from what is true. There is a being behind that that would love to pull you away from, and we have to understand as human beings, that's what's enticing to human beings.

Is it still enticing? What is enticing to you that can rob you of God? What is enticing to you that takes you away from God? What is it that you elevate? What is your obelisk that you place up before God Almighty? If you know what an obelisk is. If you don't, go look it up. But to raise up an obelisk before God, that's what you are doing spiritually before God to place anything between you and your God. That's hideous if you know what an obelisk is. That's pretty sick.

God wants us to understand the sickness of that thinking because that will not be in His Kingdom. In many cases, that will not be in the Millennium. May be in the Great White Throne. Why not fight it now? Do we grasp what has been given to us? Do we know what is of the greater value? Is there something else that we hold as value than God Almighty? Are we raising it up? What is that that we're holding up here that is of greater value to us than God Almighty?! That's the choice we have to make, isn't it? We have people in God's Church that are raising things up higher than their relationship with God.

And so next year, if we have a full time, if God hasn't intervened, if the war hasn't begun by that time and this country is destroyed by that time... because this country goes first prophetically. We know that. We know that with all of our being. We see it as clearly as we know the sun is going to rise in the morning. Incredible!

But if we have a Feast next year and he hasn't returned yet and that war hasn't begun there will be people who will not be here. I cringe when I think about that because I hate to see the Body become smaller and smaller, because we're small already. To come out of the Apostasy and have only a few worldwide at this point in time when at one time there were nearly a hundred thousand baptized members around the world? Which was great. It was very large for God's Church in history. To now be down to what we are?

That's why people, if they hear, "Oh, you're only... Yeah, God's working with you!" They just laugh and snicker because they don't understand. They can't help it. But you have the ability to know. And so, every year I cry out, "Are you going to be here next year?" Because we've had a lot of people go by the wayside.

Why? Most often because of sex, pornography, cheating and lying to God, robbing God because "I want to buy a new car." "I want to buy 'this.'" "I want to have 'that,' and I can't do that..." "So, my bills are coming in and I made this choice and this decision and now I don't have enough. God surely understands I can't pay my tithes this month." Oh, He understands all right. Sad. Obelisk, obelisk, obelisk before God Almighty.

I hope that all of you are cleansed of this thing, of sick, what I will call perverted, sexual desires that are outside of God's law. This society, this world and all of its advertising, sometimes I look at something on TV, a commercial comes on and think, "Why do they have a woman in there? What are they advertising? What's this got anything to do with the product they're selling? Why is she half-clad?" Why? Why? Why? Why? Hmmm. Huh. It's because the carnal human mind. Sick.

Now today we have all kinds of things because you don't know and people don't know what they are. "Where am I in the scheme of things?" Crazy! Crazy world. It's hard if you're doing it yourself carnally. With God, it's not hard. With God's holy spirit and conviction to live this way of life and you're going to fight what you need to fight and every time you know you're thinking wrong and you're tempted to do something wrong or say something wrong and you ask God for help and you acknowledge to God, "I'm doing it again, my thinking! Save me from this! Help me to become convicted!"

Because it's not a matter of obedience! It's not a matter of just do's and don'ts. It's a matter of conviction that you do or don't. When you're convicted in the mind because you're in agreement with God and you're ready to fight that fight, because you know, because you're convicted of it, that's what maturity is all about. That's what God wants in us, maturity, so we don't go by the wayside.

You have to cry out to God for that help. But He'll give you that help. He will give you the spiritual help you're lacking. It might be a long battle. You may have to fight it for a little while, and you keep growing and you keep crying out to God, and sometimes you cry before God because of what you see in your mind, in your being, and you know it's not right. You can cry out to God and say, "Holy Father, save me from this! Help me to think right. Help me to escape, to get away from, to be convicted of how sick and perverted and ugly the human mind can be," in harsh judgments towards others, in pulls and thinking that can happen in the human mind.

We can be really cruel as human beings, and we need to be able to see that. Because we're not to be like that.

It says, it goes on to talk about this process that's working within us. That's what Peter is talking about. Again, do we really want it? How much do we want it? Because God's going to know that. God is going to know how much you really want what He's placed before you. So, different things will come your way, and all along the way day by day you have choices. Only you can make those choices. Some will not be here next year. Sad. Sad. Sad.

...according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively (a living) hope. It's something you live. ...by the resurrection of Joshua the Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled. What we're seeking, what we're desiring is to be in total unity of the mind of God, to become a part of the God Family, to live forever in peace in

God's Family, and the excitement and the joy of things He's planned far, far, far, far, millions of years into the future. Something we cannot comprehend as human beings.

...and undefiled, and that does not fade away. Everything with God is beautiful, pure. It totally works against carnal human thinking because it's the way of peace and we can struggle with that as human beings because with human nature we can almost get to a point where it's like we're thriving in drama. "Feed me some drama! Feed me some more drama! That's what I live on." No, you better live on peace, in peace, and want it and understand how beautiful it is, the fruit of it, how pleasant it is before God. There's a rich life in that, there really is, in a relationship with God and Christ that we can have much more of.

...to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that does not fade away, though we do because we're temporary, **reserved in heaven for you.** So, it's waiting. We're being judged. "Judgment now is upon the house of God," as it has been for the last 2,000 years. He's called us and it's up to us as to what we do with what He's shown us. We go through this testing, this trying, and we make choices and decisions all along the way because God must know who you are. You must know who you are. That's why God told Abraham, "Now I know you. There is nothing that you won't do," that He gives to him.

...who are kept by (through) the power of God. We cannot do this on our own. You cannot fight these battles on your own. That's why you have to cry out to God for His holy spirit to live and dwell in you, and to fight and to repent continually and ask God for help, His holy spirit to dwell in you.

...power of God through faith unto salvation. That's what brings us to that point in time of being able to truly be saved from this, from what we are.

...ready to be revealed in the last/end time. So, for the Church, as this was being told to the Church at that time when Peter wrote it, and there were going to be six more eras of the Church to follow, it's talking about that first great resurrection, and yet this goes on into the Millennium and the Great White Throne and we understand that. But so much of what is written in the New Testament is writing about the Church and those being prepared for that first resurrection. But the instruction will still continue on in time.

Wherein you greatly rejoice! Whew! What a beautiful thing, to rejoice, greatly rejoice in God and God's way of life? **Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through various trials.** So, do we have trials? The fire? Yeah, absolutely. But you've got to be willing to fight them. Because they're going to come along and you just have to be willing to fight them and want to fight them, and to look to God to learn what needs to be learned, to grow in what we need to grow in, and to understand that we're going to experience some difficult things in life. Because it's in that that you have difficult choices to make sometimes. But only you can make that choice. It's a refining process of the mind.

So, "now for a season," because we're not there yet. We're still in this temporary thing.

If need be you are in heaviness through various trials. So that the trial of your faith... What do we believe? It's going to come out. God's going to know in someone very quickly if they're willing to steal from Him. He knows it. He might allow them to continue on for a little while so that we can learn, so the Church can learn from certain examples that are there, and perhaps to stir me up sometimes so that I will preach about certain things that can stir us up then. Because certain things are allowed to happen that aren't right, that happen for a length of time. God doesn't just come down and take care of it immediately.

That the trial of your faith, so whatever it is we go through, **being much more precious than of gold that perishes.** I think of that journey. There has been a lot of fire along the way. There's been a lot of hurt and pain and suffering, but for the proper purpose. There have been a lot of stabbing in the back and the stabbing in the heart in the front. A lot. A lot! And betrayal is a difficult thing in life to deal with, it truly is. Those who walked to God's house side by side, if you experience them turning against you and the things they will say about you then, those things hurt because you desire something different to continue on.

But if that can't be, you've made a choice that regardless of their choice you move forward, you move forward in God's way of life. You fight. Because it's through the pain and the suffering of life that character is developed, that the very mind of God can be developed because of your right choices. And so, as long as you're in this temporary dwelling you've got to keep doing those things until this is over with.

Now, I'm getting close. Whether Christ returns or not, I'm getting close to that period of time. I'm not concerned about it one iota. That's the way you have to be in your thinking. You're in God's hands. Your life is God's. He can keep you alive or He can let you die. He can let you make choices that lead you right on out of God's Church, too. Those are choices. Choices, choices, choices. So, what is our conviction? That's what it comes down to.

"That the trial of your faith." So, if we understand, that's just the way it is. This was never meant to be easy. It isn't easy when people think you're nuts. It isn't easy when people talk down about you.

I think of someone in our subdivision. He will not even look at me. He will never wave or say "Hi." He just won't do it. I can do it. I can do it a thousand times. You think, "What a horrible way to live. You're not hurting me, you're hurting yourself." But they can't see those things.

So, you go through things in life that you experience, but you keep doing them regardless of what others around you do. It doesn't matter what everybody else does. That's why from the very beginning of the Apostasy, I know the Harrell's felt about that the same way my wife and I felt about it - "If it's just you and me," and I know she felt this way and I did too, "Even if it's just me," if she's saying that or I'm saying that, "this is the way I'm going." That's what you have to decide. You're going to keep going no matter what anybody else does or says.

It may hurt like mad, but you're going to turn away from what God has given to you and open your mind to know and to see and to understand? That's what we're tried in over and over and over again. Is God first in your life?

Because if He isn't, you know what? Laura and I have talked about how that right now, it seems a little like groundhog day spiritually for the Church. Because some of the exact same trials, which I call drama, are happening now that happened before 2012 in people's lives in the Church, in many people's lives in the Church. You didn't pass the test then. You going to pass it now? You going to fight for this now? Because that's what some of this is all about. Choices, choices, choices. So, we should want to fight.

If we look back in our lives and say, "Have I grown? Am I doing things different now than what I was back then, or am I repeating some of the same stupid things that I did back then in giving in to certain trials and tests? Or am I going to stand and fight for God's way of life in my life and nothing is going to come between God and me!" That's the way you have to be in your thinking. A conviction of spirit.

It says, **if need be, for the time you're in heaviness through various trials**. So, they come our way. It says that, "in heaviness," because they're not fun to go through. They're not fun at all. I had three years that weren't too fun. But you do what you do, and you do it with your head held high. You do it with your head held high and you do it because you know you have a relationship with God, and it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks or does.

Are you trying to save something about your name? Because in the Church, you're not going to. Because you have friends, family who have turned against you when you first came along. You've had people at work who turned against you because they don't like what you believe. If they read something online and find out, "Oh, you're saying that our Passover..." They don't even call him "our Passover" as a whole. "That our Savior died like this and not like this?!" A lot of them excuse that then if you've seen some of that on the site. We finally got rid of that because a bunch of it's a bunch of garbage anyway. But it's like, "What does it matter? We have this. We have Jesus." It's like, "Okay. You sure do."

Things like that.

They turn against you. Things get ugly. They turn against you. People can get vicious. Look at the political world today, and the world is stirred up more than ever before. So, you have to go through things and stand for what's true. You stand for what is true. You know what, even to the point if your life was taken, you stand. Because a lot of people in times past, they gave their lives for what they believed. The early Church, and for a long period of time, did not go through easy times.

Saul, who became the apostle, Paul, was one out on the forefront killing God's people. He was the one who gave approval for Stephen to be killed very early on. That's the way it was in the Roman world, of what became the Catholic Church through time. God's people were hunted

down in many cases and killed because it was a threat, because it was a “cult,” or whatever it is that people like to say in order to appease their mind and their thinking because, “You’re not like me and you don’t think like me, and you’re wrong. We’re right! You’re wrong!” Well, you have to stand for that, don’t you, in God’s Church. It’s not always easy is it?

You have to do that when you go during the Feast of Tabernacles, and say, “That time is here again this year,” or maybe it’s the first time you do it, and sometimes that can really be difficult, the stress you’re feeling, which you have to go in and tell them that you’re going to be gone for a certain period of time. “I’m going to be gone for at least eight days,” sometimes nine or ten, eleven if you’re going to be travelling somewhere because it’s farther away. You’re going to go tell them to get that time off and they’re always so helpful and pleased with your choices, aren’t they?

Well, we’ve experienced a lot of things in God’s Church where they’re not always so kind. That’s a trial. But you do it without thought. After a time, it’s just what you do. It’s what we do!

I’m going to jump on down here. I need to get down to verse 13 here. Notice the one before that, verse 12. Again, I lost my place so I’m moving ahead, and time is shorter, and I have a lot to say and a little time to say it.

Verse 12—Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves... Talking about the trial up above there, but anyway, I’m dropping on down here now, verse 12, **but to us they did minister the things**, speaking of those of times past and what they wrote because it looked for a time in the future, of God’s grace being poured out and what was going to happen. We’re still forward looking, even now, in a way that’s going to be poured out. But they were looking to what was going to happen in the Church of God. Basically, things they didn’t understand that was going to come to pass, but they looked forward to a time of God fulfilling certain things. Those things are going into the Millennium and so we’re forward looking in the Millennium and the Great White Throne, and God’s work that’s going to continue on.

It’s talking about some people of times past, but it says, **unto us they did minister the things**, especially as you look at times in the Old Testament, **which are now reported to you by (through) those who have preached the gospel unto you with the holy spirit**, because that’s the only way that it can be taught. If God’s spirit isn’t in it, it doesn’t mean anything. If people make up sermons on their own, or sermonettes, or whatever it was in times past, and they’re not looking to God to give them what they want and they’re just doing it because, “Well, it’s time for a child-rearing sermon. I guess I’ll give one of those today or this week.” That’s what it got to. It didn’t have any meaning because that’s not what God’s Church needed at that time!

...with the holy spirit sent down from heaven. That’s what God does. What we receive must come from God, it must come through Christ. Christ is the one who gives it to the Church. He is the head of the Church.

...which things the angels desire to look into. So, there are many things through time that as God has given more truth to His people, the angels, the angelic realm wants to know about it. Those who are faithful to God, who have gone through what they have and they've seen what Satan and a third of the angels did that became demons, that are on this earth, confined to this earth and what they've done for the last 6,000 years to harass and make life miserable for mankind as most they can. And so, they desire to know, "What is God doing?"

Because God has been progressively revealing truth through time and they know it. They know it, and they know how God works and how God reveals what He's doing. It's through the prophets in the Old Testament, and as time went on, in the New Testament primarily through the apostles then. That's how truth was given. That's how God worked.

They wanted to know what was being given to the Church. So, when ministers and others in times would learn those things themselves and then be faithful, if they were faithful, to go out and teach faithfully what God had taught them, what had been given to them. Which wasn't always done, was it? Passover, as an example. Anyway, going on.

So, again, it must come from God and from God's spirit, and if you want to be fed, you know what? You have to cry out to God for His holy spirit to receive what He has. That's why the Feast of Tabernacles we can only receive what we do to that point that we're crying out to God for His holy spirit to teach us, to help us be excited about what He's giving to us and to learn from it so we can live it more faithfully, more fully, more completely, to honor Him and His Son and His name.

Which is sent down from heaven; which the angels desire to look into. (Verse 13)

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind. It's like, fight! Get with the program! Gird up the loins of your thinking, of what's going on in the mind. Don't let it just go by and you're not addressing things that you need to address. Be alert! Be on guard! ...be sober, as it says, be soberminded. We should be, of all times, more soberminded.

How much time do we have? I don't know. God hasn't given that. He's shown us seven markers, which I think is in another series at the Feast here. But, awesome to understand those things! Now we just wait for the first attack which will be on this nation. To wake up the other morning and two people in our government had corona. I was shocked. I thought, man! Things that have happened that are just unexpected. It's like, what...? What can develop?

So, we watch, we're alert. But that's nothing because one morning you may wake up and you don't have any cell service, you don't have any electricity, and you wonder, "Well, what's going on?" No juice, electricity is off, the fans off. We have a fan we always have on. Anyway, people who know, know. It's like, one day it's going to happen to people. Somewhere around the world, but especially here in this country, at some point.

Even though you know it's coming it's going to scare you. You really don't know fear to that degree yet. We've been told it, but until you actually experience it you don't really know it.

That's a lot of what this sermon series is about right now. We learn things through experience. Knowledge is not enough. Even growing in understanding, still not enough. But the understanding, if we grasp it, is something we do grow in as a result of experiencing various things in our growth. Conviction comes as a result of those experiences.

When you experience that one, you're going to be prepared for it in a way that others on earth are not. Not even the scattered Body. They're just not ready because it takes God's spirit to be spiritually prepared up here for what's going to take place. Because it's horrifying. So, you will be scared. As well you should be. Because you know what's behind that is going to be a whole lot worse. You know it's just the beginning of something and you just pray to God that it be swift and that it doesn't take long to complete what must take place. Because it's going to humble the world and it's going to humble mankind.

We see things rippling in world news in ways that two or three years ago you'd be waiting for months to read such an article as you read day after day after day that are taking place around the world right now that the world doesn't even know because it's not being reported in the news. You have to hunt. You have to look for various things that are happening. Whether it be India and China and China and Taiwan, and China and the United States. And boy, is that something that's boiling. On and on it goes between nations. Europe and China. Europe and Russia. Europe and the United States.

In the last two years I have seen incredible changes in people's thinking from other nations toward this nation. We know it has to be there in order to fulfill what's prophesied in the book of Daniel. And on it goes and in Revelation.

Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you through the revelation of Joshua the Christ. So, we have all this revelation that's given to us, and it just continues on and on and on because it doesn't stop. He just continues to give use more and more and we have progressive revelation. We know those things. And it excites us, it inspires us!

I'm trying to think of which sermon I addressed them. I hate to touch on other sermons I'm giving here because that's one thing about preparing sermons in advance and even pre-recording some things, after a while it's all in the mind but you don't know exactly what point you said it. I don't want to be repeating certain things or saying them ahead of time so I'm going to wait.

...as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts of your ignorance. So, when we didn't know God's truth, we didn't know God's truth. But now that you know it, don't let it continue on. You know that certain things are sin, that certain things are wrong, that can pull you away from what is true. Why condone it? Why put up with it? You know what God says about sin that can come into your life, which is what drama is a result of, it's sin somewhere in your life. God says flee, run with all of your being, and that's basically what is

being told here when it says, “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober minded.” Fight it. Deal with it. Don’t let life just happen to you. Because if it does, you’ll not come through this.

Verse 15—But as He who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation. It’s a word that means “conduct,” but it comes out, generally, in people’s conversation so translators have translated it as “conversation.” But it has more to do with conduct, which 90% of it is what comes through the mouth. That’s where drama comes from. It’s what somebody says to somebody else and it just doesn’t stop because this mouth just keeps going. Sin. Sin. Sin. Sin. Drama. Drama. Drama. Drama. Silence can be golden sometimes.

Verse 16—Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy. And if you call on the Father... This is beautiful! If. That’s all you have to do. That’s what you must do day by day by day. ... **who without respect of persons judges according to every person’s work.** We are to work! Girding up the loin of your mind takes work! It doesn’t just happen. Prayer takes work. You have to plan it. It doesn’t just happen. Just like any kind of work doesn’t just happen. You don’t get out of debt by not working. It takes work. We all have choices.

So again here, **according to every person’s work pass the time of your sojourning...** I love this because it’s like the children of Israel journeying in the wilderness. ...**pass the time of your sojourning,** in other words, it’s a word that means, basically, “during the time of your stay; the time of your journey in this,” **here in fear.**

It’s not a matter of being afraid of God. It’s not about that, as so many people in Protestant world think when it talks about fear in the Bible. It’s about a fear, a strong, healthy fear of disobeying God, God’s way of life, of not living according to His way. To quench God’s spirit should be fearful. To do things, to have certain things come into our life that remove God’s presence, begin to interrupt God’s presence of His life to be able to dwell in us, to guide and direct us, to be strong in that power.

So indeed, as truth began to be restored to God’s Church during Philadelphia, we didn’t learn everything all at once. It comes through time. But we have been blessed to gradually and progressively build upon it. It’s been an awesome thing and we need to see that. That’s a part of what we’re to do and to live even at the Feast of Tabernacles, but all year long. If we can see that as something we’re to do all year it’s a matter of appreciation of our calling and this change that’s taking place.

Because of this process here, of being able to build upon something in a progressive manner, because of this, there have often been periods of time where we have needed to grow in greater balance of the truth that was being revealed. Again, that can only come with time and experience. I’ve given a lot of those examples, of certain things that have happened in times past and how we have to live a certain thing. Then as God begins to show us, “No, there’s deeper meaning to this than just having a motel room and that being the Feast of Tabernacles. It’s so much more.” Then we learn and we build upon it because it becomes more exciting.

It'd be good here to repeat a paragraph that was stated in the introduction because this is so much of the focus. "As a result of truth beginning to be restored, not everything about a basic truth is revealed all at once, but they're gradually established within the Church." It's incredible our history, what we've gone through, Philadelphia, and then what took place in Laodicea, and then a desire once again as God began to pour out His spirit to lift up His Church to prepare for the end of this age. The name of the Church - "Preparing for the Kingdom of God." No longer Radio Church of God, no longer Worldwide Church of God, now the Church of God - Preparing for the Kingdom of God. We're almost there. It's not far off now. Awesome, to know those things.

So again, "gradually established within the Church so that we can come to stronger understanding and conviction." It takes time in those things. It should be so exciting for us to know what we're living and what we've been given. "...as we are blessed to build upon the foundation of a truth once it begins to be given." As we go through this series, as we go through the next series, this becomes more exciting, it truly does, as we talk about this process. So again, this process, as I mentioned, is awesome to understand in itself.

So, as the Church of God, Preparing for the Kingdom of God, we have been exceedingly blessed to live through a final period of time just before the Millennium becomes established. It's incredible what we have lived through, the various phases of time, and this period of time we call preparing for the Kingdom of God, to know and to understand that, just as the title says, again here, *The Millennium Is Not Far Off*.

Now, we've been given to know much about the Millennium, and a part of that, we've learned, much about what it is not through our maturing process. We've learned a lot of things. What about the lion and the lamb, the bear, the snake, things that were in the mind about the Millennium and so forth? What life would be like? That's so far back now it's hard to grasp and imagine that we came to understand things, finally, about the Last Great Day and why it's reserved for the Last Great Day and why—there'll be people who get really upset about this in the scattered Body—and why people are going to die throughout the Millennium.

It's needed. It's needed. It's needful. It's a process. People are going to be born and they need to learn about life and death. There are things in that that you can't learn any other way! God isn't going to give people a thousand years to live like they had before, where they lived almost a thousand years, nine-hundred and some, seventy-six or whatever it was finally in years, that Methuselah was the oldest. I don't remember the exact number right now, but it's out there. It's way high; almost a thousand. Things we cannot even grasp.

I would think that would be most miserable to live in this human body for a thousand years. I really do. Now, that, to me, is a horror story and people did it though and they became professional in evil. That's why we had the flood. They became so professional in evil, the mind became so ruined, they so marred their thinking to the point that some can't be worked with in the future. And so, God ended it all.

All that by design. It wasn't like, "I've let them live too long! We're going to shorten their lifespan now. I think that's what I'm going to have to do." That's how we used to think in times past. No, it's maturing, isn't it? You learn through time and experiences and God teaches. Through that, God teaches us more and more and more. To me, it's a beautiful process. I love it, I really do, because of things we've experienced, things we've gone through.

We've learned a lot about what the Millennium is not like. It's not a utopia. This used to be the thinking of the mind. Used to be when you get the *U.S. and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* it had a newspaper stuck in it. Well, it was a future newspaper because it was like this would be what the news would be in the Millennium, this utopia. Now, because of maturity, makes me kind of sick, because of where we were! But we couldn't help it because that's where we were. God had to teach us through time that this isn't real. That's not real human life.

Human beings have carnal human nature, and they do in the future. You can't force human beings to be like the God Family. They can't do it. And yet that's kind of what we thought. It's like this other one. I love this one! Someone is going to come up and tap you on the shoulder, "This is not the way to go. This is the way, walk you in it." Because we so misunderstood what was being said there because of this concept that the Millennium is going to be a utopia. But God had to teach us within the Church through time as we matured, He doesn't just funnel it into your brain and give you understanding. Because it doesn't work that way. This mind is kind of slow and it takes time for it to learn through experience what God is like. God can't give that to you.

If God could just give that to us, the creation would have been different. But it can't be given because it has to come through choices and trial. Because He's not going to allow anything like Satan and the demonic world to enter into His family, so we have to go through what Satan is like. Satan is selfish, evil in thinking, in the sense of not God's love.

You think, "Well, mankind is not evil." Well, when you understand God the way of mankind is selfish. By definition, compared to God and God's love, it is evil because it's all about self.

I love Mr. Armstrong's example about a love to a child. But a person can't have that same love to all children in the same way. Why? Because it's "my child." There's a difference there. You say, "Well, that's good love, isn't it?" Well, yes, it's good that we have that kind of love and capacity as human beings, and God gave us that capacity and ability, but the fact that we don't have the other, we're sadly lacking and sadly selfish and we just, until our minds change, we can't have that. That's why man can't have the way of peace until God is in the mind.

So, again, there is no tapping on the shoulder and people aren't going to have jobs going out here and telling people, "Manifest yourself quickly when someone starts to sin, and tap them on the shoulder because they can't sin. 'This is the way, walk you in it.' And they're going to be so happy you showed them." It didn't change their human nature when you do something like that. It doesn't change a person's nature when you correct wrong that someone is doing. If it's in their heart and it's in their mind they've got to want to change.

You can't force anyone to choose God's way of life. And so, human beings through the Millennium and the Great White Throne are still not going to want God's way of life after they see everything that God does to the earth and the peace it's given, one government, one Church worldwide. They're still not going to want it. Why? Because we're not very nice inside. We've got to choose it. Do we really want it?

Sometimes it's hard for us to grasp there are just going to be an awful lot who don't want it. Choices. God isn't going to force it upon anyone because He can't anyway. You can't make people do what is right and somehow they be in agreement with it in their mind. It doesn't work.

So, to understand those things is a spiritual thing. To grasp those things on a spiritual plane and why God works with us in the manner that He does is a spiritual matter. It's a beautiful thing.

Again here, so much about the Millennium, things we haven't understood that God has blessed us in. But we've had to learn it through experience and that's how we become more convicted. But if you don't do certain things by your choices, you'll never have the right experience. Those who resist and fight God and sin and continue to sin, they can't learn it. That's what begins to happen to people. They begin to quench God's spirit. So next year, some won't be here.

Isaiah 43. Even with this new age. Well, I should say, this new age that's not very far away now. It's so close. We don't know how close, but it's coming in fast. You can tell by what's happening in the news. It's out there. It's when we're ready. When the Church is fully ready, when God has molded and fashioned us to the point He can say, as He did to Abraham, "Now I know you," when the 144,000 are complete to that point, then it's done and then it starts.

So, let's notice, focus on God and what He will accomplish as it talks about some of these things, Isaiah 43, and what's coming to pass. Again here, He's speaking to Israel.

Isaiah 43:3, He says, **For I am the Eternal**. He's Yahweh, the Eternal one. Beautiful. You understand that He is Yahweh, and that this one labelled "Jesus Christ" was never Yahweh. Yahweh was his Father. Yahweh is the Great God of the universe. He is the only one who has eternally existed. No other being ever did. There is no such thing as a trinity. There is no such thing as whatever the two is. Christ had a beginning.

Even the scattered Body today would look at you and say, or tell you, "God is not working with you! You're nuts!" Well, that's what they do. Because they can't understand. They can't until they come to a certain point, and God is the only one who can bring them to that point.

I am the Eternal, your God, Your Elohim. Incredible, what He's saying here. "I am your Elohim." "I am your Family." "I am the Family you should desire," **the Holy One of Israel, your Savior**. And so, when people think of a savior and they hear it in the Protestant world, they don't think about God Almighty, they think of Christ only or of "Jesus."

We understand that Joshua has been given that name by God Almighty to be the Savior for mankind. Because God did it, because he's His Son and He had that purpose. He, God Almighty, is the Savior, but He's given us a Son to rule and to give us salvation, to be a Savior. He's given all titles, in that respect, to him. He's given all government to him, to finish everything through the Millennium and the Great White Throne until it's done. Then as Paul talks about it, then, when it's complete, it's all given to God. Beautiful what's shown there.

Verse 10— You are My witnesses, says the Eternal, and My servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there is no El, there is no God. There is no other! There is no God formed, fashioned, made, or created. You can't have such a thing like God Almighty. He's eternally existed. There's no God made except what God does. That's what He's showing here.

...neither shall there be after Me. No eternal God. There can be no Yahweh. There is only one. **I, even I, am the Eternal; and beside Me or apart from Me, without Me there is no Savior.** Powerful words.

Verse 15— I am the Eternal, your Holy One, the creator of Israel. He's not talking about physical Israel. He's talking about spiritual Israel. What a beautiful thing to know and to understand, what God is creating, Elohim.

He says here, **the creator of Israel, your King.** God Almighty is the King. He is the Savior and He is the King. But He's given that title to His Son as well. He's given His Son to be the King of kings over this earth, over mankind for a thousand one hundred years.

Zechariah 6, we'll conclude there. I've gone a little longer than I intended. This is the Feast. We did come here for a purpose.

Zechariah 6:12—Speaking unto him, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, who says, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH. Beautiful picture here. This word "branch" means "to bud forth; to spring forth; to grow forth." Incredible, what it's about. **He shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Eternal.** Beautiful, when you know what it is.

Because mankind is focused on things, what David did. Judah has focused on things that David did and that lineage and so forth, and it's all a physical thing to them. But here is about a Son, the Branch, the one that's to spring forth, the one that's to be born, to die, and then to live forever. Incredible!

He shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Eternal. That's that job that's been given to him, the responsibility that's been given to him to complete, to build the major portion, if you will then, under God Almighty, through the government of God on earth, that temple of God. Through the government that's there and through the Church that's there, that now everyone can see and know. There won't be anyone who doesn't know Christ, of him. Not that they really know him, but they will know of him.

Even he shall build the temple of the Eternal; and he shall bear the glory. This Feast season, this period of time we're in is very much about that, of what's going to take place through the Millennium. That's been happening in the last 2,000 years for the Church, but it's going to continue on for the next 1,100 years.

...and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest. So, it's not just about government, it's about him being the High Priest. The Church throughout the world. Incredible!

...and he shall be a priest upon his throne. And the counsel of peace, having to do with the completeness, the harmony, the purpose of unity. See that little thing that's the opposite of drama? The drama is the exact opposite of this.

And the counsel of peace shall be between them both. It's a beautiful picture about God Almighty and His Son and His family. What a blessing to have a beginning part in that, to be called to receive the impregnation of God's spirit and to be living in a temporary dwelling with God.