

Last Sabbath we began a new sermon series entitled *Vision* with this being *Part 2*, and we focused sharply on **Proverbs 29:18** where it says - **Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he who keeps the law, happy is he.** And so we discussed that quite extensively, showing what that is all about, what that means and also showing that a part of keeping alert and so forth, and being content, being fulfilled in our lives that God has given to us in the sense of what it says here; **happy is he who keeps God's law**, it's a matter of keeping focused, it's a matter of being alert spiritually. And the words used in the Old Testament about 'vision' are very much like what it talks about in the New Testament when it talks about the ability to 'see' spiritually. Words like, 'to watch' and 'to be on guard' and so forth that are given that we're going to look more at today as well. All these things have to do with our ability to keep sharp spiritually, and as we talked about last week it's a matter of our prayer life, yes; it's a matter of staying close to God, yes; it's a matter of what we drink in Sabbath by Sabbath, it's a matter of keeping, indeed, God's law, God's way of life. And just like the series we went through recently concerning relationships, God's law and God's way of life – that's what it's all about. It's about how we function together. It's how we live together. It's how we think toward each other. It's how we talk about one another. It's how we treat people. And so all these things that have to do with our behaviour that we hear about from time to time in sermons is obviously very important to our spiritual well-being and also if we will receive guidance, direction, and as we heard in the opening prayer here sometimes as well, correction.

That's very much what our life is like. It's receiving guidance, direction, correction from God. It's a matter of a course we're on and sometimes correcting that course, making sure that we *are* following the way that God says we should live. And so much of that, again, is about our relationships. This is a part of being able to be sharp with *vision*, our ability to *see* where God is leading us, our ability to see where we've been – because it's a spiritual matter.

Our ability to see what is happening in our lives, our ability to see the need to change and to grow in relationships, our ability to see where we are, as we talked about, even prophetically, is another asset, is another attribute, if you will, to spiritual growth and keenness of vision spiritually. Because if we don't grasp where we've been, if we don't grasp where we are, if we don't grasp where we're going, if we don't have that kind of vision we're not going to be fulfilled. And the concern of the sermon series, as was focused upon, is that even at this late date there'll be situations where people have left and will continue to leave until this is over. It's the way it's *always been* in the environment of God's Church.

Paul, Peter, they all had to deal with situations like this, of people's minds being opened, of people's minds being drawn – but it's up to *us* to stay sharp, it's up to *us* to remain sharp spiritually. And so again, that's something that is up to us, our response to God, our desire to grow spiritually, our desire to be close to Him.

So again, there is much said in this particular proverb here of Proverbs 29:18 about vision, about our ability to see. And again, that is a very spiritual matter in our lives.

And so as was covered last Sabbath we need to grasp that the Thunders continue to grow and that everything that is happening in end-time prophetic events is all moving forward into position. That's what's taking place here. Everything is moving into position in a finely tuned way to produce great

things later on in the sense of repentance, in the sense of people's response, in the sense of being able to reach people. It takes a lot to get through to this human mind - especially on a massive plane that God is getting prepared for. And so the things that are going to happen are going to happen very quickly in a very profound way and everything is being positioned, placed into position, truly is.

And if you have ability to see that you'll be at peace with where you are; you won't have doubt, you won't have questions that sometimes pop up out there – and especially as we draw closer and closer. Because I think of the example of the children of Israel walking around the city of Jericho seven days in a row. Ours is very much akin to that in the sense of the length of time, in the sense of how it's spread out – but ours is very much more spread out over a longer period of 'Times'. 'Half a Times' is actually like each day for us. The emotions, the feelings of things that people go through because it is over a longer period of time is a lot different than just getting up each day and preparing and thinking about what you're getting ready to do, that you're going to march around the city. We're doing it over an extended period of time, but if you keep focused on those things, if you're content in those things, then you're going to be fulfilled. You're not going to have doubts, you're not going to have people come along who can dissuade you or persuade you of something different, or put doubt into your mind because that kind of thing has been out there forever. And we're living through that as well at this particular time.

So we always have things to deal with in life and we have to keep close to God. It is a matter of being spiritually alert, spiritually on guard, it truly is. And these things can actually give you strength and greater confidence if you're staying alert, they truly do.

By just going through some of these things in this series of sermons we're going to go through hopefully it will help sharpen your focus, your vision, and help you to understand, indeed, where we are and be able to see it far more clearly and be moved by that because it's a moving thing. It's not an exciting thing! Change and things we have to go through in life, things that people have had to address at different stages of their lives, it isn't always *fun* and enjoyable. Growth is *hard*! We go through *a lot* to change. In the past 6,000 years everyone who's ever been called, it hasn't been easy for them, it's sometimes excruciatingly painful and difficult for what people have had to experience, the trials and tests of life that mould and fashion us. And candidly, in the first 6,000 years people have opportunity to have far greater growth, in one respect, to have far more moulding and fashioning take place in their lives and the development of character and opportunity to be a part of God's Kingdom and in service to God. Those are things that come with time and come with change; but it was never meant to be easy.

And so everything's working forward to a crescendo of final events. Everything is being set in place and we see segments along the way of things that are being fit into place as we discussed last Sabbath about the dying of birds and fish in just a short period of time, just a blurb all at one time and all around the world in different places of the world. We're going to look at some more things here today, just another blurb of things being put together, being brought together, when they finally take place in a far more massive scale that is far more devastating. But again, it's something that's getting closer and closer and closer.

Let's turn over to Mark 13 before we look at some more of the end-time events that sometimes is a part of watching. But again, we have to know what events to watch and especially with some of the truths, of some of the things that have been given to us, especially concerning Thunders and the beginning of the 1st Trumpet, if you will. It's a process we're going to go through. And we're going to go back and look at that even far more closely as well and look at some of the Trumpets and what's going to come,

what's going to take place, and the timing of events, and how some things have changed because of what we can learn from and the effectiveness in reaching out to this world in a far more powerful way. So again here, Mark 13 and things that Jesus Christ had to say is very much like what was stated in the book of Proverbs 29 that we read last week and I mentioned today at the beginning of the service here.

Mark 13:26 - And they shall see the sign, so we're just breaking into the flow here and we're going to go back a little bit later here and look a lot more closely at what Jesus Christ had to say at this time. It says, **and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory**. So it's taking us up to a point in time at the very end when everything of 6,000 years has come together and what takes place at that particular time. This is a part of God's Kingdom being established at the return of Jesus Christ and things that human beings are going to see all over this earth. It says... **And then shall He send His angels**; so the first thing it mentions here is Jesus Christ, an appearance of something that people don't understand, they don't grasp what's taking place, that they're able to see something in the atmosphere around the world that we can't grasp yet.

It says, **then He shall send His angels**, God will **send His angels**, and **shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven**. And so again here, an order of things; very simple - the return of Jesus Christ, the gathering together of 144,000 who are going to come with Him, and this is a part of this process.

And then it says, **Now learn a parable of the fig tree**; so it's mentioned many things before we got to this point, many things that lead up to this final day, till finally when God's Kingdom is going to come to this earth. And it says, **learn a parable of the fig tree**; because of all these things mentioned beforehand that we're going to go back to after a while here, **when her branch is yet tender, and puts forth her leaves, you know that summer is near**: I don't have any fig trees, but I'm looking forward to the buds coming back on the trees. It means it won't be this snow on the ground like we have right now and when things begin to turn green it happens quickly. It's an amazing process when the very first part, just the trees in the area of where we live in the area of Cincinnati, and when spring is about there and all of a sudden from the point that you first see the buds and all of a sudden... there have been times when we've gone away for just a week and come back and it's dumbfounding the change that takes place so rapidly. And this is what God is telling us – it happens quickly when it happens.

So it says, **you know that summer is near**, sometimes not in our perspective of time because of how things are spread out over what is referred to as 'a Time, Times and a Half a Time'. Also in other areas it talks about that period of time from 1260 days or 1335.

Verse 29 - So in like manner, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that it's near, and so obviously as you follow the things that Jesus Christ had to say and you go farther into the process here the closer it gets. And so I think of all the things that we're going to read in a little while here in Matthew that talk about a process that we have lived through, many of us have lived through for the last fifteen plus years and the things we have seen – and I think of where we are now. We're so much closer now to this verse here, verse 26. We're so close now compared to what we were so many years ago when the apostasy took place. We're so close to this particular verse that we just read about Jesus Christ, the Son of man appearing in the sky and the things that are going to come to pass there as far as something very literal, very physical that's going to appear to mankind – something he's going to be able to see on a physical plane. Spiritual and it's physical obviously.

So in like manner, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that it's near, even to the doors. And how much nearer now? How much closer now if you go through all these verses that precede verse 26-29 here. And notice this, when it talks about and **when you shall see all these things come to pass, know that it's near...** So what are the things that it's talking about if you go back and read these verses, if you know these. Some of us have been around for so long these are deeply imbedded in our mind, we know what it's talking about in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. It's in context – this begins with prophecies about the destruction of the Temple. It's always primary first and foremost been about the Church. These verses are primarily about the Church. It comes to a point in time, and there are many things that take place physically, obviously, on this physical earth, but the focus of Jesus Christ was and is primarily about the Church. And if we have that vision about the Church, what is it about the Church that has been changing dramatically? What is it about the Church that's getting ready to change *far more dramatically*? Well, it's what God is doing on this earth.

We've gone through a long period of time where the Church was barely alive, in one respect, as far as size compared to what it was before – and God strengthened us through time but He kept us at a certain level as far as size was concerned, and only of recent time now at the beginning of some things that we're talking about here at the very end-time, has He brought some more along. Just like here, I mentioned in the very beginning of services – what an incredible thing for so many years in this local area alone; 2 people. Year after year after year, 2 people; and now of recent time more, but this is small! This is small compared to what God is doing and why God is doing all this. And so if we have that vision of what it's all about, it's about the world that's getting ready to change to where there'll be millions. People you know! People you've come in contact with! Maybe at a grocery store, maybe at a bank – wherever... maybe a neighbour, some relative or relatives (because God works a lot in families); and so the different ones that God's going to bring along and call, but all these things have to take place in order for them to be called! ...in order to sharpen their hearing so they'll listen! It's amazing what human beings are like and what it takes to bring us to a point where we will change.

So whereas God has worked with individuals to bring them along in the last few years, to bring them to a point of change, now it's getting ready to happen on a massive way very powerfully so. And the timing? Scrunched together in order to accomplish it! It's an awesome thing, it truly is! And it's fulfilling! That's why I look forward to things we're going to go through – not because of how bad it's going to be, but because of what it's producing! That's what excites me! It's not the horrendous things that are going to take place – it's because of what's going to come out of that. That's going to be our focus! That *is* our focus! It's what's coming out of it, the people, the change in the earth, the change in people's lives that's so massive and so great. And so if that's your focus, if that's your vision, yeah, it's going to be hard, yes it's going to be difficult, yes we're going to see *incredible suffering*, but it's what's produced from it that's important, it truly is. It's what comes out of it that's so important and so exciting. And the more you *grow* (and I know it's hard for many of you who are young because it's taken me a lot of years to come to the point where I see what I see today), those of you who are one year or two years or three years old in God's Church with the spirit of God working in you, dwelling in you... I understand, God knows, He made us, He knows what it's like – that it's difficult to grasp and see things about death and human suffering, what we go through and what we're getting ready to go through on this earth. But to come to understand the power and the beauty of God's plan – that's another matter – because death is nothing to God. Time, in that respect, is nothing to God. He's waited 6,000 years to bring about His Kingdom, to work with 144,000 through time. He's worked with them at different times. Abraham has been dead a long time. Noah has been dead a long time. Abel's been dead a whole lot longer! But God has waited because He has a plan and He's excited by it. We can't comprehend what it's like to see one generation come along and one generation leave and another generation come...and to

work with different ones throughout time, consistently so, to bring them together at a point in time where finally they're all ready and then a great resurrection that takes place.

And then only a short thousand years behind that everyone else who's ever lived and died – as a whole (there'll be some exceptions – some are already judged) – but as a whole for the mass majority of mankind a great resurrection is going to take place. So, death is a horrible thing and we deal with it in different ways, but with God it's just a matter of time and He's going to give life again; back to life again but in a beautiful world. Not in this world! Not in this world the way it's been in the last 6,000 years. I'm so thankful things are getting ready to change so powerfully in this world.

And so we wait a thousand years...and sometimes I know as human beings we can think about those who are the youngest who die - children, babies - and that's difficult sometimes for us as human beings. But I think of those who have died throughout time when they were young – a year, two years old, three years old – that's a horrible thing, but I'll tell you what, when they're resurrected in their time do you know the kind of world and how much easier and how much better it's going to be for *them* than it is in any part of this world in the last 6,000 years? It's far, far better to live in that age, it truly is – far, far better! And not have the pollution and the garbage and the time and chance that has affected so many human beings for the past 6,000 years.

The majority of people who are resurrected who are adult, obviously, the things they have to go through. Do you know that their time is going to be that of conquering self and the way humanity was? I think of times when I've visited different places in the world, especially when you visit something like a castle in England, or something that's really old and in some of these places they have history preserved; they always have these areas where people were tortured, how people treated each other. You look at some of the wars that human beings have had and it just astounds the mind how society lived, how people have been treated, the lives that people have had to live through in different ages at different times, the horrendous things that people have experienced. It's hard for us to grasp. It's *really hard* for us to grasp when you live here in the U.S. because we don't understand what it's like to live in other parts of the world where it's really hideous right now in different cultures and different societies because of governments and so forth and how people are treated and the things that happen because of some of the prejudices and so forth that are there deeply rooted. They lack the kind of government that has brought about some civility in life - not close to God's government - but again, greater civility than what many human beings have experienced in time.

So our perspective is so much different from God's, it truly is, and sometimes that's hard. But the more you see God, the more you grasp and understand what He's doing, why He's doing it, how He's doing it, why He's allowing mankind to do what he's done to himself or one another for the last 6,000 years – it's a beautiful plan! It is an *awesome plan*, it truly is! We come to appreciate it the more we come to see and understand God.

Verse 30 - Truly I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, until all these things be done. All that He's mentioned. And we're going to come back to that – what all these things are. And so He says, **this generation shall not pass.** And there's been speculation back and forth as to how long is a generation, as to what this means and yet the timeframe when certain things begin that He focused upon.... because you know what He focused upon? The temple. Do you know what the context of these verses are, again? The destruction of the Temple. He's talking about something that would happen at the end-time and then He says, "all these things that come to pass," that He mentions that just barely precede that and that follow that, behind it, that that generation won't pass away until it's all fulfilled.

So those who are of a particular age in a particular generation, older, and the time it takes for one generation to grow up and to become an adult – whatever, 19, 20, 21 in through there – that within that length of time these things are all going to take place. And that time is almost over. Awesome to understand what it's talking about here.

There's a period of time that will exist and it won't be longer than that. It's not a hundred years, it's not fifty years, it's not a long time...and yet we've almost gone through that period of time.

So He says, again here, **that this generation shall not pass away until all these things are done. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away.** Whatever God says, it's going to be done, absolutely in His time, in His way.

But of that day and that hour knows no man... boy people have had fun with that one. People in the world have a lot of fun with it – especially Traditional Christianity – they have a lot of fun with that one there when they hear that you're saying its May 27, 2012. "Don't you know no man knows the day or the hour?" And you can't really give them the whole story because they can't grasp that any more than they can grasp this, because what it's talking about here is taken completely physically, not even understanding or taking into account that before God does something massive on the earth that happens to mankind, or that happens to the nations of Israel, it says He gives it to His prophets first; and that has to do with everything that's going to take place. This here is interesting when you understand what Jesus Christ is saying here, and *few* have ever understood it, truly.

So He says again, **verse 30 - this generation shall not pass away, until all these things are done. Heaven and earth shall pass away:** you go through physical time... Millions, billions of years, I don't know, and in time God's plan and God's purpose, if that's what it's specifically about – but He makes comment here that which will never pass away has to do with what He says, His word. ...**But of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.** Only the Father. So this really entails a whole lot more when you understand what the context is and what He's talking about because most people take this as something that is literally physical that's coming to this earth and that's not what it's about; it's spiritual. The primary intent here, just like it is with the prophecies, just like the things that Jesus Christ was saying - it's about the Church first and foremost, and it's about that which is spiritual in life, not that which is physical. So it uses physical things here and uses a timeframe, a picture of something that's going to take place in time to teach the Church.

Verse 33 – so what does it go on to say? **Take heed to yourself, watch and pray:** Watch! Be spiritually alert, be spiritually on guard is what these words are about. It's the ability to *see*, the ability to have this *vision* and your part in it of what you have to do – because you're a participant. These are things we have to do. It's a word that's used because of the 'night watch'. The hours were during the daytime period so they just had what they called 'the hours.' But at night-time they had what they called 'the watch' – the first, second, third, different watches that happened during the night. And so in a town, in a city area, where people were gathered together, especially if it was fortified, they had guards or sentry's at gates, at the entryway into the city, and they were to keep alert – just like in an army, they have sentry's or guards. And their job, their task is to stay alert and stay awake. Why? To keep on guard for enemies, for something that is threatening or hurtful to the city, to the people. And so they would use this word as 'a watch' for a purpose because this is something they did during the night. They would have those who would be set at a post to watch, to be alert to danger that might come along.

And so it is to us, that we're to watch, that we're to be alert to dangers. Because when you're called into God's Church there's a lot of danger. There's a lot of danger to your losing what you've been given. There's a lot of danger of letting down. There's a lot of danger in life because of a spirit world that's out there. There's a lot of danger just because of our own carnal human nature. There's a lot of danger just because of the pulls of this world and society around us and the way society and the world is – TV, and on and on it goes. And so you have to stay alert and you have to stay watchful, to be on guard against that which can *hurt*, that which can *destroy*, and that's exactly what He's saying here. To whom is He saying this? To the world? No, to the Church... **watch and pray**. It's to *us*. Stay close to God. Pray; take your troubles before God, take everything you have in your life that you need to grow in and change in – especially repentance as we've talked about. So much is about repentance and change and *desire* to change – to take those things before God, to stay alert.

So He says, **take heed to yourself**, *no one else can do it for you*; it's a personal relationship between you and your God, whether you're able to continue watching, to be alert, to be close to God, to have the vision that God wants you to have – it's in your hands. God's given it to you already. You know, when God calls us and gives us what He does as far as God's concerned we have it made, we do. He's given us *everything we need* to guarantee we're going to be a part of His Kingdom, but the problem is us, the problem is our own human nature, the problem is we have choices to make day in and day out. The problem is our nature, the world around us and a spirit world that's out there that wants to rip us away from God's way of life, that fights against God's way of life. Your own nature fights against God. 'The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.' It's an awesome thing to understand about your own mind; that there's this battle taking place.

That's why I love when Paul says what he does in Romans 7 or Romans 8 and talks about this nature we have within us that we have to fight. It's an awesome thing!

Take heed to yourself, watch and pray: so He's telling the whole Church this. He's telling His disciples this, "This is what you're to do." He's telling every generation of people that come along in God's Church for the past 2,000 years – every era starting with Ephesus. If you want to go through the eras of the Church, He told every one of them the same thing – **watch and pray: for you do not know when the time is**. Why would He say it that way? Why would He tell everyone the same thing? What do you mean, 'watch and pray'? Why would He tell Paul to watch and pray? Why would He tell the apostles that they're to watch and pray? Why would He tell Smyrna, Thyatira? Why is that message there for them as well? ...because it is there for them as well even though Jesus Christ wasn't going to come back in their time so why tell them this? **Take heed to yourself, watch and pray; for you don't know when the time is**. What does that mean in a person's life? Is it about the eventual return of Jesus Christ when He's not coming at the time period for any of those people, literally to this earth? 2,000 years have come and gone and most who are a part of the 144,000 have come and gone – they're dead, but they had to live by this.

Verse 34 - For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, it's a long way away and it's going to take time; **who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every person his work**, it says here, 'to every man his work', but again it's the way it's recorded here in English in King James and it's not the word for 'man'. It's talking about everyone, everyone who's called into the Church, man and woman alike. Every individual is given their work to do, his or her work to do; **and commanded the porter to watch**. See? The porter, the guard, the sentry – to watch. Who is that? Every one of us has that job.

Watch therefore: for you know not when the Master of the house is coming, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or at the morning: this verse is not about May 27, 2012. It's about something far more important for every person in God's Church, who has ever been a part of God's Church over the past 2,000 years.

He said, **Lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.** So He told the disciples that and 'all'. What all? All those who are given ears to hear, all who are brought into this way of life, to the Church of God.

We're going to come back to this a little bit later, but again, sometimes...well, not sometimes, but the normal human thing to do with scriptures oftentimes is just to read our own ideas and thoughts into it; and generally what we start out with – we start out with something very physical. That's why I love the book of John. When you go through the book of John to me there is no other book of the Bible that is more powerful in teaching this principle – that what we do as human beings is to take something physical first, something that God says. The woman at the well or Nicodemus. With Nicodemus, Jesus Christ is talking to him about being born again and all he can think about (it just blows his mind), "How can a man be born out of a woman twice – especially when he's full grown?!" It just blew his mind. "What are you talking about?" He couldn't see it and basically Jesus Christ told him that very thing, "You can't see it, it's spiritual. The wind comes and goes and you can't see it. You can't see this Nicodemus, you don't understand it." He just told him the way it was.

And the woman at the well, I love that one there. I love chapter 6 where it goes on to say...when Jesus Christ told the people who were following them – He said that "you have to drink My blood and eat My flesh." To a Jew?! You tell a Jew that you're going to have to drink blood? Something the Old Testament says you are not to do – you're not to drink blood and you're not to eat *human flesh*! Pork is horrible enough, but to think about cannibalism? That just blows the mind! And Christ is saying that... you know what it says after that? It says, 'Many disciples quit after that', not the twelve, but many disciples who were following Him at that point of time quit following Him from that point forward because they couldn't take what He had to say because they read something into it, if you want to use those terms, what He was saying. Because they took it physically. They didn't grasp spiritually what was being said. And on and on and on... John 14 – even His *own disciples*, "If you've seen Me, you've seen My Father." *Blew their mind!* Because all they could think of was seeing something physical. "We see You! What does it mean? Just show us Your Father and that'll satisfy us." They knew what He was talking about but they didn't get it, that it was totally spiritual.

And so is this! So is this, **no man knows the day or the hour**, is spiritual in what it has to mean to each individual who's called into God's Church. Candidly, those in the thousand years *have to do and follow this instruction as well!* Those in the hundred years *have to follow this instruction...* what it means *spiritually* to them. So we'll come back to that in a little bit here.

It's incredible when you start going through things like this and seeing what it says here. But again, our vision, our ability to see, our ability to be inspired by where we are in time.... *I am inspired* by where we are in time because *I know where we've been* in God's Church; *I've lived it - through the apostasy!* It is *deeply* imbedded in me and more deeply imbedded in those who were in that period of time, truly, because we *lived* an apostasy. It is so clear to us! Before the apostasy took place we'd heard about a great falling away; about when the end comes, before the end comes there's going to be this great falling away, and we heard sermons about it, but it didn't register! We couldn't grasp and comprehend *how* it was going to take place. And those of you who didn't live through that, learn from it...because

things did not happen the way *we thought they would*, and so it will be with *much* of what takes place now at the end-time here. There are still things coming that will happen in ways differently than what you have embedded in your mind – because so much of what we take and how we take it.... and we'll get into some of that as we go along through this particular series, or different sermons within the series of sermons we're going to have here.

But again, it is awesome; it truly is, if you see what has taken place. I mentioned it last Sabbath. I am so *dumbfounded* just by the timing of things alone – that mathematically if you were to put it all together in the sense of the timing of days of the 1335; if you go back and you look at the 1260 and some of the things that take place there; if you go back in time and you look at some of the things we talked about as far as December 25, if we talk about at particular point in time that led up to a time where God showed us what 'Time, Times and a Half a Time' meant on a particular Feast of *Trumpets*! And you look at where 1335 began. You look at different Feast of Trumpets and what God has given us already and the meaning of Trumpets itself and you look at it just mathematically, it is *astounding* how everything comes out as it does and everything fits into place, let alone everything that has happened the way God said it would take place as time has gone along.

And so if we have that vision then we see those things and we're *watching* because we know what to watch for.... I think of a group that has been watching Europe and they report a lot about Europe before the apostasy occurred. They continued on with something that they learned in Worldwide. They know that something's going to happen in Europe and so they do watch the news in Europe. And so they have speculated about many different kinds of things. So in a physical kind of way, since that time, they have continued on watching *very physically* physical things that are transpiring in Europe about 10 nations and what might cause them to come together and so forth through time.

And yet, without growth, without things that God gives there is that which is missing, it's just not there, any spiritual growth. And yet as far as what God gives when He continues to give His truth and His way of life, to understand why the apostasy took place as an example, we understand that. We understand about the Seals and so forth. We understand where we are in the Seals and so forth and that is to give you motivation and encouragement and strength – it truly is. You need to *see it in that light*, to build you up, not tear you down. Because everyone who leaves, everyone who becomes weakened *doesn't have vision*. They don't see the reality of what is taking place or what has taken place and have confidence and boldness in what's coming. Those are the things that keep you motivated and on fire! They keep you *focused*! Vision does! So how strong is your vision, because that's what it comes down to.

I hate to see people go by the wayside. Right after I gave the sermon last week had a call on the telephone about someone else who'd left – just found out that week. Think... "Too bad!" That choice didn't happen overnight, none of them happen overnight, but people get to a point where they become so weakened through time that they can't fight anymore. *And you don't want that to happen to you – especially now!* What did someone say before services here today about time remaining? 498 days? Here we passed under the 500 mark already and it just gets smaller and smaller and smaller. Incredible!

So before we go more deeply into the meaning of these particular scriptures here let's go back and look at some other end-time events in the making and how we're to keep things in focus. Because when you see these things happening the way they are told to us, the way we see them and understand them it'll give you strength and encouragement. It's like prayer. There is something *awesome* about prayer in your life. If you will go before God on a continuing basis and cry out to Him and you have this

relationship that you're building and growing in there is that which God gives in strength in life. I mention sometimes when you have especially strong battles, or whatever, at times you're moved and motivated to fast, to humble yourself before God. I also think of opportunities of fellowship that give you that boost! That people need each other! We need each other in God's Church and there's something special about that, that you receive extra strength from when we come together.

And the Sabbath alone, every Sabbath, the ability to hear what God gives to us. I don't know about you, but sometimes when you come to a Friday it's like you're ready! Six days have gone by and you're ready! You're wanting it! You know you need it! You are *worn out* just in six days! God knows the cycle of what we need and what He's given to us and how He works with us. And this day here that picks us up, that strengthens us again – add to that the things that are going on in the world around us.

Don't let it be like it is on TV. If your diet is CNN and FOX on occasion, you're going to die as far as vision is concerned about prophetic things, because it's not *news anymore*, it's about personalities, it's about politics, it's disgusting and this helps to create a false sense in people's lives. When you hear things about the stock market, when you hear what they're trying to do...if you believe all of that then you're going to lose focus on what's true, what's real out here and then you begin to be lulled into sleep, that somehow everything is going to be just fine and okay, that things can be turned around. I love it that some people have connection with different ones and they send each other different news items that are from around the world, things that are happening in different parts of the world. If you can get BBC on occasion – just something like that can give you a focus to realize these things are happening. And don't let it get to a point where you think what is happening is normal and has always been this way. Everything keeps happening so quickly and so much so that you might think this is the way it's always been – that can happen to people too.

Let's take a look here at some events over the past couple of weeks; and before we do that I want to read about just one of the seven Thunders. Not talking about number 1, number 2, number 4... I'm just going to look at number 3 today and what's being discussed here because there's so much that continues to happen and it get louder and louder and louder – just like being put into position more and more and more. I'm going to read from page 97 of '2008 – God's Final Witness'.

The Third Thunder

In terms of an economic impact on property, and even loss of life, one of the most destructive forces that is taking a dramatic turn for the worse is being caused by an escalating change in our weather. Some will argue that the current weather conditions are a reflection of normal cycles of change over time. It is true that the weather follows cycles. Yes, there have always been times of intensity when destructive powers have been unleashed. However, now is different because the destructiveness and change in weather patterns is going to continue to increase dynamically, not following normal patterns.

[#3 The **Third Thunder** is the growing **destructiveness from weather**.]

Some areas will experience abnormally large amounts of rainfall, while others, that normally receive large amounts, will receive none. The consequences of this will be a marked increase in flooding and mudslides in some areas, while other areas will

experience growing problems with drought, which as we have seen this past year, results in widespread fires and extensive damage to livestock and crops. Some areas will experience normal amounts of rain, but it will come at the wrong time to benefit agriculture. Too much cold and too much heat at the wrong time will also add to this destructive power. Those who have their livelihood in agriculture have always had to contend with such things, but over the next couple of years these conditions will become the worst yet!

#3 The **Third Thunder** is the growing **destructiveness from weather**.

And this is a part of what we're talking about here as far as a crescendo and things building up as they are one after another. And it's not that things haven't gone through patterns and happened at different times in the past, it's just that *these* are happening more and more *all the time, all over, to produce something toward the end here*. And when you add them all together – it's loud.

I asked Wayne Matthews here recently if he's found something down in Queensland newsworthy to keep me posted about some of the things taking place down there and he had an email here he sent along with an article, but he said basically, 'all of Queensland is now flooded. Some of the coal mines are under water therefore cutting 10% of the world's coal supply. Because this is also one of the main areas for some fruit and wheat crops, food prices are expected to soar. The area flooded in Queensland is the size of New South Wales and Victoria joined together.' Now that means something to the Australians and very little to you; but as we've heard up here, it's the size of Texas and New Mexico together, or for the Europeans, it's the size of Germany and France together.

So again, events are happening and the size, the intensity and so forth is what makes it unique.

Here's from the Associated Press on the 11th....

Scores missing in tsunami-like flood in Australia

Originally printed at <http://www.komonews.com/news/national/113276644.html>

By KRISTEN GELINEAU and TERTIUS PICKARD Associated Press January 11, 2011
BRISBANE, Australia (AP) - Greg Kowald was driving through the center of Toowoomba when a terrifying, tsunami-like wall of water roared through the streets of the northeast Australian city.

Office windows exploded, cars careened into trees and bobbed in the churning brown water like corks.

I don't know how many of you saw these things on the news, but when it came through it was massive and cars were like tinker toys going through there.

The deluge washed away bridges and sidewalks; people desperately clung to power poles to survive. Before it was over, the flash flood left at least 10 dead and 78 missing.

"The water was literally leaping, six or 10 feet into the air, through creeks and over bridges and into parks," Kowald, a 53-year-old musician, told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "There was nowhere to escape, even if there had been warnings.

So again, no warnings when something like that happens as quickly as it did.

There was just a sea of water about a kilometer (half a mile) wide."

The violent surge in Toowoomba brought the overall death toll from weeks of flooding in Queensland state to 20, a sudden acceleration in a crisis...

Notice....

...a sudden acceleration in a crisis that had been unfolding gradually with swollen rivers overflowing their banks and inundating towns while moving toward the ocean. Queensland Premier Anna Bligh said there were "grave fears" for at least 18 of those missing.

Talking about the 78 still missing there. It went on to say that....

The high waters headed next to Australia's third-largest city, Brisbane, where up to 9,000 homes were expected to be swamped. The Brisbane River overflowed its banks Tuesday and officials warned that dozens of low-lying neighbourhoods and parts of downtown could be inundated in coming days.

But nothing downstream was expected to be as fierce as the flash flood that struck Toowoomba on Monday. It was sparked by a freak storm - up to 6 inches (150 millimeters) fell in half an hour.

That's a lot of rain in a half an hour and that's why it reacted like it did with everything wet like it was already.

"There was water coming down everywhere in biblical proportions," Toowoomba council member Joe Ramia told the AP.

[jumps forward in the article...]

... Brisbane Mayor Campbell Newman said authorities were preparing for flooding affecting about 15,000 people in 80 suburbs.

[jumps forward in article...]

Queensland has been in the grip of its worst flooding for more than two weeks, after tropical downpours covered an area the size of France and Germany combined. Entire towns have been swamped, more than 200,000 people affected, and the coal industry and farming have virtually shut down.

[jumps forward in article...]

The floods reached a second state Tuesday, with about 4,500 people stranded by high waters in bordering New South Wales, officials said, though the situation was not yet as dire as in Queensland.

Bligh said last week the cost of the floods could be as high as \$5 billion, the latest figure available.¹

So again here, just a continuation of these things happening. BBC talking about (this was on the 13th, two days later....)

BBC NEWS

13 January 2011 Last updated at 11:25 ET

Battle to reach thousands of Sri Lanka flood victims

More than 30,000 army, navy, police and air force personnel are battling to provide urgent aid to people hit by heavy flooding in Sri Lanka.

A government spokesman said more than 325,000 people had been displaced by flooding. At least 27 people have died and more than a million are affected.

[jumps forward in article...]

In the centre and east, farmland has been flooded and rice fields destroyed.

Thousands of people....

So there's a flow here of something happening. When all this happens like it is, another thing affecting crops and produce and so forth and this is all building up to something in a very great way later on – lack of food. It's going to be bad enough and the ability is not there to transport it from one area to another, let alone the fact *it's just not there*. And so it goes on to say....

In the center and east farmland has been flooded and rice fields destroyed.

Thousands of people who fled the flooding are now living in camps on higher ground, a spokesman from the disaster management centre told the BBC.

But officials say that in some cases those camps in turn have been flooded...

They've been flooded now. [jumps forward in article...]

The floods have left some stretches of railway line under nearly a metre of water.

Three feet and 3 inches for you...

Officials in Ampara to the south of Batticaloa say the rainfall there since Saturday has been the highest ever recorded in such a short time.²

¹ <http://www.komonews.com/news/national/113276644.html>

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12179296>

[Jordan Times; COLOMBO (Reuters)]

The agricultural ministry said at least 21 per cent of Sri Lanka's staple rice crop had been destroyed, raising concerns over supply shocks and higher food inflation just as the central bank lowered lending rates to spur growth.

Greater-than-normal monsoon rains since early January have pounded Sri Lanka's Northern, Eastern, Central and North Central provinces, setting off mudslides, swamping roads and bursting hundreds of dams and reservoirs.³

Same day, January 13th...

Brazil flood and mudslide deaths rise as rescue goes on

13 January 11 15:39 ET

More than 420 people have now been killed by flooding and mudslides in south-eastern Brazil, officials say.

[paraphrased...]Thousands have been made homeless. The president said she's been flying through the area and said it was "hell". Heavy rain began falling again early on Thursday as rescuers resumed their search and expected to continue throughout much of the day. The collapse of electricity and communication system combined with the destruction of many roads and bridges have severely hampered the rescue work.

Morgues in the affected towns are full with churches and police stations receiving bodies. Officials in Brazil's civil defence department have warned there could be hundreds more bodies yet to be recovered.

One area, Teresopolis, remains cut off entirely and has yet to be reached by any rescuers. It's feared that 150 are buried there.

Civil defence officials in Teresopolis said that the city was soaked with 144 mm (or 5.6 inches) of rain in 24 hours, more than the usual amount for the whole of January.⁴

Another report from the same day, and this is Reuters in the same area said, 'Rescuers have dug desperately for survivors on Thursday and struggled to reach the areas cut off.' Said 443 at that point and I know it's gone up to 555 now that they've found since today, as of today. But anyway it just goes on talking about all the damage and the damage to crops and the damage of things that are taking place in some of these areas.

³ <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:IA8k5te-xVYJ:www.jordantimes.com/%3Fnews%3D33464+agriculture+minister+in+Sri+Lanka+said+21%25+of+rice+crop+has+been+destroyed&hl=en&client=safari&gl=ca&strip=1>

⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-latin-america-12180079?page_id=16

MANILA, Philippines, Jan. 12 (UPI) -- Widespread flooding and landslides in the Philippines claimed the lives of seven more people, raising the death toll so far to at least 40, officials said.

The disaster, triggered by the northeast monsoon and a cold front, [had hit mainly the Mindanao, Eastern Visayas, Southern Tagalog regions and] affected more than 1.2 million people, the Philippine Star reported Thursday.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said those killed either died in landslides or by drowning. Damage to agriculture, infrastructure and private properties has been estimated at more than \$20 million... [but was expected to rise.]

And so again, it's this thing of finances, nations are struggling as it is, food, and on and on it goes – and every little thing that comes along and you put them together and these things are massive that just continue to happen.

The report said about 4,800 of the affected families remained in evacuation centers. Several thousand are staying with relatives as evacuations continued...⁵

Argentina uneasy over La Nina effect on crops

Argentina Star

Wednesday 12th January, 2011

(Source: www.upi.com)

BUENOS AIRES, Jan. 12 (UPI) -- Argentina is feeling the effect of La Nina weather phenomenon on cash crops that are likely to have sharply lower yields because of low rainfall totals.

Flooding in Brazil, drought in Argentina...

Corn and soybean prices rose in response to anxiety over a lack of rainfall that has prompted producer groups to lower yield forecasts.

Poor rainfall began worrying agriculture industry in December in response to La Nina diminishing rain over Argentina.

U.S. and Latin American meteorological centers said drought conditions could deepen through the first quarter of 2011.

Officials said estimates for Argentine corn yields were already down from 25 million tons in December to 20 million tons and didn't rule out further downgrades as the dry season persisted.

⁵ http://www.politicsjam.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50347:philippines-flood-death-toll-rises&catid=54:world&Itemid=53

Soybean crops were also affected by La Nina phenomenon, agriculture industry sources said.

The combination of poor rainfall totals and above average temperatures pose threats to corn pollination and soybean developing for a satisfactory harvest.

Amid forecasts of declining corn yields, prices rose 45 percent over last year, partly in response to growing demand.

Now, in the United States we see some of these different reports of 'jump in 50%, 45%, 70%' and that doesn't mean as much to *us* right now, but it means *a lot* to a lot of people around the world, it truly does.

[jumps forward in article....]

Meanwhile, United States agriculture estimates showed U.S. grain stockpiles could be the lowest in several years.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is expected to show in its monthly crop report a further deterioration in supplies and also to issue its own estimates on the crop situation in Argentina and Australia, which is seeing flood conditions because of La Nina.

[jumps forward in article....]

Forecasts for Australia's wheat crop are also expected to report lower yields as the country struggles with massive flooding.

So on and on it goes. Then it goes on to say....

La Nina-related weather events earlier devastated large areas of Pakistan and caused widespread drought in the Black Sea wheat belt.

So all those regions have been hit. Russia's been hit. It goes on to say....

The drop in U.S. stockpiles is at least partly due to soaring Chinese demand for soybean.

Prices and supplies were also affected earlier by poor crop yields in Russia.⁶

All around the world. May not mean much to people in certain areas of the world when you're still able to go to the grocery store and get what you want to get, but it's all building up to a time when it's not going to be that way.

Here's one from Accuweather, January 6, talking about this. Thought I'd read this about...

Floods, Drought Drive World Food Prices to Record Highs

⁶ http://www.polijam.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50223:argentina-uneasy-over-la-nina-effect-on-crops&catid=59:science&Itemid=58

By Vickie Frantz, **AccuWeather.com Staff Writer**
Jan 6, 2011; 7:19 AM ET

World food prices hit a record high in December, according to *Commodities Daily*. 2010 brought droughts to some agricultural areas of the world, and flood to others.

China and North Korean Floods

In southeastern China, the city of Pucheng had 25.61 inches of rain in June, according to AccuWeather.com Senior Meteorologist Jim Andrews. Normal for the area in June is 11 inches.

Near the border of North Korea, the city of Kuandian, China had 34.57 inches of rain in August.

So again, all these things that are causing flooding and destroying crops.

[jumps forward in article....]

China is having a shortage of food due to much of their crops being destroyed by the floods this summer, according to the *International Business Times*.⁷

And one thing about China... they will not sit idly by; if they don't have the food then that causes them to think in a different way than it does people in a lot of different countries, a lot of different areas.

I don't need to go on and read things about the 'Ukrainian and Russian Drought,' I've already mentioned those in part; Australia and so forth.

Thought I'd read this report here – this just came out yesterday from MSNBC.

Global food chain stretched to the limit

Soaring prices spark fears of social unrest in developing world

By [John W. Schoen](#) Senior producer

msnbc.com

updated 1/14/2011 10:51:29 AM ET

Strained by rising demand and battered by bad weather, the global food supply chain is stretched to the limit, sending prices soaring and sparking concerns about a repeat of food riots last seen three years ago.

[jumps forward in article....]

On Friday, Tunisia's president fled the country after trying to quell deadly riots in the North African country by slashing prices on food staples.

⁷ <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:6QXLGm2HTnEJ:www.accuweather.com/blogs/news/story/43993/floods-drought-drive-world-foo-1.asp+2010+brought+drought+to+some+agriculture+areas+of+the+world&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca&client=safari>

"We are entering a danger territory," Abdolreza Abbassian, chief economist at the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said last week.

The U.N.'s fear is that the latest run-up in food prices could spark a repeat of the deadly food riots that broke out in 2008 in Haiti, Kenya and Somalia.

[jumps forward in article....]

"Situations have changed. The supply/demand structures have changed,"

[jumps forward in article....]

Price for grains and other farm products began rising last fall after poor harvests in Canada, Russia and Ukraine tightened global supplies. More recently, hot, dry weather in South America has cut production in Argentina, a major soybean exporter. This month's flooding in Australia wiped out much of that country's wheat crop.

As supplies tighten, prices surge. Earlier this month, the FAO said its food price index jumped 32 percent in the second half of 2010, soaring past the previous record set in 2008.

So, it was set in 2008, now another record comes along breaking that one.

Prices rose again this week after the U.S. Department of Agriculture cut back its already-tight estimate of grain inventories. Estimated reserves of corn were cut to about half the level in storage at the start of the 2010 harvest; soybean reserves are at the lowest levels in three decades,

And that's when populations continue to grow.

...the USDA estimates, in part because of heavy buying by China.

[jumps forward in article....]

"I haven't seen numbers this low that I can remember in the last 20 or 30 years," said Dennis Conley, an agricultural economist at the University of Nebraska. "We are at record low stocks. So if there is any kind of glitch at all in the U.S. weather, supplies are going to remain tighter and we might see even higher prices."

Higher oil prices are also pushing up the cost of food — in two ways. First, the added shipping cost raises the delivered price of agricultural products. Higher oil prices also divert more crops like corn and soybeans to biofuel production, further tightening supplies for livestock feed and human consumption. Conley estimates that more than a third of the corn produced in the U.S is now used to make ethanol.⁸

⁸ http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41062817/ns/business-consumer_news

So it's a vicious circle. Put it in food and give it to people, put it into fuel and use it to help keep down the prices to get the food to where it needs to go – it's like a 'catch-22' almost.

Let's go over to Matthew 24. I know that sometimes just listening to certain kinds of news reports and stuff like that can be a little bit *boring*, but I'll tell you what, you need to keep abreast of things that are happening and think about them, and pray about them – things that are taking place in the world, that God give you the ability to see, to be able to *watch* to see what's happening and taking place here that, again, can stir you up inside to not let down spiritually in your life.

We have a short time ahead of us and I hate to see people go by the wayside, I truly do, and yet it's something that's going to continue to happen until this is over with and it *blows my mind*. And I'm not just talking to those that are new. I'm talking to everybody out there! We need to be alert as to what's going on around us and not let down spiritually. And just because we're below the 500 day mark now and into the upper 400's and counting down every day, it doesn't mean you let up, because if you let up it can have devastating consequences in your life. You've got to fight to the end, you truly do! You've got to fight until it's over with.

I don't know how much of some of these news things to read because there's just tons of it out there, tons of it, things about the economy, a global economy, things about the dollar and it's deterioration in the world and on and on it goes; and things that are forcing Europe to a position in time here. I hope you see that the news events taking place in the world, economically, and the things happening in Europe are things that are pushing them to a point that it's easy to see now why they're going to come together. I'm a little bit dumbfounded by some of the things that could happen as far as Europe stepping into this country when the time comes and doing it in a very peaceful means in the very beginning. It could happen... *it could happen*; it could start out real peaceful like because we need help at a particular time. It's going to be interesting to see how it all unfolds.

But you've got to keep alert; you have to keep alert to these things as they're happening and things that are taking place. When our president begins to talk about how that France is our closest ally... what a slap in the face to Great Britain! *Incredible* what's taking place! And if people begin to think this way... it blows my mind. I mention that because it has to do with a way of thinking that can lead to things happening later on where an invitation is given to a people that when it's all said and done... well, it's not going to be pretty for what happens in this country.

Matthew 24:42 – again, admonition from Jesus Christ. He says, **Watch therefore: for you don't know what hour your Lord is coming.** Watch! And this, again, is that admonition that's given to people of all time. Every era of God's Church was told to do the very same thing; not because Jesus Christ was coming at their time, it wasn't about the literal day of His return. Yes, that's going to happen, it's going to come to pass, but these admonitions are to the Church, to every individual in God's Church.

Verse 43 - But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, it's an important verse here and why it's talking in these terms, 'to come like a thief in the night.' It says, **he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.** Easily said isn't it? If you knew there was going to be someone coming into your place to break into it, to steal everything you have there and so forth, there'd be things you would do. You would take some kind of action, you would make sure that someone was there waiting, and if you'd known *exactly* when it was going to take place, to save you all the destruction and so forth that would transpire from that in taking everything you have. Why is an admonition given like this? Be careful that what you have not be taken

away from you... can it happen? I have seen it *every year I've been in God's Church* – where people haven't done this – what they were supposed to do on a spiritual plane. And for them a thief came and took what they had, they lost it. They lost it and they didn't continue in this way of life. God gave them *great riches*. God gives us great riches when we're called, He truly does, if we could only *grasp* it in that context, the value.

What kind of a *value* do we place upon something like that? Sometimes when you really stop to think about it it kind of blows your mind. But the reality is as human beings we have a difficult time grasping the value of what we've been given. And it doesn't take long before we forget, or maybe we just weren't hit with a kind of impact to grasp how awesome it is. How few people in history, 6,000 years of mankind, have ever known the truth about God, have ever had their mind opened up to grasp what God is doing in the sense of that which is happening spiritually in the mind, of what can happen to your mind and the changes that can take place? 'Many are called, and few are chosen.'⁹ That's the way it's been. Many have been called through time. I've known of so many people who've had their minds opened up.

I've known of so many people that I've visited before they're ever invited to come to Sabbath services, that their minds were opened up and they could talk to you about God's plan, they could see it, and they were already dumbfounded by the fact that some in their family or different ones *couldn't* see it but they could see it and they could talk to you about it. How could they do that? Because God opened up the mind. But because of various reasons and examples like Jesus Christ gave, whether it be because they were in amongst the thorns or whatever it was, or they just didn't take root in the ground, it wasn't watered or whatever¹⁰... it had to do with their own decisions as life goes on as you see those things; and they couldn't take the next step.

Tons of people I've visited through time as a minister who never came along fully, whose minds were opened up but because they just couldn't make the choice of perhaps telling their mate, or telling their mate they're going to obey God and they're going to start keeping the Sabbath, or to begin changing their life financially and whatever that might mean for their life because of tithing and because of those kinds of things that everyone has to address in time, or because they just couldn't take that step as far as the Sabbath was concerned, of telling their boss, and in their minds taking that *chance* that they're going to lose a job and not having a confidence or a trust or just a matter of obedience to God because they grasped what they were given; that they're going to do what they have to do and look to God and work to find something different and go through whatever they have to go through.... I've seen that side, where people have done *exactly* those things through time. And anybody that's been around for a long time, you're very likely one of those individuals anyway, what you've had to go through in your life in order to follow God.

Over and over again, things that have happened in people's lives. Once they have come into God's Church and they begin experiencing various things within God's Church and something comes along that drags them away. I've seen everything. You name it, I've seen it of where people can let down, why they let down, why something is able to pull them away – and it goes back to not watching, not being spiritually alert, not being on guard and not realizing that *you can have it taken from you*.

I've heard sermons given by many ministers through time – good, inspiring, exciting sermons that God has moved and inspired them in giving – and yet I have witnessed and I have seen those same

⁹ Matthew 22:14

¹⁰ Matthew 13:3-9

individuals who have left the truth, who've gone back to Christmas and Easter and Sunday; and it blows the mind! And we think that can't happen to us? Oh, many, many people; far better, if you want to look at various things in life, far more talented than me, have done just that through time. I know why I'm here. It's by God's grace and God's mercy. And if we understand that being awakened – it's by God's grace and God's mercy – especially those of us who were asleep. Those of you who've been called anew? Some of these things are difficult to grasp and comprehend, they truly are. I know you believe them, just like any of us who read the book of Acts and we believe what they experienced, we believe what they had to say and we see that to a degree.

There are a lot of things I see now in their lives, there are a lot of things I see, *see spiritually* in people's lives in the Bible... I heard their stories and believed them, but didn't *see* if you understand what I'm saying. I understand now in a greater way what they went through spiritually in their lives, what they experienced spiritually in their lives.

And so again here, this example of a thief is important because if you don't value something enough to do what God said, that's how it's going to be taken from you. It's like all of a sudden you get to a point in time and *it's all taken away*. And we wonder – How is that possible? It doesn't happen overnight! It happens over a period of time, of bad decisions and of repetition of various things in our life – a repetition and we start following certain patterns in our life that aren't good and they're not spiritually healthy. And in the context of some of the things we're talking about right now...prophetic events? Our minds should be dumbfounded by what we see happening in this world, but I've heard things from people, I have seen comments come in at times from individuals where you realize they're starting to lose some of that. How could we live in this world, hear what we hear out there – if we're watching what's taking place, if we're alert to what's happening – Thunders that are taking place over and over and over again here, a continuation of the 1st Trumpet that continues on in a very powerful way building up to a far greater *crash* than ever before and physical things that will transpire from all this in time, in God's time?

But sometimes, if we zero in on something that someone says, it just starts nagging at us and we think, "Yeah, it didn't happen on that day." Or whatever it is...because of certain concepts we might have. We'll talk about some of those things in sermons as we go along here, but I'll tell you what; it is easy to lose everything you have, everything that God has given to you. I've seen people who've been around a long time who've lost it all. I've seen people who are new who have lost it all. And it just continues to happen year after year after year. And I remember commenting on this a couple of years ago in a very strong way and crying out and trying to warn people that at the end-time, in the last 3½ years, there will be *people who leave the Church – all the way to the end* and perhaps even to the final day. Is it possible? If you think it's not, than we don't understand the power of the human mind, we don't understand our own human nature; and that's why we need to be on guard all the more so.

So again, He says here to watch! **Watch therefore: for you don't know the hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would have come, he would have watched, and would not have allowed them to break into his house.** Christ said to watch, to be on guard because we don't know the day or the hour a thief can come and take everything away. That's the lesson here. It's not about His literal return, the exact day. We know that! We know what day He's coming back and what year He's coming back! We know those things. This admonition here goes way, way, *way* beyond that in importance and what it's telling us. Because the reality is if you're not watching on a regular basis it can all be taken away from you; but if you're watching on a regular basis then when He comes you'll be there anyway.

I want to go back up here to a few verses and we'll talk about this more in context. Let's go all the way back to verse 3. Thinking about *vision*, thinking about where we've been, where we are and where we're going; because all these things for us tie together. And the farther we go into this the more I understand these verses too. I've gone through these verses over and over and over again, and the farther I go into them in time the more God gives me to see, the more that's fulfilled.

Verse 3 – Christ and the disciples were walking around the temple and talking about various things here and He made a comment that there wouldn't be one stone left upon another and He wasn't talking about the physical temple. He was talking about the spiritual one, the Church, and a time about His return. They wanted to know when it was going to be? When are you going to come into Your Kingdom, and so forth? And so He uses that eventuality to teach that to the Church, that the Church needed to grasp for the next 2,000 years, because no one in the Church over the past 2,000 years has understood, as a whole, that we had that kind of time in front of us. Peter didn't know, Paul didn't understand those things. Those things weren't shown, they were not given. There was a period of time where Paul thought it was going to happen in his age. There's a time when Peter believed it was going to happen in his age.

Verse 3 - As He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of this age? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. That's important through time! It doesn't matter the moment in time, it doesn't matter the event that takes place; it's something you have to live by – that no one deceive you, that you don't give credibility to people who aren't even *called*, to someone who is nagging you about something, that sometimes if you give too much of an ear to it it can weigh you down. And I'll tell you, there are beings out there that know what buttons to push in our lives. They know what will get to you and what your battles are in your mind, what you're dealing with.

So it says, **Take heed that no one deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.** So even in Traditional Christianity, in what's called 'Christianity'. There have been all kinds of people who talk about Christ, who said that He lived and died (they might say died in a day and a half, but nevertheless they're going to say that Christ came and so forth) and it says deceive many. There have been many in God's Church through time who've come along, especially at the end-time here, who've come along and *knew* who Christ was and *taught* about Jesus Christ in truth, and in time began to go off course and off base and deceived many. Because that's happened, that's what the Seal was all about, the 1st Seal and the 2nd Seal and the 3rd Seal.

And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that you're not troubled: for all these things have to come to pass, and the end is not yet. So in other words, whether people understood it or not, which they didn't as a whole; in time there are going to be things you're going to go through. There are going to be wars. Things are going to happen in the world around you – don't be troubled, these things have to happen.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: we've seen that, we've seen it in what we've called World Wars, WWI and WWII... and there be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in different places. These things have always been. That's what people say! I think of some of the radio interviews. You write some things down, you talk about what's going to take place in different Thunders and so forth... it's like, "Well, we've always had earthquakes, we've always had bad

weather!" But not like what we have now, not like what's coming together now – everything that's coming together for a purpose and everything that's being set into place for one great crescendo. That's what's different; because this *is* the end.

Says, and **All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake.** And you go through time, you go through the history of the Church, things that have happened, things that have happened to God's people – and basically it doesn't matter what nation where God's people are. God's people have never been loved by the world. And the more someone might know about them, or about a particular leader like Mr. Armstrong, within his own country he wasn't loved or respected for who he was. Other's in other countries – they showed him a great deal more respect and were far more moved by what he had to say. Incredible! And there are those if they could have at that time, would have killed him, but God wasn't going to allow it. But some were killed in times past. You go back and look at the early apostles and some of the history of things that have been written about them; people who were killed for what they believed. Paul, things that he went through in his life. I think of John who was sent to an isle for imprisonment for a time. That's where he had the revelation (Revelation), on the Isle of Patmos, that was a matter of imprisonment for him and things that he had to go through.

So it says, **and they shall deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you and you shall be hated of all nations,** no matter where people are, no matter what nations they're in, people that are not going to embrace you, they're not going to embrace what you believe and who you are.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. What's that about? It's what we went through in the Church. As you go through time things just continue to build up. Even there, in time, things were put into place for what had to happen at the end-time. **...many offended and many shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.** False teachers, prophets; it's a word that has to do with inspired preaching here and whether it come from God or not is another matter, and what is taught is another matter. And so we've experienced that.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And so we've had this as an expression of something we've understood deeply in God's Church, something we began to see through time in the 70's - God's love began to wane. Why? Because God's spirit began to wane in people's lives. And if you don't have God's spirit strongly in your life – God's love/agape (because this is the word for God's love), it's going to begin going by the wayside.

But **verse 13 - But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.** And that's what the point of all this is really all about and this is what Jesus Christ is leading into in this thing when He talks about watching. It's this matter of fighting, enduring! It's not a matter of just enduring it, it's a matter of the fight that goes into it...**to the end, shall be saved.** God has given absolutely everything that is needed from the moment of calling to the moment of being in His Family, but we have choices to make all along the way and that's what He's talking about here.

But he that shall endure unto the end, and so whatever that end is. Do you know what it was for the people over the past 2,000 years? It was their physical end, when they died. That's their end. You have to endure unto you die! At least that's the way it was. People who lived in Ephesus, every one of them had to die. Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia...well there are some that were in Philadelphia that are still alive to this day, but most are dead. And most of those who are going to be a part of 144,000 –

they lived and died in the faith. They had to endure to their end. Mr. Armstrong had to endure until his end. Keep going, keep fighting, keep doing what you have to do.

We're a little different; and those of you who are new are a little different. Your end is not coming, in what it's talking about here; it's not a matter of just the return of Jesus Christ, *your* end, 'until your end' is when you die - and you have to be watchful and alert and you have to continue to fight the battle. It's going to get a whole lot easier here shortly than what it currently is in this world. All of a sudden when the whole world is geared toward keeping the Sabbath, when all of a sudden there's just one Government around the earth governing mankind, when all of a sudden people close down for the Sabbath, businesses obey the Sabbath, people obey the Sabbath - it's a whole different world. But you've got to keep fighting, as we've talked about in different sermons and so forth (especially at the Feast), because you're going to face different things.

And just because you live in the Millennium doesn't guarantee you're going to be a part of God's Kingdom. There are going to be people who live during the Millennium that have to live a second time! That is astounding! There are people who are going to live in the Millennium who must die and be resurrected in the last one hundred years! Incredible! Astounding! Because you see, the opportunity to grow and to change is so awesomely enhanced at that time. I think of people who've been called in the last 2,000 years into God's Church with the desire to be in God's Kingdom. Of course that's in a different world today, Satan's world, and he won't be around for very much longer. But people's battles in conquering and overcoming continue on.... There's an expression, 'familiarity breeds contempt.' After a time, people are going to get accustomed to 144,000 being on this earth. People are going to get accustomed to Jesus Christ... because that's just the way it is for their life.

Just like some of the news today, after a while it just kind of like that's just the way it is; and it's like it's always been this way. No it hasn't.

But it gets much easier; but there'll still be some during the thousand years who like a thief in the night, Jesus Christ came. They let down, they fall asleep, and they're not able to be changed and resurrected at the end of a thousand years into God's Family - they have to live *another hundred years*. Astounding!

And so nobody has it made until it's over with, until you have *fought to your last breath* against your own human nature, against sin, and you continue to yield yourself to God and to God's spirit living within you - even in the Millennium, even in an awesomely beautiful, wonderful world.

But he that shall endure to the end the same shall be saved. These verses have the same meaning in the future as they do for right now, as they have for the past 2,000 years.

And this gospel... so now it's specific here again...**And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.** Those of you who are new, you read that, you believe what that is about; but when you've lived it, those of you who've lived through that period of time, you knew of Mr. Armstrong, you knew what he did, you knew the Church at that time, Philadelphia, you knew a gospel message that was being preached in all this world - the power that went out in 'The Plain Truth' magazine, the power of the television, telecasts that were out there, the radio broadcasts greater than any other religious organization on this earth. *Incredible* what took place! It says, **and then shall the end come.**

And so again, telling us things that were going to take place. And Mr. Armstrong was *highly motivated* by this verse, because he knew this was him! God gave him the ability to know something very powerfully so – this was about him and what he was doing; but he never went past this verse. He didn't say the next verse had anything to do with his commission, but verse 14 did. How did he know? God's spirit.

Verse 15 – Jesus Christ goes on to say, because we're going on in time here. **When you therefore shall see the abomination...** He's using something here that the disciples asked Him. Their primary question was, "When are You coming in to Your Kingdom?" And Jesus Christ uses something very physical to teach very important things *to the Church*. **When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand:)** incredible what we've lived through! This was not for Mr. Armstrong's time; it was for what was to follow.

And so, are you *moved* by those things? Are you *moved* by what you believe has transpired? Are you *moved* by what some of you have lived through? Because I am! I'm moved by what I lived through; I lived through the apostasy! I saw these things come to pass! Going back here and talking about this son of perdition and the man of sin in II Thessalonians, and talking about what took place here in God's Church and what God allowed to happen. The very thing He was talking about – He said there wouldn't be one stone upon another. Incredible! It happened to the Church! Did the Church ever think it could happen to them? Did anybody ever think it could happen? I never thought it could happen. I didn't think it'd ever happen to me.

And so those of you listening today and those of you who are new in the last one, two or three years, whatever your time is... How do these things affect you? Because I don't want to see anybody fall by the wayside and quit, but I have since the Feast and it hurts. I *hate* to see people make those decisions, especially as far along as we are.

Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains: things I've talked about in times past, given sermons on, things that are written in some of the publications and so forth, what all this is talking about. It's all about the Church and about a devastation that took place and the things that took place as people fled, or tried to hold to what they had, some resemblance. **Let him which is on the housetop not come down and take anything out of the house: Neither let him which is in the field turn back and take his clothes. And woe to them that are with child, and to them that suck in those days!** All spiritual things! Nothing about something physical that's going to happen. It's not something literal, physical at all, it's all spiritual. It's all about God's Church and different people's reactions and how they responded to the apostasy and what took place. I'm not going to go back and rehash those things right now.

I do think about verse 19 a lot. As I was going through this I thought, "Wow!" **Woe unto them who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days!** Because right after the apostasy God showed very quickly and early on that one of the worst things was for new people to be called at that time. That was not a good time for new people to be called, 'for those who gave suck,' those who needed nurturing. We didn't have the ability to. The scattering was so *intense*, so powerful. People weren't being called into the different organizations. They weren't being called along. God wasn't using *that* time to call people because that wasn't a good time to call people. And you know the ones who needed it the most? Those who were coming of age; those who were coming to a point in time of making those choices, who grew up in the church, not new ones being called out of the world – because God just

wasn't calling people out of the world! We weren't seeing that take place. Why? Because God's going to take care of His, He's going to give the ability to take care of His.

And even as we got restructured and so forth we didn't see growth. We saw different ones come in from different groups and some leave and then some others come along and God kind of kept us at a certain place for a *long time*... for a *long time* in the Church. But not new ones – just people from the past, awakened again and brought along. The babes were those who grew up in the environment of God's Church and what happened to most of them – gone by the wayside; scattered out here with different scattered groups or have gone back into the world because there was nothing there for them. Incredible what took place!

Verse 20 – it goes on to say, **but pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:** things that people use for excuses and reasons and so forth as to why they make the choices they do. **For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** And so again, something spiritual that occurred. There wasn't a Church until the last 2,000 years anyway, and so basically for the first 4,000 years God just worked with individuals here and there, not large numbers of people – small groups, small individuals here and there, families on occasion He worked through and so forth – but it wasn't like when the Church finally came along and was able to work with far more people on a far greater scale. Just like there's as big a difference with that in the Church as how God worked in the previous 4,000 years as there's getting ready to be now – millions being called and being able to be worked with. It's that kind of a jump through time because it was only sporadic through time. You go from Noah to where? Abraham and Sarah. They were the only ones, as a whole, during that whole time period that were being trained, used, motivated, led by God. One other in the midst of all that, but anyway... as far as an impact on the world and how God was planning for it and what He was doing.

It goes on to say, **And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved:** and so often we've talked about 'saved alive'. Well, saved. And we look at what happened in the Church and what took place; and I oftentimes think about the length of time, even of things we've had to go through. So it's physical and spiritual indeed, primarily spiritual still about God's Church and what we're able to go through and what we're able to endure and how much we can endure.

...but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. So we've experienced that in part in times past already within the Church and we're still experiencing it. And we're going to experience it all the way to the end. So there are things here that are spiritual and there are things that are physical.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; don't believe it. For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive even the elect. Is what this word means. It's not 'the very elect'; it's a mistranslation there. It's talking about 'even the elect'. So God's people have the ability, because that's who the elect are, those who have God's spirit have the ability to see, to know, and to understand if you're indeed watching.

Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; don't go forth there: if He's in the secret chambers; don't believe it. So in other words, God's people are going to know where God is, where Jesus Christ is working, and what Jesus Christ is doing and so forth, and there are going to be all kinds of things out here in the world around us, as there has been as we've gone through.

It goes on to say; **For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.** So again, He uses something very physical here that happens at the very end to teach something very spiritual in people's lives – that if you're close to God, if you're watching, you *will be able to see*, as it's *light* – like we heard the sermon that Wayne Matthews gave about *light*, what that means and the ability to see something that's bright. It's a very powerful thing that God gives to us – the ability to see what is true and understand it and to hold tight to what God has given. And if you have that kind of vision it's going to be, indeed, like lightening that goes along with Thunder – it's going to be bright, something you can see powerfully in the world around you.

See, I wish that everyone could see it in the same manner and be stirred up in the same manner all the time on a continuing basis and not to let down spiritually in your life, and not to let certain things come along that dissuade you or cause doubt in your minds; because those things happen. They've always happened through time and it's no different now. But the more you see, the more stirred up, the more zeal you will have for God's way of life - you truly will – and how you live this way of life and the changes you'll be wanting to make in your life to live life better.

So again here, **verse 28 - For wherever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.** I love that verse because it's one that's very true to us. Wherever the body is, the Body of Christ, the Church of God – there is where the vultures are. It helps you to understand where God's Church is. Why do people care about such a small group like this? Why do they care about us? Why is so much written? Why is so much said? Why has it been that way for the last several years?

Before the last book came out, I used to be dumbfounded when I'd go on a website and I'd do a search on Mr. Armstrong. I would look up some article and I'd put his name in. I was dumbfounded! Page after page after page of web sites. I remember one time going there and some 40 pages appear and the overwhelming majority of it wasn't nice. I was dumbfounded by that! I'm not too dumbfounded today – still the same. Incredible, people hate God's way of life, they hate the truth, there are spirits that hate this way of life – especially right now because of things that have been said. They know what's coming, they know the time they have is very short. They're stirred up out there and there is no one they would like to destroy more or get to more than to you.

Verse 29 - Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And so it leads right up to the very end, literally something that is going to happen. But of all those things that transpire within the Church through time that build up to a great crescendo, we have experienced, and now we're getting ready for the physical things to take place in the world.

Verse 30 - And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man...so this is what we read about back in Mark; **the Son of man in heaven: and there shall**, talks about **all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.** And so again, these things aren't all just something very physical that happen on just the last day. There are things that happen and have been happening but happen in a progressive way as we get closer and closer – because the world isn't mourning as a whole. Parts of it are. You know, when you get struck by certain things that happen in your region – yes, life is made harder and people hurt, people suffer. And so wherever things happen that are happening prophetically people suffer and they hurt; but again, it's about everything building up more and more as we go farther into time.

Verse 31 – and it talks about **sending His angels with a great sound of a Trumpet**, talking about the last Trumpet there, **and there shall be**, talking about **gathering together**; so again, it's right back to what we talked about in Mark. But all the things that precede that.

Now it says, **learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near: So likewise, when you shall see these things, know that it's near, even at the doors.** So again here, this is a time even when we're able to watch and see certain things happening around us that are happening physically, prophetically, that should stir us up more! So it blows my mind that people will let down, that anyone would let down spiritually in their life and not be stirred up and excited by what's coming and where we are.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. It talks about, again, the same thing here...**heaven and earth...** But now, the important things here as we go into it...**verse 36 - But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.** I would dare say that there are probably some who are new who are still struggling with a little bit of this because it's so hard to go beyond the physical of what it's talking about here and think that it's talking about something very specific here about a specific day and time – May 27, 2012 – and it's not. It's not what this is about.

But of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, in *part*, just as many things like the stones of the temple and different things that God uses – God uses things that can be seen, things that are physical, things that *are* going to come to pass even about His return, and there are principles there for people to learn from, spiritual truths that people need to apply to their lives.

And it goes on to say, **But as the days of Noah so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For in those days**, talks about the flood, **before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark...** What's the point of all that? It's going to be the same all the way to the end – things that will happen in different parts of the world and the way people live their lives. **And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.** Again, this isn't just something that's physical – this is something spiritual.

There shall two be in the field; one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. What on earth is that all about? Why is there a warning here in the midst of all this talking about things that lead up to the end, through the end-time? Understand that it's talking very much about the Church all the way through this and what was going to happen to God's people; and it talks about a mentality, a way of thinking of people no matter when they live, just like in the days of Noah, of things you can learn from in your own life.

There shall be two in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left... Watch: for you don't know the hour that your Lord does come. We're going to stop there because I want to pick up on this next Sabbath; and just let you think about some of this portion here, about what's being discussed and who it's talking to in verses 40 and 41, and strive to understand there is a spiritual lesson here in what God is giving and what it's all about for people, because again, we need to be stirred, moved and motivated, excited about the times in which we live, what's taking place around us in the world as it continues to build up, as things continue to go forward – because when it's all said and done we have several more 'days' to march around the city. And my primary concern, just to be real candid with you at this moment in time, is that some can't hold on. Because the farther along this goes.... How long can you go

and continue to do what God tells you to do? And you see certain things happening in the world around you... do you really *see* though what's happening in the world around you?

And that's what's going to be important when all this is said and done, because again, for the Church, when you think about *time* and you think about the following year – do you have a mindset to where you can go through an *entire year* and things are happening in the world like they're happening today, continually being placed into motion and set into place but not yet happening in a massive way?

And *that's* what you have to contemplate and understand.

~~~end