

Today is *Part 3* of the *Vision* series. Last Sabbath we focused on some of the instruction given by Jesus Christ when His disciples were asking Him about when He would come in His Kingdom. And that's the occasion where they walked around the temple and Jesus Christ began to talk to them. So you'll find this in different accounts, stated in different ways, but you have to think about them at that time – they still had no idea He was going to die. To me that is incredible. They had no idea that He was going to die. They were walking around there wanting to know, "When is it going to be?" thinking it's a short term thing, that He is the Messiah, that He's going to fulfill the scriptures in the Old Testament about a Messiah and become King. And they didn't understand part of what we heard today, that He was going to die and be gone for nearly 2,000 years and then return to this earth to establish the Kingdom of God over all the earth.

And so Jesus Christ used prophetic events concerning this very end of the age, concerning the stones of the temple being cast down. He used that example there of what we've gone through concerning the apostasy, concerning the Church at that time, of something that a few of us in this roomy and in so many meeting places around the country here, that they've experienced that very thing – what it was like for the Church to go through what it did and for every individual to be cast out of God's mouth, in that respect, when it talks about that concerning the Laodicean Church being vomited out of God's mouth. Because we had to be separated from God; and it goes along a little bit with what we heard already in 1 Corinthians 3 about the temple. We are a part of the temple of God and if we don't do the work that God has given to us and grasp what God has given to us then God tells us what will happen – every man is going to be judged according to his work. And those things that are there and what will be burned up and what won't be burned up.

But we live in the end of an age when this was prophesied to happen to the Church in a very powerful way; and so God had mercy because the Church was to continue on until the return of Jesus Christ and had to be raised back up again; but referring to it in prophecy as a remnant, a small amount that was left over. And that's the *only* reason that I'm here. That's the *only* reason that those of *you* who were a part of this are here. And that's the *only* reason the rest of you are here at this time. Because God had a plan and a purpose of a remnant being raised up and to give life again in a very powerful way toward the end-time for a job and a commission that God had in this age, otherwise we wouldn't be here because we didn't do well with what God gave to us, we really didn't!

Falling asleep, letting down like we did, a gradual process that we went through, is a *shameful* thing; and sometimes we don't grasp how shameful that was! It's easy to look at the Israelites coming out of Egypt and say, "I can't believe they would do that! I can't believe after the parting of the Red Sea! I can't believe that after all those miracles that they saw, that they were a part of; that they would be like they were!" But they didn't have God's spirit.

Still kind of mind-boggling that even without God's spirit they could do it, but we need to look at ourselves. We were given God's spirit and we let down. And gradually we fell asleep and we were not doing the things that we were *charged*, that we were *given* that we should do. And only because of God's mercy and only because of God's plan and other things that He was going to reveal in a very

powerful way, even showing the power of God to deliver us (which is an awesome thing) are we here. He's blessed us mightily, He truly has. It's by God's grace and God's mercy all the way, it truly is.

But we need to respond, and that lesson has been given to us; and so even in this very period of time, though we be small and different ones are being drawn in, a part of the message that's in here right now is one that's going to be taught throughout the Millennial period: You can't afford to let down! You can't afford to not be on guard spiritually in your own life! You've got to strive, fight for, staying on guard, staying close to God and doing the work in a spiritually way that God has given us to do – *changing self, growing, repenting.*

So we looked at some various things here, things about vision. We've been focusing on that because the ability to even have vision, even where we are now; you see, because *I know all the way to the end nearly*, as we look at this, *that there are going to be people...* some today, some that are with us even to this day who won't be with us all the way! And we have just a few months left! You think, "*How can that be?*" And yet it happens. Some of you know of people in different areas who since the Feast of Tabernacles are not with us any longer and you think, "How can that be?" You think, "That won't happen to me!" Well, there's only one way that it won't happen to you and that's because you're responding to what God has given and you're doing the things that are being covered in this particular series – because it *can happen.*

Who are you? Are we 'better than' those who have preceded us, those who've gone before us? Those who are out there in a scattering right now in a lot of different organizations and groups? Different ministers out there who taught for 30-40 years God's way of life and then began to let down at some point in their life and fell asleep as every one of us did? Are we better? We're not! We have to be careful. We have to be on guard.

So we're going to return to Matthew 24 where we left off and continue on with this. That's why this cry is going out, in that respect, so that we *will do the things* that we need to do *all the way* to the end! There's but a short time in front of us now, we don't have that far, but some of the greatest trials and testing in your life are ahead of you yet! They're in front of you! Do you feel like you've gone through a lot? You're going to go through more before this is over with! If some of you think you had some difficulty when we came to the 50th Truth – you're going to have some difficulty with what's in front of you right now – because not everything happens in the way that you have planted in your mind and the way you think it has to take place. And so it will be in this end-time with physical things that happen on this earth!

How long can you go and hold tight, hold fast to what God has given to you and not let things around you, in the world around you affect or influence you? Where you begin to think, "Well, 'this' hasn't happened, or 'that' hasn't happened" and you begin to listen to other things around you, tearing at you or pulling at you, and after a while it begins to get the best of you – because it will if you're not doing what we're covering in this series, truly will.

So again, a quick review here, Matthew 24. There is a vision we must have of where we have been. If you know where you have been, even a short time here, and your belief of those things, that the scattered body here has gone through in the time of the apostasy and so forth – if you see those things and you keep those things in your mind, in your being and review them from time to time, it will give you vision! It will give you strength! It truly does! You've got to know where we have been, where the

Church has been of recent time even, what we've gone through and what God has delivered to us about those things and about that period of time – to know where we are right *now*, to have confidence and boldness of what's going on in the world around us right now.

I marvel right now at all economic news that is coming out. I'm *dumbfounded* by it and the world's fast asleep to it! But it should be so clear – it's ready to topple! *Everything* is getting so close and ready to topple, but it won't until God's time. The economies of this world falling... this is the year, 2011, for great economic downfall and collapse in a system that the world is going to keep trying to prop up. *Even Europe* is going to continue to try to prop up an economy. *China* is going to continue to try to prop it up! You read about some of the things in Revelation where God says don't destroy certain things...even during that last period of 5+ months. Their task before them is don't destroy it; on the contrary, they're going to keep trying to inflate it and hold it up – keep it in place, things like the Euro and the Yuan and so forth...not necessarily the dollar, but even that... *What if* they continue to try to prop up certain things *there* for a time?

You don't know everything! I don't know everything! We don't know everything! We've got to continue to go forward in confidence and boldness and faith with the overall picture of what *is* taking place, just like we heard earlier. God's Kingdom is *almost* here! We're almost there! *Of ALL TIMES* in earth's history don't be one to have such shame in your life that it was during this next period of time in the next few months that you go by the wayside! What a horrible thing! There's going to be weeping and gnashing of people anyway, in the thousands, when they're resurrected, who were a part of Worldwide and lived on into Laodicea. When they're resurrected they're going to have such shame in their lives when they finally see... that's what they're going to feel in a very powerful way. "I can't *believe* that I did that! I can't *believe* that I *couldn't* see that!" But they were so weak that they couldn't see it. Amazing! Incredible! Incredibly amazing! Almost unbelievable! And there's going to be weeping and gnashing of teeth themselves for what they did, the choices they made; and going to be deep, deep, deep repentance.

But God's merciful, just as anyone who has had their mind opened, when they finally see what they see, when they're finally awaked out of a spiritual sleep, who was a part of the past, and all of a sudden they see it – and that shame, thinking, "*Look what I did!* Look how I let down!" It's going to be far greater then because those who are resurrected in that hundred year period are going to look back at that thousand years that they missed out on... "Look at the treasure, look at what God placed before me...and look at what I did to it." Astounding!

Matthew 24:3 - And 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 the end of this age? What is it? See, they're not looking ahead 2,000 years, they're looking ahead in a few months or a few years, "But when is it? What's going to take place? What is a *sign* of this finally taking place, of finally happening? What can we expect ahead of us here now?" They had no idea.

And jumping on down to **verse 11** it talks about how Christ began to talk to them about various things and He said, **Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.** That's been the history over the last 2,000 years; it's still the way things are. False teachings out there and the power of Satan to deceive through so many different avenues that he's chosen and what he does. And those things that even happen within the church during an apostasy – because these things led up to the end, these things that Jesus Christ talked about are things that are leading up to a period of time that things are going to begin

happening faster. And so He leads it up to that and these things are then magnified at the very end. So even within the true Church of God these things began to take place, many began to be deceived!

Look at what took place! Power, signs and lying wonders that took place in Worldwide that deceived people and people began to think that they needed to go back to *what they came out of!* *Need to go back to Sunday, need to go back to things taught in traditional Christianity – it really was okay! Every day's a good day to worship Jesus Christ!* You think, [smacks head a couple times] "What's wrong with you?! You proved those things in the very beginning; that YES you should worship Jesus Christ every day, but ONE DAY is the Sabbath day – and you've swallowed that garbage up, that swill again of the Protestant world?" That's what happened.

You think it couldn't have happened to you if you lived at that time? Every one of you today that's called, every one of you who's new in the last few years – if you'd been living back there at that time you would have done *EXACTLY the same thing!* *Don't think you wouldn't have; don't think it couldn't happen to you!* It happened to EVERYBODY, everyone... *everyone!* Powerful – power, signs and lying wonders on a spiritual plane that took place in/to God's own Church, God's own people.

It says, **and they shall deceive many;** many have been deceived, gone off in different directions. Today many people are deceived. It's a very frustrating thing for me sometimes thinking about different ones and some of the different groups; and whenever you come across any of them and you talk to them whether it be someone in United or Living, or now the new one, the Church of God – a Worldwide Association; or whatever it is. All these things that take place! You come across someone, you start talking and you can only talk to a certain point. And there's something of the past to a certain point, and that's it, because there's no depth of understanding of what's taken place, that there was an apostasy, that there was a great falling away – that they don't *know* those things! They don't have the *vision* and the *conviction* because of those things. If you see those things and you know they happened and why they happened, that strengthens your vision, it strengthens your determination, it strengthens your zeal and your drive to stay close to God, to not let down, and to understand how blessed you are with what God has given you.

Verse 12 - And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. That's exactly what happens and that's what happens when anybody leaves God's Church. Somewhere along the line, if they had it, that agape (because it's *God's love*); because God's spirit begins to wane they begin to lose something there that gave them life in the beginning, that gave them the ability to see and have vision. All of a sudden because of...generally within, obviously, this is about relationships, and because people let down in relationships and don't apply the things that God is giving. Just like what we've gone through in a recent series...if we're not all applying those things concerning relationships between men and women – all across the board – and we have *great respect* for one another – something's wrong with us! And if we're not changing we're in dire, dire trouble, deep, deep trouble!

We've got to change when things come along, when God gives them to us; and if we're not doing that then the love will begin to wax cold because God's spirit begins to wane, we begin to lose that strength and power – and you can't do this on your own, you can't love this way on your own, you've got to have God's spirit. And so if the love begins to wax cold, just like what happened during the apostasy, massive destruction of the Temple, massive destruction across the board.

So you can't allow those things to happen in your life. And how you think about one another? How you treat each other, how you have respect toward one another is something you can't work up, it's something that you've got to pray about and ask God to help you to have and repent of when you find out that it's wrong, when you don't have it in your life.

Going on...**verse 13 - But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.** You've got to fight to the end, whatever that end is. And that's really what Matthew 24 is about; whatever your *end* is in life...if it come to death that's your end. And so it's been that way for 2,000 years for the Church, that you've got to fight until that end! Only those will be saved – those who endure to the end, fight to the end, who work to the end! Those are the ones that are going to be delivered. And in like manner, in a very powerful way, in a very unique way, to a group now at the end of an age who will live on physically. They'll be able to continue on, to be able to be saved through the things that are ahead.

Because I tell you what, when we let down, if we let down, if we turn from God after what He's given to us, after a calling – Why would He give intervention to deliver us into a new age? Do we *value*, do we *grasp* what we've been given? We are being judged *differently* from the world and those who have not yet been called. We are being judged *totally* in a different fashion, in a different way – and God will see to it in those kinds of cases, if we turn against what He has given to us and we treat in a bad way the riches He's given to us and we have disdain toward it – that we *will not be there!* That's the difference, see. That's the difference; that we *won't* be there! Why should we be there? Why should we reap of that when we've been offered something so powerful in the beginning? It's just as much as the children of Israel during the period of the exodus from Egypt, when for 40 years... there's a reason why God saw to it that *not one person*, save those few (less than a handful) of a certain age were able to go on into a Promised Land physically. The same thing is taking place now.

I feel sorry, I feel badly for some who have turned their back on God and what God has offered to them, because they have thrown away those opportunities to be able to go on into a new age, truly have, if there's not some *powerful* repentance right away in their lives.

Then we came to the commission of Mr. Armstrong that he knew was his during the period of Philadelphia; **verse 14 - And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.** Already in the end-time in his period of time, but those things are coming behind that that will have to take place, that so many prophecies point at and the things about the apostasy and so forth that had to take place. All those things are going to come afterward. And that's what it goes into in the very next verse then that had to take place during the Laodicean era, the final era of the Church.

Verse 15 - When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet.... You see, there are a lot of people today in scattered groups who don't have vision of where we are and where we're going. They don't know if Jesus Christ is going to return 10 years possibly from now, 25 years from now, or a hundred years maybe from now – because that's what some believe – it could be that far away because they don't believe there's been an apostasy! And because they don't have *vision* of what we've gone through in the past, that yes, we did have an apostasy, and because they don't have that vision... what a horrible state! To think that it could be 25 years...and what does that do to a person's life? ...or a hundred years away – because you believe that the church has to grow so large, much larger than what it was in Mr. Armstrong's day, in order to have a big apostasy that it talks about. Because they don't believe we've really had one yet. They don't believe there was a man of sin

or a son of perdition. They don't believe the stones of the temple have fallen down and that we all were guilty and had to repent. *So where do you go if you don't believe those things?! What are you going to do? Really!* Do we *believe* those things, those basic things about what the Church went through?

Because you see, it's only in the *vision* of the things you've gone through that give you strength to look forward to see what's coming, to have *boldness* that *this is it!* *This is what you received and where you received it* – in God's Church! How can you leave it? How can you deceive yourself in going off someplace else? How can you think, "Well, certain things haven't happened yet so I just can't do it any longer...can't go at it any longer." Get up to November next year here... [sigh] "Can't do it any longer. That's my limit." How could *anyone* sanely make such a decision if they *know* who we are? If they *know* what we've come through? That *we are the Church of God!* You can't go anywhere else and have these things taught to you like this.

You don't have the 50 truths... 57 now – you don't have those, let alone 36 or whatever number you want to stop at, whatever number you want to go back to – past the 21. Where on earth do you go? Living? United? Where? Out there on your own? ...that you're going to discover these things on your own somehow now? ...that God has given you a *special* calling? You're two years old and God has given you this special calling to leave the Church at the end-time? We've had that happen to some people! Something's loose up here [taps head] for that to happen – real loose!

Don't think these things can't happen to you. Hold fast to what you've been given! Because see, that gives you the confidence and the boldness of *who you are* – that you *have* God's spirit dwelling in you, that you *have* opportunity right now, and that you've got to hold fast all the way to the end, whatever that is, that you're ready to turn to the left or the right or do whatever as it's given to you. Because there are things that have not been given to you yet because they have not been given to me yet; and I know they'll be given to you when they're given to me – because *that's how God works* and that's how He works through any prophet at the end-time. And so we are at that particular time, and the kind of boldness and confidence we have in that, our ability to all of a sudden start listening to something else or thinking we need to listen to something different... it blows the mind, it truly does!

Wherefore when you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand:) but you can't if you don't have vision. You can't if you don't grasp what we've gone through, you can't if you don't repent of what we've all done – talking about the scattered groups out there and so forth. They don't understand what happened to them, they don't understand why we were all scattered; they don't believe it. They think that somehow God's working with all of us together and somehow He's going to get us there. Well, that's what the Protestant world thinks! That somehow all these different groups out there..."Yeah, they don't agree with each other and some believe one thing about hell, and some believe something else about heaven and some believe certain things about Christ's return, or not returning at all and we're all going to go up there and maybe some are going to go up there for 7 years and then come down later on and... but somehow God's just kind of working with all of us and *we'll all get there.*" Bull! That's not how God works. There's one truth, one way of life – and so it is with all the scattered groups. They don't agree with each other; and the number one issue.... Do you know what the number one truth is that God gave very powerfully so to Mr. Armstrong? *Government!* And the very fact there are different organizations shows different governments. They don't understand that truth, they're blind to it. Can you become blind to that? It's happened to people since the Feast of Tabernacles. It happens every year. Every year I've been in God's Church people leave! It's a horrifying thing!

Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains...I think of what happened when the scattering first took place and different organizations started to pop up, different government organizations that were spit out of God's mouth, popped up in different places and people had to flee to try to hold on to what they had until God began to make it clear where He was working and what He was doing. And we had about 3½ years there where the government was scattered; but then God brought it together.

So incredible things we've gone through, truly. My vision of those things is quite keen. I lived them; the worst of times and the best of times in the midst of it all. It's in here, in a very powerful way in my mind. Saw it, lived it. Others in this Body saw it and lived it; been awakened to see and understand and grasp it and *know* with great power where we've been. And that truly strengthens our vision of where we are and where we're going. It helps to stir you up to not let down. It helps to stir you up to fight the fight. And so every one of us needs to have that kind of vision and that kind of insight and that kind of understanding – to hold onto it.

That's why sometimes I encourage people to go back and study those truths – because you'll not get them anywhere else. How deeply embedded in your being are they? They aren't anywhere else, period, exclamation mark! And then sometimes if we're not careful we get hung up on one or two of them or whatever. If we understand, we won't get hung up. If we see them we won't get hung up. Because the rest of them can't be there unless God is there.

Going on in scripture here, a keen area of insight, a vision that people were to hold fast, but can only do so by being on guard spiritually as we've been talking about. **Verse 27 - For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.** And so, all these things aren't instantaneous events. I hope we understand that; that there are things that have to do with periods of time depending on who they apply to and the situation they apply to. And just as lightning – the ability to *see* what happened to us, to the Church – lightning was the first, if you will, the 1st Seal. When that took place that was like lightning that Jesus Christ is returning – to those who have eyes to see, ears to hear. It truly was a very powerful thing; that Jesus Christ is coming back. Not that day! But it was a powerful sign when the apostasy took place, a shaking that took place; and then all the things that followed after that, continued to go on. Powerful that we're able to see it! And there are things happening today that are like lightning, or *thunder*, or whatever it is that people should be able to hear or see – but can't, or don't. But you've been given that ability.

For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Literally when it finally comes up to it, but Jesus Christ is using it, all these events that lead up to the *very end* to teach us powerful lessons that lead us up spiritually to that same time period – to endure to the end. It's not about the physical coming in the sense of being able to see it physically on that particular day, or His feet standing upon the Mount of Olives which is going to take place *physically* on that day – these are *spiritual* things that lead up to that time, that get us through that time, that bring us on into a period of time...all these things are that are being discussed here.

For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Again, for those spiritually watchful it can be clearly seen. That's the point.

Verse 28 - For wherever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together... this is one that I look at. I don't enjoy it. I don't enjoy being picked on like birds and vultures do and their wanting to pick

away at and tear apart and destroy. I think of Mr. Armstrong making comments, “They’re like *vultures* waiting for me to die!” Amazing! And so, to me, why would anybody be worried about such a small group like us. Why would there be so much out there? Why do so many *people* spend so much time (like to use different expressions, but I can’t) tear away at us? Who are we? We’re puny! Incredible! I don’t see the same things out there in different areas in different groups and so forth – but man, a little group like this. Incredible!

Wherever the Body/carcass is there are the vultures; it’s a proof of where God’s Church is. It’s the way it was with Mr. Armstrong. They weren’t concerned about different groups out there and different ones out there in the same manner, especially at that period of time. You see that happening in the Protestant world? Obviously not. But the same things apply here spiritually to us in a scattered body, in the groups that are out here today.

Matthew 24 finally jumps ahead to events leading up to the very return of Jesus Christ; but they’re events that lead up to that time, talking about continuing tribulation and the very signs in heaven from which the nations begin to mourn. Even that there is a process – when they begin to mourn. It’s because of what’s happening to them. They’re mourning now; not enough to repent, but they’re mourning now. There are people out there hurting now. There are groups out there hurting right now. There are corporations out there hurting right now. There are governments out there hurting right now. They’re hurting, they’re mourning, they don’t like what we’re going through and they have to talk about how much better it’s going to get. “Got to get the people to believe this! Especially anybody that puts money in the stock market – you’ve got to get them to believe this, that we’re doing better... look at that, look at the *numbers*... they don’t lie do they? He he he!”

So the higher the numbers, the greater the fall – sad, sad, sad human nature, how greedy human beings are. But that’s what it’s all about to finally bring mankind to a point where he truly *will mourn* far more deeply. But the mourning has already started; it started in 2008 in a very powerful way and it’s continuing on. And I’ll tell you what; there are a lot of things going on out there where people are not happy campers. Different countries, different problems stirring up right now because this just *won’t go away!* And now we’re going to raise our debt limit again. Oh, that’s an encouraging sign to the *whole world* that we won’t bring down our costs of things and won’t cut corners. No, let’s just say we can print more money – that’s the solution – have more dollars out there.

The *Chinese* like to hear that because all their dollars are worth less, the world’s primary reserve currency is worth less to everybody that’s holding it. We’ve got some sermons coming where we’re going to discuss some of this stuff. This world is in a heap of big trouble economically. If somebody were out there listening and they *don’t believe* May 27, 2012 – *FINE!* Think you’re going to take a bath? You think the world’s about ready to take a bath? You think the dollar bill is about ready to come to a screeching halt and even the Yuan can replace it? There are people talking about China. Number one! And if time were to go on *THEY WOULD BE NUMBER ONE!* They are already the second most powerful in the world as far as an economy is concerned. What’s going to stop them? What’s going to stop them from taking over different resources around the world?

We are so *dumb* sometimes when you look at the military things that take place in the world and why they have strategies of their naval fleets and so forth and their ability to manoeuvre like they do – that they can bring a submarine up in the middle of our fleet and we don’t even know it. And the things they do behind the scenes...and now the stealth bomber that caught everybody off guard. “Where’d that

come from?" They didn't know about it. Oh, I wonder what else they have back there that we don't know about. Incredible what's going on in the world; and we think that somehow we're just going to continue on.

Every nation, kingdom we heard of before, that was spoken of in Daniel – the Babylonian Empire/Chaldean Empire – did they ever think they were going to come to an end? The Greco-Macedonian Empire? The Mede-Persian Empire before that? And then the Roman Empire and it's had several ups and downs along the way. People don't think they're going to end. They've all ended! Given enough time they'll all end. And we're there now – at the end – even if it weren't the end of Jesus Christ returning. Even if people didn't believe and *even if it weren't going to happen*; I hope you understand – *even if He weren't going to return* we've had it as a country. This nation's had it! It's at its end. Europe would rise, China would rise – there's going to be a Third World War. If you look in time, no matter what, it's coming, just in the world, the way the world is without God in the picture. Man left to himself, a World War is coming! China's already planning it. *China is already planning for it!* Amazing! They know a World War is coming. They know that this country's not going to go down peacefully and they have no qualms about it. They have no qualms about losing millions of people. They have *no qualms* about it! They don't think like we do and that's our downfall too, because we don't understand how they think.

Sad, sad, sad...and look how much we have to believe. We *know* where we are in time, we *know* what's coming. Incredible where we live and the time we live in!

The Thunders are taking place. If you're seeing any kind of news events from time to time, if you're not letting yourself be lulled to sleep – and don't let that happen; that you begin to think, "Well, this is just the way the world has always been." Don't let those things happen to you. It's good that these things can stir you up. Everything I'm talking about here today can stir you up – things you understand about what's happened to God's Church in times past; the greater the conviction of where His Church is today, gives you encouragement and strength and boldness and *fear* to let down, *fear* to go away from the Body, *fear* to have doubts come into your mind. If you have any kind of doubt that ever comes into your mind, you should *fear* that and realize how close to the edge you can be when those things happen. Ask God to stir up your spirit, to stir up your life and to give you vision so you can see clearly what has happened, what's happening now and what's getting ready to happen – and He'll do it. But you've got to do your part; you've got to apply yourself to the process.

So I think of even just this past week, just little things in the news, spin offs of things that we talked about already – Brazil; death toll keeps climbing. Floodwaters keep coming in Australia; they're talking about problems that are going to continue on now because of some of the waters and where they're going and some of it that'll be dammed up and when it gets hot and what happens when other areas are not going to be flooded because certain waters are going to stay in certain areas and not drain out to the sea and that that affects the weather down there and so forth. South Africa now in the news because of their flooding that's taking place down there and sharply affecting agriculture. And it's just one thing after another. I'm just mentioning a few things here about weather because those things there, if you understand what's happening to food, if you have *vision*, if you're understanding that the world's food supply is getting worse and worse and all these things just add to it. And then you add to that the problems with money, the economy – and then certain prices going up... it's like a 'catch-22', it just gets worse and worse and worse.

And then this past week – a report from the New Caledonia region says...

CYCLONE and floods hit Asia-Pacific commodities

James Regan and Rebekah Kebede,
Reuters January 14, 2011, 6:53 pm

SYDNEY (Reuters) – A tropical cyclone forced five mines in New Caledonia producing 4 percent of the world's nickel to shut on Friday...

They produce, I think, 25% of the world's total...

...while flooding in Australia shut in millions of tonnes in coal and aluminum exports.

Severe weather is raising the cost of raw materials, potentially fuelling inflation in the industrial heartlands of Asia, which rely on the commodities to produce steel, generate power and make everything from bathroom fixtures to airplanes.

The price of steel making coal from Australia has jumped 35 percent...¹

Every day these reports come out of things that are being affected, of this little pot that's just being stirred up more and more and more – not getting better and better but rather more stirred up. And are there people who make money on it? Sadly, yes, on the woes and the mourning of mankind.

I think of one report I just missed a few weeks back when we were talking about dead animals and so forth. Talked about thousands of dead octopuses that washed up on the beaches of northern Portugal. Thousands of them, there's a video out there of a guy going out and just picking them all up on the beach and throwing them in bags and hauling them off – all over the place.² *All these things* are just a little prelude to things far greater that are coming, but it shows that things aren't right out there.

I'll tell you what, all the oil that went out of the Gulf...if you think that doesn't have something to do with some things that are going to take place in the ocean yet... "Oil all disappeared – whew- it's all over, there's no problem, everything's fine!" BP and the governments want you to think that one.

Anyway, crazy, crazy things that are taking place in the world right and left.

Matthew 24:36 - But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. Literally – yes. And we know how God works, until He revealed at the end-time the way God works, and He says that He won't do anything before He reveals it first to His prophets. That's how God works. And so there are certain things that He's reserved and kept in time until it's *time*. And so it just isn't given by God until it's time. And there are things about a spirit world that we don't comprehend. There are things that *God keeps to Himself* until it's time to be given. It isn't communicated from Him in any fashion or form because there's a being out there and beings; until it's over with, until they're put away we're still going through certain things.

¹ <http://news.yahoo.com.au/world/a/-/world/8653210/cyclone-and-floods-hit-asia-pacific-commodities/>

² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8438477.stm>

Verse 37 – It’s awesome what this is teaching if people just have ears to hear and eyes to see – very powerful lessons. **But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in those days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,** and we see the world’s going to be like that as a whole and some areas are going to suffer more and not be exactly that way and there’s going to be a slow transition take place through time here, but it’s going to be slow in one respect, fast in others. **And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.** Man’s going to resist, those who have power, all the way to the end. *All the way to the end!* Europe, Asia? The vast majority of mankind is going to resist all the way to the end, they truly are. Only those who are humbled beforehand, the scattered nations of Israel, where they’re located, and some others in other areas and the like.

So, on a physical plane this will be true as it always has been, just like it says here, **they knew not until the flood came.** In other words, who listens to God? It’s always been that way and who listened to Noah? They didn’t believe Noah until the flood came, until the waters came. And you know what? Then they started believing. Amazing! When you start doing the back-stroke and the front-stroke and trying to hold on to anything that’s floating, and then eventually you die, you drown because you just can’t stroke any longer...a little too late, but this may all be true, like to be on that thing with Noah! Little too late then, isn’t it? So it’s the same way today; unless God specifically gives you a calling and draws you out of it you can’t know it, you can’t hear it, you can’t see it. All of us, God’s give that to us, the ability to see and the ability to hear. Treasure! Riches! *Powerful!* ...that the world doesn’t have yet.

And so the lesson in a lot of this is; who listens to God’s prophets? Who listens to God? It’s the way it’s always been; it’s going to be that way all the way to the end here. But right now, when you read this, the instruction here *isn’t about the world*, because the world isn’t being addressed here. It’s about God’s people, it’s about the Church that’s being addressed and are warned all the way through what Jesus Christ is telling the disciples. These are *warnings* to the Church! So how are *we* being warned about *this*? What is the warning to us? I think about asking the question here too: What is the concern and the warning that we covered last week? What does Christ cover here in the instruction just a few verses down?

It’s the expression, again, of Christ’s coming being likened to a thief. Don’t let that be lost on you – okay? Do you understand *why* He stated these things in this particular fashion as we’re reading through this? Because there’s a purpose in all this that’s directed to the Church – not to the world, because they can’t hear. And it has to do with things given in the book of Revelation and some other examples as well.

Let’s turn over to Revelation 16. Let’s notice a verse inserted right in the midst of other verses leading right up to the final 7th Vial – see, right up to the very end! And this is talking about after Jesus Christ’s return – He’s in the heavens, the 144,000 are already resurrected, but here are the 7 Vials now in that one day all being poured out upon the earth because it’s about the destruction of Europe and of Asia and so forth that God Himself is going to do in bringing them down before Jesus Christ’s feet stand on the Mount of Olives on that day. And so these things are taking place; so right in the middle of the 6th Vial and the 7th Vial – just before the 7th Vial is poured out notice what it says – an important warning to God’s Church.

Revelation 16:15 - Behold, I come as a thief. You think the world's going to listen to that? So the world all of a sudden will listen to something that's happened on the very last day just before Jesus Christ's feet touch the Mount of Olives? No! This is about the Church! **Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he who watches, a warning for the past 2,000 years for God's Church! Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments...** What is that all about? Well, it's an expression used about your garments, to be kept white and how you live your life and how you're responding to God – watching, keeping alert spiritually, staying close to God; **lest he walk naked**, now I'll just tell you, if you wait between the 6th and 7th Vial, *you've waited a little long!* The point of all this is to learn from this whenever you lived and were a part of God's Church. Because the eventuality is indeed God's Kingdom coming to this earth and the return of Jesus Christ, but there's a very powerful lesson that's contained in all of Matthew 24 here that shouldn't be lost on us in any fashion or form; **lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments...** He said He's going to come as a thief. How does all that fit together?

Revelation 3, let's turn over there; an even greater warning that we should learn from. How is it to His Church...? How is it to a Church that He would give a warning and say, "I'm coming as a thief"? What happens when a thief comes by? What's their objective? To take from you what you have, to take from you what's been given to you, or what you've gained, or whatever you have, that's their objective, and Christ is warning, "Be careful... be careful!"

Revelation 3:1 - And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write; an interesting era of God's Church. Here was an era following Thyatira that lasted hundreds of years; the longest era of God's Church through time, over a thousand years. And all of a sudden by the end of that period of time and you get into the 1500's - 1600 period, Sardis comes along, the printing press comes along, and it's no longer just the Catholic Church, they begin to pop up in different areas! And you have this *impact* then because of all this that's happening in the world – and now it takes an impact on God's Church in a very powerful way and they begin to *lose* the things that they have – the Sardis Church did. They didn't have much by the time Mr. Armstrong was brought along, by the time that it finally came to a point where if God hadn't intervened there would be nothing left. But the Church was to endure through time.

And unto the ...church in Sardis write; These things says He who has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know YOUR WORKS, YOUR WORKS; we heard about that in 1 Corinthians 3 today; be careful how you *build* upon the foundation, because God's going to reveal what sort of *work* you have, whether it's going to be burned up... Can that happen to people in God's Church? That the work that you had or were building upon, all of a sudden now it can be burned up because it's made from wood, hay and stubble/straw? Absolutely! Or is it gold, silver and precious stones that we just heard this morning. That's what it's talking about here.

I know your works; not much left, **that you have a name that you live, and yet are dead.** You have the name Church of God – but look at you, look at what you have - **Be watchful!** With what you have...they didn't have much but He told them to be watchful, to be on guard. Guard, protect what you have ...**and strengthen the things which remain**, the Sabbath – make sure you're doing as... observing it in the most effective and powerful meaningful way. You hold onto that, stir it up within you! The name – understand what the name means, that you bear the name The Church of God and how important that is that you're God's people. And tithing – see that you continue to do that and strengthen that – don't fudge, don't play games with God! Those three things were in Sardis; and He said **strengthen what**

remains. Amazing! Powerful! The main areas that people let down in if they're not careful, that can destroy.

It says, **strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die:** because even those 3 truths were ready to die out. Incredible! ...**for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard...** You know why it says that? Anybody that was brought into Sardis – God told them, “Remember where you heard it. Remember how you received this. Remember how you learned it. Remember your calling! Remember what was given to you and don't forget it!” And a part of not forgetting that too is where you learned it, where you received it in the first place, where God is working. Because there's a way that God works and has worked through time. It's been unique to us in the end-time because of the scattered groups and so forth, but before that it wasn't that way – there was one Church of God that was not scattered through time and didn't experience what we experienced in the sense of a scattering. We are unique in what we've gone through.

Remember how you received and heard; and that's true today too! Remember what you've received. Remember where you heard it. Remember, think about how God works, how you're able to see that there was an apostasy, that you learned of those things, about the stones of the temple that were cast down, about the man of sin and who he was. How do you know those things? Where did you learn them? What stirred you up? Because it's God's spirit that stirred you up, but He brought you to where the truth was. That's just a reality. It's not about pride and haughtiness – it's just the *truth! It's the way it is!* And we have to hold onto that.

And it says, **and hold fast,** remember where you've received it and heard and hold onto it more than ever before. And I think of how much more we've received! Incredible! 21 Truths? NO – 57! Look how rich we've been blessed by God! And yet people leave. It's been that way and it'll always be that way. And it astounds me sometimes that that can happen spiritually to anyone's life; but it does.

...hold fast and repent. Because with the truth we have to repent. Of the 57 truths – *if you're not in unity and oneness there's something there you've got to repent of... if you're not at one with that!* What is it that we're holding back in? What is it that we're not embracing and believe with all of our being? What is it? Women can be ordained? What is it? I don't know. There has been a lot of changes in God's Church from the 21st truth all the way to 57 – a lot of *growth!* A lot of exciting truth! But it's up to us whether or not we believe it. We only, each one of us individually, can make that decision and choice and only each of us individually can hold onto it with all of our being and *love* what God has given to us – love it. If you love the truth you won't forsake it. If you love the truth you won't forsake God. If you love the truth you'll have powerful vision, you'll have incredible confidence and boldness about where you're going.

Remember therefore how you received and heard; and hold fast and repent. If you therefore shall not watch, and this is true for anybody of any era, doesn't matter; but this was specifically geared more toward them. But there are lessons from all seven eras that we all can glean from when we read through them. Some just apply to specific times more than others because they were more to the point of what they had to do at that time.

If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief: Why? Because you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing; you're not watching. And if you're not watching you're not spiritually on

guard - what you have is going to be taken from you. You're not going to be able to keep it. Remember the pounds? The ten servants and the ten pounds that were given out that we heard about in Luke 19? Incredible! The pounds – certain ones that gained more. Got to the last one – nothing gained there, but they thought they had it. Isn't it amazing how the mind can deceive itself in thinking, "I still have it." They'll walk out of God's Church but say "I still have the truth. I believe I have this relationship with God." It blows my mind! The audacity, the blindness of individuals when they get to that point and they still think they have this relationship with God. "It's You and me..." Forget the Church, forget the ministry, it's just this special connection between them and God. People come to that in their lives. Sad, sad, sad - because there's no such connection. It's not just between you and God – that's not how God works.

And some will misuse that (not any of us). Yes, you are to go to God; continually on your knees before God and pray for and cry out for the holy spirit and for guidance and direction. But I'm talking about how that you can have that relationship without the Church, without Sabbath sermons and so forth. There's no such thing as being able to have that relationship without those things in the middle. That's the point of it all.

So He says, **I'll come as a thief, and you shall not know...** look at this! And you won't know **what hour I'll come unto you.** Incredible! "I'll come as a thief and you won't know what hour it happens." *The timing of Matthew 24 and talking about 'no man knows the day or the hour' is NOT about the day and the hour He returns, it's about that which is spiritual – that if you're not watching and being alert and on guard you will have taken from you what you have, and you won't know when that's going to happen in your life because you get so weak anyway you can't know it, you just don't know it. It doesn't matter if you lived twenty years ago, two hundred years ago, or almost two thousand years ago, if you weren't watching and being alert and on guard your hour came and you weren't aware. And what you thought you had was taken from you.*

And there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth when those people are resurrected, if they are resurrected – see, because that's God's judgement – because some commit the unpardonable sin because they really don't want God's way of life. There are some who've done that. They don't want the truth no matter what. They don't *want* to be reawakened, or to be awakened again. That's God's judgement – He knows the mind; but there are people who have done those things. Dangerous ground, dangerous situation to be in.

Powerful lessons here in what it says in Revelation 3 to Sardis because it's a truth that exists and is very powerful in what it's talking about in Matthew 24. It's talking about the time; that you can have taken from you everything that you have if you're not watching and being alert and being on guard spiritually. It's about a spiritual condition; because you can lose it, you can have it taken from you.

I will come unto you as a thief and you'll not know what hour I'll come unto you. So it isn't about the hour of His return. It's not about May 27, 2012 – okay? It's about anyone in God's Church over the past 2,000 years – that we're to be on guard, we're to be doing what we're supposed to be doing and what God has shown us and given us – being watchful and alert.

It says, **You have a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.** See, these garments again – white. **He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;** it's a spiritual condition, it's a spiritual state, it's about a

relationship with God, about a desire to get rid of sin, it's about a continuing repentance in our lives day by day – Sabbath to Sabbath because we hear things that we.... I repented in the back of the room today as I heard some of the sermon – moved by, stirred by some of the things of what I heard Mr. Harrell talking about – and I asked God for forgiveness as I was listening to the sermon in certain verses – something I can be doing better and should be striving to do better. We can all see changes that need to take place in our life, of things that need to be brought into subjection even more so. And if you ever get to a point where you're not doing that – you're dead and your hour has come! It's a spiritual state! There's never a time we don't need to repent and change and be taking correction and guidance and direction from God. On the contrary, it's a way of life and I love it! *I love it!* I don't love what I am but I love that God's granted me the ability to repent and change and I don't have to stay the way I am and He'll forgive me of what I am – because I want to hold onto that which is richer and awesome and powerful; and I want that white raiment, white clothing, the righteousness of God – not mine – His and Jesus Christ.

He who overcomes, overcomes, conquers, that's what the word is. You have to fight! You can't quit fighting! And sometimes people get tired of fighting; they get tired of fighting some things with their unbelieving mate, or unbelieving children, or unbelieving parents – or whatever it might be. They get tired of fighting the fight! *WHY?* Why get tired of fighting it? What is more valuable to you? You can't deliver *them!* You can't give them God's mind and God's way of life; but hopefully in time, because of what you're living that may have an impact in their life. You don't know. Paul talks about that in Corinthians. And whether they do or whether they *don't*, do you *want* what God has offered you?

We're at the end. We have just a few months left! Do you want *this* world and to die with it? How much do you believe that? Or do you want the world to come, to be a part of it, to help change *everything!* Because I'll tell you what – *everything needs to be changed.* *I ache inside* day by day, I am *wary* of this world and this world's systems, the governments of this world, of the lies and the lying and the greediness of mankind. And the more I've grown, the more God's given me to see, the more I'm wary of it and I think of how God has done this *for 6,000 years!* Blows my mind! But He has the vision to give to us so we can have a little bit of it – because it's all about what's here. He's worked for it for a long, long time and He's excited about it.

I guess we'll make a Part 4 out of this. We'll stop there. Enough to digest here just to go through some of these things and think about some of these things, mediate upon some of these things. And I think of some of the interviews. I think of some of them, trying to answer them about, "No man knows the day or the hour." The best one you can give them that they can even *possibly* begin to understand is about, "Yes, but God reveals them to His prophets." But you see, that's not what this is about and that's not what those verses are even about, the day or the hour. It has to do with God's Church – and how can you give that to the world? You can't. Sometimes it's frustrating isn't it? You can't teach them. You can't give them the spiritual things because they can't receive it – and so they don't listen to God.

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