

Thought I would make comment here that after last Sabbath's sermon I had several requests for more information, or even clarification on some information, and what do certain things mean. Candidly, that is a particular sermon that I can't give you more than what I gave you. I know there's a little more coming at some point here to be added to that, and obviously a little more clarification. I know where some of it's probably going, but just to let you know, there are times, just like in writing the second book, I didn't know where I was going until I started writing it and then it was given to me, and the same thing as with that sermon. There are questions I have, things I'd like to know, but they're not being given. It's just a matter that, in essence, for that sermon there I was to give it and that's the way that works. I can't give you any more.

We all have questions about things. We're to watch as we go along, just like this week here, some Thunders occurring but it's not like what's coming. So again here, those that live on the East Coast can be very thankful that that hurricane didn't become worse than what it was and that you're able to continue doing the things you're able to do for as long as you can. And that's the process we're learning from. So there'll be more coming, I'm sure probably at the Feast the way things are looking, but you just have to wait. Just like I mentioned about the Trumpets – we don't know when the second takes place until it takes place – that's a reality. And there's much to learn from that.

And I might add; always with an attitude of trying to understand what is God doing, because it's a matter of what God is doing. Sometimes people can lose sight of that, or not think about that clearly, and I was thinking this morning about some of those things, thinking about Mr. Armstrong and some of the things that took place within God's Church from the time I came in, in 1969 and on. To me it was a blessing and a gift that God gave in the sense of always striving to understand things in the light of he is God's servant, how is God leading and guiding and directing him, what is God showing, this is God's work, it's God's Church. And you learn from that process, you really do, in a very powerful way. Rather than reading things into something you just wait and see and God will show you because God's in charge, even with the apostasy, God's in charge.

Anyway, I just thought I'd mention some of that. I understand your desire to know more. I think of Daniel; he wrote all the things he did but didn't understand it. God just said, "Shut up the book Daniel, this isn't for you, it's for the time of the end." And He'll reveal those things that need to be revealed at the end that are things sometimes that we have that we don't understand fully until it's given.

Today we're going to continue with a process that we have been going through as we have been addressing truths that God revealed to His Church, and we have had a few sermons, mostly in a series format because generally some of them are in series, some of them may be a single sermon, in which we have addressed those particular truths that we've covered this far, obviously, beginning with the three basic doctrines that were still there at the end of Sardis. We don't know what truths Sardis started out with, obviously more, because they lost things as time went along, they were dying through that period of time because of what was happening in the world around them.

The world has a big impact on God's Church! The world at the end of this age, I hope you understand (thinking about this yesterday), the world has a big impact on God's Church today. It did during Laodicea. Lukewarm spirit, rich and increased with goods – we are so wealthy sometimes we don't

grasp and comprehend how wealthy, just from a physical standpoint, but we are. You might think you're struggling and you have it hard. You live in one of the most incredible nations in the sense of what God has given, not because of what man has done, that the earth has ever experienced!

The ability to travel, the ability to be in a room like this with air conditioning... *kings didn't have it* this well, they truly didn't. *The very wealthiest on earth never had it as good as how we have it*, the ability of travel, the ability of ease and comfort and food and everything else that's there at our fingertips. We don't have to work like people used to have to work when it comes to preparing food, we really don't. We go and shop for it and get it and sometimes we think life is really hard. Well, I understand, it is hard at times, obviously, and we struggle because of some of the things that are out there, but we are still incredibly blessed, we truly are. And that has an impact on God's people. After a while, if we're not careful, we can begin to lose sight of how blessed we are, how well we really have it, how many opportunities we have before us in life, and that's what happened to God's Church. God's Church, after the period of Philadelphia, with all the truths that God gave to it and restored to the Church through Mr. Armstrong, 18 very powerful, foundational, meaningful truths in order to give the Church life again, and a boost that it needed in order to go through a period of time in Laodicea to make it through to a time when there would be an apostasy, and then to continue on past that – and God gave those truths to Mr. Armstrong very powerfully so.

But during Laodicea, as soon as Mr. Armstrong died (and it actually started happening before that), the Church came to a point where even spiritually, not just physically, but the physical part affects people spiritually as well, that people began to think in terms of themselves, what I have not, of what God has given, rich and increased with goods. That's means there is not that recognition or understanding of what we have, what God has given to us, and instead of recognizing God we began to look to ourselves and think about self more so; we turn inward more and more.

The reason I mention that is because I see that happening in God's Church even now; Laodicea, it's there! Not everywhere, but it's a battle you've got to fight. We're past Laodicea but the effect... that's why I've made so many comments through time here, that as we go through the Millennial period, *that is going to be the major battle spiritually for God's people for generation after generation after generation* because *God's Family* is going to be on this earth! Rich? Man has *never known a time* like that! With *one* truth in the sense of what is true from God, the Word of God that's made clear and available to everyone alive. *One* religion on this earth, one truth, one way of life, one *government*; not all the competing, lying, backstabbing, killing type of things we see going on today in the world. This is a sick, filthy, perverted world we live in and sometimes we don't recognize how bad it is, we truly don't. It's a sick, sick, world!

I think of that world that's coming and what's going to be the battle? It's going to become the norm for young children as they grow up and live in this world to have seen members of the God Family on this earth, to very likely at times be able to talk to them. What a world! 144,000 and Jesus Christ on this earth for a thousand years. The spirit of Laodicea is going to be a battle. That's why these things are written. That's why that history is there – so that people in the Millennium can learn from that.

So don't let that get a hold of you, *hunger* for God's word, be alert, be spiritually on guard, truly, looking to God constantly in your life, crying out to God for help, of His spirit to live in you, to fight against the pulls and so forth of this world.

We've been going through some of those basic truths and talking about them, and of course, again, those 18 truths that God revealed and restored to the Church through Mr. Herbert W Armstrong. Awesome!

Today we're going to enter the next phase of God revealing truth to His Church in this sermon that's entitled, *Truths About the Apostasy*. We've gone through these truths in time's past; we've looked at them in greater detail, we have sermons on the website about them. This series is with a different kind of focus, seeing how God works with us, why He works with us in the way that He does, how things are timely in the fashion that they are. And so it is in this particular sermon here today.

As we begin I'm going to read about these truths as it is stated on the Church website, and as we go through this in the beginning it's important to see how God gave us, in a timely manner, truth that we needed as a Church because of what we were going through because the Church was dying, spiritually dead. God raised up an apostle to restore truth to the Church through Mr. Armstrong. In a very timely fashion we went through things in Laodicea, an apostasy that we had been told about over and over again that was going to come to pass – there would be an apostasy, which means, it's translated in the King James in Matthew as a 'falling away'. In 2 Thessalonians it talks about these things – we'll be reading about some of this a little bit later regarding some of the things that took place.

God began to show us truths that we needed in order to deal with that apostasy. Even though we'd been told about it for so long we had no concept of how it was going to come to pass. Just like the 'great tribulation' – it is great, it truly is, of what's been taking place, but we're not feeling the effects of certain things taking place in the world around us yet and what took place spiritually in the Church was great tribulation as well, those things that we entered into as soon as the 1<sup>st</sup> Seal was opened and the apostasy began.

And so again, God in a very timely manner gave us those things that we needed in the Church in order to be awakened out of sleep, otherwise the Church would have died out. The Church couldn't have survived! If God hadn't begun to draw a remnant, began to help people to understand what they'd gone through by truths that He gave to the Church, to understand the apostasy in the first place, we wouldn't be here today. So, God gave it to us in order to survive, just as much as He gave the era of Philadelphia the truths to Mr. Armstrong so we could be revived spiritually once again.

So here it is from the Church website:

### **Truths Revealed During Laodicea**

But not given until after the apostasy. So Laodicea was from the time of Mr. Armstrong's death up through the apostasy, but it wasn't until after that that God began to give these. This is what it states.

Herbert W. Armstrong taught that the Church of God would always continue to grow in understanding and knowledge of God's truth.

So basic, so essential; and that's the way it is individually in our lives too. Either we're growing or we're not. Becoming stagnant and levelling off is not growth; as a matter of fact, a person begins to go backward, begins to lose what they have. You can't be stagnant. *God's spirit demands growth!* If God's spirit lives in our life, it has to grow, it has to produce fruit. That's what God's spirit is there to do,

produce fruit, and it's up to us as to whether we're using it and responding to it and crying out to God. But when God gives His spirit it's for that purpose, to produce fruit, and so individually it works that way, and for the Church of God it works that way. That's why you can look at Sardis and learn great lessons from it – they began to lose. You know what happened there. We could look at Philadelphia and we see what happened during that period of time. And then finally, Laodicea. You *learn* from these things! We're to learn from them mightily!

Herbert W. Armstrong taught that the Church of God would always continue to grow in understanding and knowledge of God's truth. *There can never be a point in time that God's Church stagnates, otherwise we cannot be God's Church.* Wherever God's spirit dwells *there will be growth.* [emphasis added throughout]

So that's for God's Church, but that's individually in people's lives as well. However, we came to a time of an apostasy. We have some scriptures we're going to look at here in the book of John, just to be reminded of some very basic truths. We came to a time of the apostasy in God's Church finally in 1994 at the end. We had ceased to grow and did not understand, we did not fully see what was coming and we did not understand it when it took place. God was going to bring His Church back to a point where it could once again grow in truth, because the reality is the scriptures became very true when it talked about God's Church came to a point in Laodicea that it had to be spewed out, which means vomited out of God's mouth. And there's a great lesson in that. That means God would no longer allow it to be in Him, or Him in it. Lukewarm spirit, the attitude that was there, God wasn't going to have it, He wasn't going to dwell in it and it wasn't going to dwell in Him. So it uses the expression of vomiting it out, something that's repulsive. The entire Church, all of us were cut off, everybody in God's Church cut off from the flow of God's spirit at that point in what took place, and then He began to draw some back.

**John 4:23 - But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers,** again, Jesus Christ teaching, showing those things that we need to understand in our individual lives and for the Church as well. **...when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:** they go together, you can't separate them. We either have the truth, becoming stronger individually as we grow in it, and continually given more. That's why from Holy Day to Holy Day, year to year, we continue to build upon the things that are there, that God has given, ever growing, and that should be individually and that should be as a Church as well.

So again here, **when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit,** meaning we have to be in God and God in us. You can't be cut off from the flow of God's spirit because of sin. We have to conquer sin, fight sin, and the primary way of doing that is through the tool that God has given us of repentance and being forgiven and the battle that can go on there in acknowledging sin, fighting against it on a continuing basis, acknowledging that we need God; and when you see that and you know that you cry out to God for His spirit to more powerfully dwell within you because you need that help to battle the battle that's there in front of you.

**...and in truth;** so it's the truth that strengthens us. It's the truth that it talks about here in John that sets us apart as well, that sanctifies us. We are sanctified by God's truth, that's what separates us from the world, that's what separates *us* in this Body from other scattered groups out here, 600 plus, whatever it is of all those that split off after the apostasy. Truth; that's what sets us apart, sanctifies us. What does sanctify mean? Set apart for holy use and purpose, for God's use, sanctified. It's through the truth, and because of the truth and because of your response to it God can then work with you and work through you. And so He had to give us more truth, and that's what this sermon is about today,

truths concerning the apostasy are about the apostasy because we had to understand it, we had to come to acknowledge some things.

**But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him.** That's how God works in our lives. When He draws us, when He begins to call us His desire is for us to succeed. And candidly, that's all that will happen if we respond as we should; it's guaranteed. As far as God is concerned we're there, but we have the battles and we have choices and we have the mistakes we make in life and the sin and the responses to God's spirit and whether we do that well or not and whether we grow or not as we should. **...for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is spirit: and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.** It's a beautiful verse, truly is. **...must worship Him in spirit and in truth**, in other words He has to live within you. You can't worship Him without His help. You can't love God without His help. You can't have agape in your life without His help. It comes from Him! He is the source; it's a simple thing.

I've commented in times past about how Jesus Christ expressed concerning the law of God and speaking to an individual, made comment about the law, as an individual responded to Him, that we're to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our being. And I've made comment you can't do that...*you are incapable as a human being to do that*. You cannot love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your being, with all of your life, because you're selfish, I'm selfish, and we always have that working against us. And so we learn and we recognize we have to have God's help to love Him. First of all He has to show us the truth, and then we make a response to God in that truth, He shows us the Sabbath. How do we respond to it? Do we set it apart for holy use and purpose like we're told? We're told that we are to sanctify God's Sabbath. How can you sanctify something? You obey God. You do what He says to do. *You* set it apart, and that's what we start doing, we quit working on Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, one whole day. We set it apart for holy use and purpose not our own use and purpose to continue at our job or to go out to sporting events or to do whatever we want to do or have our own whatever that's apart from the Church, that's apart from what God has designed the Sabbath for accomplishing. The Sabbath is set to teach us. It's God's time to teach us; it's an appointed time for God to teach us.

And it all depends on how we respond to it. We have to worship in spirit and in truth, we have to have God's help, and then even the command that goes on there as individuals respond and saying, **and to love our neighbour as our self**. People think they can do that in the world. What a joke! You can't! You can't love others as yourself because with human nature self is always number one, it's just the way it is. It's just the kind of nature we have; we pamper self, we take care of self. We're unhappy and then sometimes others around us become unhappy because if we're not content others around us aren't going to be content because we're not pleasant to be around. Do you ever have times like that in your life? It's the way we are as human beings sadly. And so we have to have God's help to fight against that, to ask for help not to be like that.

We have to have God's help to worship Him in spirit and in truth, we have to cry out for His help, and it's a desire we have because we want to be able to love like that, we want His love to be in us, one that's unselfish, one that takes it all the way that it has to go as far as a human being is concerned – a willingness to sacrifice. In order to love others, to love God, you have to sacrifice human nature, self; it's the way it is and we learn through that process, it's a beautiful thing.

**John 16:12 - I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now**, this was on His last night of teaching the disciples and things being recorded for the Church through time before He was

going to die. This is some of the instruction He gave. He says, **I have yet many things to say unto you**, what does that mean? He couldn't give it all then. When did He give it? He gave it in this book, the rest of it that's written later on after Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the things that are written afterwards that came from Jesus Christ. The things given to Paul came from Jesus Christ. They come from God the Father through Jesus Christ to the Church because Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. And so the things we've been given today, the things that Mr. Armstrong was given concerning the truth, it was given from Jesus Christ (from God the Father to Christ) to give to the Church. They are one in unity and harmony, things that we cannot fully comprehend until you're a spirit being. We begin to learn about them when we're younger, when we're babes, in some cases not even babes, we're really just kind of an embryo, that's how we're described, we're not really even born yet. So that's when we begin to learn it but the ability to truly comprehend it comes later when that's what we fully become.

So, He says, **I have many things to say unto you**, which He did through time, just like the book of Revelation given to John; that's what He's given to us, things He said to us that we couldn't bear back then, that they couldn't bear back then, it was too much. What He gave we still go back to. What He gave on that night we go back to and build upon. We've been building upon those things in John 13, 14... *Philadelphia* did not understand John 14, and because of that did not understand the book of 1 John, 2 John, 3 John – didn't understand the spirit of what was being said because God hadn't given it yet, Jesus Christ hadn't given it yet. Even though it was written the understanding of it wasn't there yet, truths that we'll be talking about yet to come here.

So He says, **I yet have many things to say unto you but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when it, the spirit of truth comes/is coming**, because it's that process. It's not a one-time event, it's an ongoing event in your life. It's the holy spirit, when it begins to come, and it began to come for the Church on Pentecost 31 AD, but it didn't stop, it didn't cease coming, and as people were called it began to come into their lives and it continues to come into your life as long as you have the impregnation of God's spirit and are responding to God and growing; and that spirit just continues to come into your life. And the spirit of truth ...**howbeit when the spirit of truth**, because that's what it conveys! It's a means of giving growth, giving the help to grow, but it's done through the truth in the mind. It's the Word of God in your mind that you grow in, that you make choices about and you come into unity and harmony with it through time. It's a process of growth.

**Howbeit when yet the spirit of truth is coming** (is a better translation in the English), **it will guide you into all truth**: That's what God's spirit does, it helps us to grow. If we'll respond to it we learn, we grow, just like what Mr. Armstrong taught the Church, just like what was mentioned that I read earlier. The Church must always grow to be God's Church. Individuals must *always grow*, can never stagnate, can never level off. There's no such thing as levelling off, can't happen.

**Howbeit when the spirit of truth is coming it will guide you into all truth**: it does the building, it helps do the building, the growing, everything! It's an awesome process. It's like building a building; it's being a part of the building. You lay one row of block and you lay another row of block and you can't get up to the fourth or fifth row until you're up there. You can't do the fifth one, you can't do the topping off until you've done the rest in between; you can't just set it up into thin air. You're building something. And that's what God's spirit does, building something on top of the other, a constant process of construction.

**Howbeit when the spirit of truth is coming it will guide you into all truth: for it shall not speak of itself; but whatsoever it shall speak, that it shall speak, and it will show you things to come.** So again, it's the

power of God, it conveys the mind of God, the being of God, the Word of God. We grow in that, it becomes a part of our mind, our being. Individually we're different, we have choices, we have different ways of thinking and so forth but we come into unity, as we heard in the opening prayer, a desire to be in unity with God the Father. That's what it's about; to be at one with the Word of God. That's why it's such a beautiful thing about Jesus Christ being The. Word. Of. God. Made. Flesh.

Continuing then with the 'Truths Revealed During Laodicea', what I began to read earlier here that's on the website:

Yet today we are in a time where most who were scattered have been stagnating. Many have been growing in lies and deception...

So you have to remember when these things came along and where these things were spoken of.

Many have been growing in lies and deception (rather than truth) that contradict the word of God and what was restored to the Church by God through Herbert W. Armstrong.

So even just those basic truths there and the scattering that took place and seeing what has happened in the Church, it's talking about all that was scattered and all that was a part of the Church at one time.

Despite what has been happening to most who were scattered, God has continued to bless a remnant of His Church with a deeper understanding of His word, especially as it pertains to this end-time. The Church has indeed continued to grow in understanding and truth. God has revealed these truths through Ronald Weinland who is His end-time prophet.

So again, that's how God has been working.

All who become part of the remnant God is calling will come to agree with these truths. The 3 truths remaining at the end of Sardis and the 18 truths restored during Philadelphia separated God's Church from the World, and those truths are vital for salvation. The truths given during Laodicea separate God's true remnant Church from the rest who were scattered after the apostasy.

So in the beginning when you look at the 21 Truths that the Church had during Philadelphia, that's what separated us from the world. There wasn't another Church out there. Oh, there were some that broke off, there were some who were put out of God's Church and went off and started their own groups, but they weren't God's Church. The different ones that quit at different times. I think of 1974, the things having to do with Pentecost – there were different groups that split off and did their own thing. Before they even left, certain decisions they were making, they were already cut off from God's Church. Ministers out there...several that were just cut off from the flow of God's spirit, and individuals followed them, they were cut off from God's spirit. One individual had to be put out – his own son! Horrible thing to have to do, Mr. Armstrong did! It was difficult for him and the battles he went through and the evangelists he listened to at different times in this process. And his son went out and started his own church. It wasn't God's church but it was a church. And today we have tons of groups out there calling themselves by different names and using the name 'Church of God' but they're not God's Church right

now. There are those who were scattered and in time they have to be awakened, if they can receive it, and most will.

So again here, going on and reading this....

The truths given during Laodicea separate God's true remnant Church from the rest who were scattered after the apostasy. These truths identify God's true Church and who his people are in this present era of great confusion. Most of these truths represent a transition from a strict physical view in the past to a deeper spiritual understanding now.

That's what God has given, that's what God's spirit does, it gives deeper understanding. And as we grow we come to understand more fully the spirit of the word of God, because we always hold onto, first and foremost, and see first and foremost, that which is physical, just as much as the woman at the well. I love John when it goes through...and Nicodemus; he couldn't grasp what it was to be born again, 'What does a man do? How do you crawl back into the womb and be born a second time?' It just blew his mind because he could only see something physical. The woman at the well – awesome! She heard about living water, solved her problem big time, she didn't have to go back and forth every day lugging those pitchers of water. She wanted this living water! That's all she saw! She didn't grasp anything spiritual. Jesus Christ, chapter 6 says, "You're going to have to eat My flesh and drink My blood..." OH! It says many of His disciples quit following after that, not the twelve and the others who were faithful, but there were many who quit following Him because they couldn't take what He said, because they only saw something physical. Cannibalism?! Drinking human blood?! Eating human flesh?! "You're sick!" because they couldn't see it. Amazing!

And there are many things that we in God's Church *think* we see and *think* we understand but we still see them, oftentimes, in a physical way and don't understand the greater truth that's behind it, the spirit.

The following are not in any particular order of importance. Some overlap and some could be expanded upon or combined to either lengthen or shorten the list.

So again, they flow together like the ones we saw on the 18 Truths. There are just things that fit together, flow together, but they are separate and distinct as well. These, actually because of this particular sermon title here today, are combined together in a very powerful way because it is about the apostasy, things we had to have, truths we had to have in order to continue on, in order to be revived, in order to be awakened, if you will, even spiritually. Number one, which is 22 in the total order, but number one during this period of time....

**22 (1) There has been an apostasy that is unprecedented in the Church of God as prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.**

Now you'd think that would be pretty simple. You'd think after 1994, after Mr. Tkach got up and told the Church in December that you no longer have to keep the specific Sabbath day and the Holy Days, that on all days we should worship God, not just on the Sabbath day and that other days are fine to worship God on as well. And clean and unclean meats now, finally we actually agree with the Protestants, shrimp is okay, lobster's okay, that stuff that stinks and ruins your meal when people bring it out and sit down beside it. I hate it! You know, you're sitting there and you're wanting to eat a meal

and somebody orders lobster on the table next to you – stinks up the whole room! Think, “How on *earth* can they put that in their mouth!?” Anyway, sorry, one of my pet peeves.

An apostasy. Started telling us we don’t have to obey God’s laws anymore! The Sabbath doesn’t sanctify; you’re not sanctified by the seventh day, it doesn’t set you apart from anybody any differently. Well, they just went right back into the Protestant world. An apostasy took place! You’d think that the whole Church could say, “Man, that’s definitely happened to us! We have *definitely* had an apostasy!” No, that isn’t what happened. And in the scattered groups today... is it taught in Living? Is it taught in United? Is it taught in different groups out there? ...that we’ve had an apostasy that was prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2?

The context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is for the end-time, before the return of Jesus Christ...

It’s amazing how that’s stated in there, certain things they couldn’t grasp nor see, that things had to come to pass, and it talks about (several times there) in context about the coming of Christ, the return of Jesus Christ.

...before the return of Jesus Christ and was not for the time period of the early apostles. The word “apostasy” means “to forsake and depart,”

To forsake the truth and depart from it.

...and in this apostasy there was a forsaking and falling away from the truth God had given to His Church. Never before had this happened within the top leadership of the Church of God. Never before [in nearly 2,000 years] had there been such a large departure from the truth by the membership of the Church. This had to happen before the unfolding of end-time events that would lead to the return of Jesus Christ. Many in the scattered Church do not yet believe that this apostasy has happened, and so by implication, they believe they must grow much larger than what Worldwide was in order to fulfill this prophecy.

Some have taught that. That’s what they believe. Because at the time of the apostasy (if you want to talk about the Church and what was able to be seen at that point in time...) to have around 96-97 thousand baptized people, nearly 150,000 people total when you include children and everyone else, 90-some thousand baptized members in the Church of God; the Church at that time believing that at the end-time 144,000 would come out of the Church when Jesus Christ returns and be resurrected, not understanding what that was all about. So what they’re looking at is that they have to become much larger than Worldwide, because look at what happened to Worldwide - even with only 96,000 baptized members, not anywhere close yet to 144,000, and therefore if it went through what it did, Living, United, whomever, are going to have to become *much* larger than Worldwide ever was in order to fulfill the prophecies about a falling away. Hard to understand that kind of thinking and reasoning but that’s what people believe out there if they accept certain things that are taught about a falling away. They don’t believe it’s happened yet. What a sad thing! What a sad thing that people don’t believe a great falling away, that an incredible apostasy took place that we’ll talk about through some of this series here.

But we're to learn from the past, like I mentioned earlier at the beginning of the sermon, during the Millennium, actually for 1,100 years they're going to be able to learn from the past in an awesome way! We learn from the past today because we're at the end of 6,000 years and we have the benefit of having seen what happened after Sardis, bringing up Philadelphia, what happened in Laodicea with an apostasy. We have learned powerful lessons that benefit us in ways that... *because* of what we experienced that they never could grow to or be able to see during Philadelphia, because it hadn't happened yet. They couldn't learn from that. And so we have the benefit of all that additional information or knowledge and understanding given to us.

**2 Thessalonians 2:3 - Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come,** and in context here it's referring to the time of Christ's return, **except there come a falling away**, that is how it's translated in the English language, but that's not the Greek word if you understand what 'falling away' means in all of its definition here. Because as I mentioned a minute ago, it's the Greek word for apostasy and it means 'to forsake and depart', to forsake the truth and depart from the truth. That's what happened in God's Church. Unprecedented in God's Church!

**...except there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;** the Church didn't embrace that, the scattered groups out here didn't embrace that, didn't see this as being something of awesome importance. That's why it's the first truth. It's about the apostasy. It's about understanding what the Church needed to come to grasp in order to continue on, because of what was going to take place after the apostasy. What took place? A third of the Church just quit...just quit. Because a reality is if you're in that situation and you don't have answers to why did this happen if this is God's Church.... Those of you who didn't live it, it's *hard to understand* what took place, from those of us who *did* live it. If you're living in something and you're actually experiencing something it has a far greater impact on your being because by that time I'd been in the Church a few decades, and here we came to a point in time where we were weaker, sluggish, things were coming into the Church that were breaking us down in the sense of things we couldn't even grasp and comprehend through time (especially from the early 90's on). But if you come to a point in time that you believe this is God's Church and all of a sudden someone gets up who is the physical head under Jesus Christ on earth of the Church, and tells you that that which you came out of the world, you embraced the Sabbath, you embraced the Holy Days and they are *your life*...and that all of a sudden you don't have to keep them!?! Where do you go? Where is the truth? Where is this now? Well, there were two groups out there that had started.... I don't even want to go there, don't have to go through that history of that part. But these two groups were not sound, not fully addressing things that had taken place. One left for the wrong reasons totally. And what do you do? It's easy to understand why a third just quit, because where do you go? That's why a third just quit, because you know you can't go back to Christmas and Easter, you've *proven* that to yourself, you know you can't go back to Sunday, you know that! So what do you do? You lose hope. You lose focus. It's like, "I'll go back to whatever but I'm not going back to that."

Another third by that time had come to a point where they were so weak by that point in time that they began to think... well, maybe all foods are clean. Maybe they have it right. Maybe we haven't really understood grace. Maybe it's okay to worship God on every day. And a third went back to Sunday. That's what they did in different ways. Some got upset at Worldwide because they weren't moving fast enough toward Sunday, they were still using this double-speak. "Oh you can keep the Feast of Tabernacles and maybe you can have lights on your tree this year too – whatever *you* want to do. You have to worship God in whatever *you* believe." It's like God's building all these gigantic bridges and "You're all going to get there some way," just your way, whatever that is. Sick, sick, sick! So a third went off in that direction.

Another third didn't understand but tried to hold onto some resemblance of the past, formed different groups, went with different groups. Mass confusion in God's Church because God spewed out the Church, did not give His holy spirit to have all the answers. Except that He had a plan. The only reason you're here, the only reason God's Church has ever been here is because God has a plan that He's going to fulfill. At the end, the prophecies which we're going to get to in time here, about a remnant that God would bring along, something that's left over, a remaining part of, not the bigger part but a small remaining portion of what had existed before would continue on. He would bring that back and bring it to the end, to completion if you will, that's the only reason we're here. Not because we understood things in a better way. Not because we're better than those others that are still out there scattered. On the contrary!

And so God began to draw some back, began to help us to understand, "Ah, we have *definitely* experienced this! Definitely, someone has betrayed Jesus Christ." You know that was hard to even talk about? In the beginning my wife and I could talk about it a little bit, and some kind of grimaced in the Church when I first mentioned it, that an individual fulfilled this, he became the man of sin. He became the *son of perdition*. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ, for all rights in a very physical manner, in a very physical way to be betrayed to death; and this individual betrayed Jesus Christ in a greater way, if you understand, in a spiritual manner – betraying - because of the Church of God, all those lives, spiritually lives of individuals - betraying. It was a massive thing that took place and God said that it would happen at the end-time. This one truth alone is astounding and would help so many if they would just come to acknowledge it and say, "Yes, that happened to us! Yes, he..." because that's what they have to be willing to say, just as much....

It wasn't that big a deal for the disciples to come along and say, "He betrayed Jesus Christ to death!" But it's hard for the scattered group to come to say, "*He* betrayed Jesus Christ! *He* is the man of sin prophetically; *he* is the son of perdition." Because you see, everyone has to be able to say that and accept this truth in order to grow. If you reject the truth what happens? You can't change, you can't repent, you can't grow.

That's what separates us from the rest – anyone who comes along comes to this point in time where they.... Those of you who came along and were drawn later on who didn't live through that, it's easier for you to accept the truth. When God calls you it's as much as when I first came into the Church; God let me see the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the migration of the children of Israel, that *this* nation here is Manasseh, that Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, that they're Ephraim. Easy to see! It's like the book of Acts, it happened; you read about it when God opens up your mind and you say, "Yeah, it happened, it is history." You come along; God calls you, it is history. The apostasy to you is history, and that's a blessing that you *didn't* have to live through that, if you understand what I'm saying. Those who lived through it and those who still continue out there – different story, because something has to change up here because they lived through it. They have to be able to come to a point in time where they say, "Yes this happened to us." Because, see, this truth leads to another truth, which leads to another truth, which leads to another truth and that's the problem. That's why they can't change. That's why they can't repent. That's why they can't grow. That's why they can't be a part of the Church today.

Going on here, **verse 8 - And then shall that wicked be revealed**, God calls it what it is, wicked, **be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth**: What does that mean? ...**and shall destroy with the brightness/appearance of His coming**: *What does that mean?* For someone scattered they can't see it until they accept that an apostasy took place first of all, and then they can

begin to understand these verses, because it's like one individual who left early on, who has an organization out there, who is on TV and so forth, thought it was Mr. Tkach at one time and then said, "No, because he died it can't be him, it must be his son, he has to be the one." Didn't understand what this was all about because he didn't understand this verse; and you can't without God's help, without God's spirit.

And so **that wicked was revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth**, it was already prophesied what was going to happen to him, that he would be destroyed. Little did we know. And then when we learned about 280 days, beginning to understand about 40 weeks judgment. It was powerful! The very man who stood up in Atlanta and said you no longer have to obey God's Sabbath day. You no longer have to keep *the* Sabbath day as you have in the past. On that very day you count forward 40 more weeks, 40 Sabbaths exactly, a time of God's judgment that He's used over and over again. The flood – 40 days and 40 nights. Different things that have happened through time that God has done, that He shows that 40 is a matter of His judgment. 40 Sabbaths – how apropos, not 40 days and 40 nights but 40 Sabbaths, 280 days exactly to the hour that man died, consumed. Consumed with cancer. Coincidence? But people think that it was just a coincidence, that it happened to be 40 Sabbaths, 40 weeks exactly to the hour that he died. They don't see God in the picture at all.

**...and shall destroy with the brightness of the appearance of His coming.** This led to another revelation of understanding something. What happened on that day when he got up and said that – that was the day God revealed that Jesus Christ was going to return, that now the countdown had started. We didn't know what the countdown was yet, but we knew the countdown had started because God revealed that the 1<sup>st</sup> Seal of the book of Revelation had been opened with this event. Awesome! Everything began to fit together. God began to reveal more truth to the Church.

**Verse 9 - Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan**, that's what Satan started doing right after the Church began; came along, started working through one individual that later became known as Simon Peter. Not *the* Simon Peter but one who became known as Simon Peter through history, Simon Magus in scripture there who began to want this power. He was a kind of a wizard, or whatever you call them back then, dabbling in the occult if you will, and he liked to mesmerize people. He was eloquent in speech and was able to persuade people in a very powerful way and he wanted this power that he saw that the apostles had! And he began to be the one that began to teach and began to work with and began to accept things of, if you will, paganism – Easter, Astarte, sun, SUN-day, sun-day worship, all these things that existed long before the Catholic church ever came along, things that existed in history, the very things that Israel was taken into captivity for several hundred years earlier, that people are ignorant of in the world. They were taken captive because they started worshipping on the day of the sun. Ba-al worship was on SUN-day, the day of the sun, not on the Sabbath. The nation of Israel to the north (Judah is in the south), began to worship on a different day. They began to change the times of Holy Days. They began to observe what we call today 'holidays' – Astarte, Ishtar, Easter. Long before knowledge of Passover for the Church came along they began to accept some of these things. This is what Simon did, he brought these things along about Easter and Sunday worship and that's what came through the Catholic church. It became known as the Catholic church; that big statue of 'Simon Peter'. His big toe is worn down with all the kisses. You ever seen it? Great big statue there, and this great big toe that people have [kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss], over the centuries kissing this toe. ROCK, so many lips on it, worn down smooth; it's smooth, indented with all the friction of lips. Mind-boggling! That Simon Peter, the false one. Incredible!

They think they follow Peter the apostle, and Peter never taught these things, he taught against them. You know, that's astounding. I can't help but be dumbfounded by what Satan did! Came along and deceived people into believing that, and the big thing in 325, the Nicene Council, the big thing written in history, in history books and religious books that they know about, the Protestant churches know about it and they get their authority from the Catholic's and the Catholic's alone because of what happened in 325 AD. Dumbfounding that they don't bow down to the pope, because that's where their authority comes from. It doesn't come out of the Bible! And the Catholic church pokes fun at them, "You have your authority because of us!" That's what they say basically, in their encyclopaedia, the popes. And so it was to change Passover to Easter – Nicene council. The world started changing. A Church was still out there that kept Passover, small in size, always has been for 2,000 years, but this church began to be *big* because of what it did. Satan did a number on mankind just like he has on *every other religion* that's out there. 1.2 billion people have grown from that one, one thing that began to happen in 325 AD. Another billion are the spin-off daughters of it that keep Sunday and Easter and Christmas...and the mass of Christ - where did that come from? It came from the Catholic church – Christmas, mass of Christ.

Thank God this world is about to change and have truth again.

**...even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,** because that's how that church has operated; power, signs and lying wonders. That's what happened with this group of people. That's what happened with this man here. I experienced it. Those who were in different congregations experienced it. Had an individual get up on stage after I'd resigned and gave a sermon, and a wave went through the audience, *spirit*, evil spirit, as some individual even behind me started, "Praise the Lord!" It's like that story about snakes being handled around and where's the nearest door for me to get out of here type of thing.

**...whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,** because of what it was able to accomplish, to *deceive* very quickly, instantaneously a third of the Church when it happened? That's power! Power! Where did that come from? From Satan. You realize sometimes when you see things on TV and you think about these auditoriums that are filled with thousands of people – thousands – and they're moved and some come down to the front. They don't know what they're messing with! It's not God! It's a spirit being and his followers, and they have power. It's a perverted spirit and they can influence thinking. They do, and people get into a point where they can actually get to a point where they...some Pentecostals have this problem, because they know they've had experiences and stuff. Yes, they've had experiences but not from God. They're messing around with beings that they don't understand and they get in trances and they say things and do things that they know didn't come from them. That's true.

Anyway, **power and signs and lying wonders**, Satan and a demonic world.

**Verse 10 - And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them who perish/are perishing; because they received not the love/the AGAPE of the truth,** Awesomely stated here if you understand what it means. You can't have that without God's spirit. That's why it's so important to embrace the truth, *obey* the truth, or you'll start losing it. I don't care what it is, you've got to fight that fight, you've got to change, you've got to have faith in God and do what God says. Keeping the Sabbath? You quit your job if you're working on Friday - you don't work anymore on Friday! You tithe to God because it's God's! You obey God! And when people don't, they don't realize they're working against God instead of stepping out on faith and obeying God. Trust in God to lead you, to work with you, to bring you through.

...and received not the love/the agape of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, That's what happened to a third immediately, strong delusion. How was that done? Because the Church was spewed out of His mouth, cut off from His holy spirit, and those beings then had a hey day with individuals who by that time had not only become weak but began to let down themselves, began to sin before this ever happened, themselves being far weaker in that respect by the time it hit, they were able to be moved by a different spirit and accept, again, Easter, Christmas, Sunday and so forth, etcetera, etcetera...**that they should believe a lie:** Satan is powerful, demons are powerful – sin gives them power. That's how it was given. That's why God did this. That's how it's done. If we don't stay close to God this is what will happen in your life, in time.

**Verse 12 - That they all might be...**this word here says 'damned', but it means 'judged', it's the word for judged or 'brought into judgment', that's what it's about. ....**who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** That's the problem, a desire to go back, a desire to be like the world, desire now not to be different. Now we can meet on Sunday. Now we can be more like them. Now our family and our neighbours aren't going to be upset with us. Now it's going to be easier on the job. Now I can go back to work on Sabbath. Now I can do this... that's what this is about; it's that pull and the ease to go back into it, to accept again what we were drawn out of.

Number 2 concerning the apostasy, 23<sup>rd</sup> truth over all....

**23 (2) The Man of Sin has been revealed to be Joseph Tkach, Sr., who initiated the end-time apostasy.**

Understanding first of all that an apostasy occurred, and then accepting *who* was behind it, *who* fit that bill, *who* fulfilled what was given there. Again, under this it says....

Mr. Tkach tried to change the law of God, and his actions led to great destruction within the Church. By changing the law of God, he exalted himself above God.

Whenever we do something, when we sin, it's like raising up an obelisk and worshiping before it, because we're saying that it's okay to commit that sin, or do that above and beyond God's law. That's what we do in life, that's the reality spiritually.

By changing the law of God, he exalted himself above God. The word "sit" in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 means "to be given authority."

It doesn't mean to do like I'm doing in a chair right now. That has nothing to do with being seated in a chair. It has to do with power and authority, that's what the word means in the Greek language.

Mr. Tkach was given authority in the Church to be its physical head under Jesus Christ, and shortly afterward he turned against God. Joseph Tkach, Sr. died 40 weeks to the very hour that he delivered his sermon of apostasy, which was a sign to God's Church that Jesus Christ was now coming and that final end-time events had begun.

Because see, that's what 2 Thessalonians is about. The end cannot happen, Jesus Christ cannot return until this event occurs. See, before this was written Paul was uncertain when Jesus Christ returns,

believed in context with his writing that it was going to happen in his time, as they all did. As time went along they began to learn because God began to show them that He wasn't going to come back in their time. Disciples began to die, things began to happen. Paul finally was given this revelation, this understanding in 2 Thessalonians, to write it; that these things had to happen before Jesus Christ could return. The man of sin had to be revealed in the Church, that these things would be the very sign of Christ's coming.

All these truths that God began to reveal powerfully to the Church were necessary to re-establish a remnant at the end-time, a remnant who would acknowledge what was true concerning the Church at the end-time. This would require humility rather than pride, which is necessary for God to lead His Church into the Millennial period. And that's so much of the problem in life. And the big problem there is, "Who are you?! You say this is true? Who else is saying this? How many others? How many other ministers out here are saying the same thing? Other ministers aren't saying this, that he was the man of sin. Other ministers aren't saying 2 Thessalonians was fulfilled. Who are you? You weren't an evangelist! Who are you? I don't remember your name. Who are you?! I follow this man, he was an evangelist." And that's a problem sometimes with human nature. It isn't a matter of who, it's a matter of God, it's a matter of God's spirit, it's a matter of willingness to humble ourselves when we hear the truth, whatever that truth is. And that's a big problem in the scattered Church today.

### 24 (3) **The "temple" in Matthew 24....**

All of these have to do with the apostasy, one ties into another. All of a sudden it began to open up doors to us so we could see. Now we could understand how this could happen in God's Church! It wasn't God's problem, in that respect, in the sense of something He did, it was what we did! We were the ones that were guilty and had to repent! That's why it happened!

### **The "temple" in Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, and in many other prophecies, is about the Church of God.**

It's amazing today how many out there think in scattered groups that prophecies having to do with the end-time... that a temple has to be built, like some of the Protestant world believes, in Jerusalem, or as Mr. Meredith believes in Living, that at least he's been told by some of his advisors that at least an altar has to be built. Do you know why they believe that? Because of Daniel. Because they believe that like with Antiochus Epiphanes; they believe because of something physical that happened at the temple in Jerusalem when they came up there and offered a pig on the altar in Jerusalem, that this has to happen again. Physical, physical, physical! So they think someone has to come along to desecrate an altar. But before Mr. Armstrong died he made it clear to the Church that no one is qualified to build a temple, no one is qualified to set up an altar, the Levitical system is not functioning nor can it be brought back by man. So how can it be done and desecrate something that's not holy? Because it has to be holy to desecrate it, in order for it to be an abomination of desolation. And so they've gone back to something physical and they've forgotten, they haven't been able to hold onto what Mr. Armstrong taught before he died – that no one can rebuild it, period. No one has the authority or the power to consecrate, if you will, to make something holy that is... What's holy? The Temple, the Church. How could anyone have lost that? But they did. Everyone that's scattered out there doesn't grasp the magnitude of this now about Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2; that the Temple is about us. We are the Temple.

1 Corinthians, let's just notice. Make sure we're well grounded in these things, of things that thousands before you have lost! They have lost this, and yet this was there. And this has to be difficult, and unless

you've lived through this and grasp the mind and grasp what human beings are capable of, it's hard sometimes to go back and think, "I just don't see how that can happen. I would *never* have done that!" Don't. Ever. Say. That! Don't *ever* say, "I would never have done that, *BECAUSE* I'm better than that, because I know my mind and *I would NEVER do that!*" You didn't live then. You didn't live through that. Don't seek to be tried in that. Be thankful for what you have that you don't have to be tried, that you don't have to go through certain things, that you don't have to go through an apostasy. Because if you lived through the apostasy *you would have done the exact same things and you would have been spewed out of God's mouth*. No one is better! It is a matter of humility to recognize what our human nature is capable of and what it did then.

There are simple and very basic scriptures that should be *simple* for people to understand concerning the spiritual temple, but you can lose it. **1 Corinthians 6:19 - What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit**, even individually in the Church. That's what God says about us individually as building blocks, as stones, as those who are called, that God's spirit is to dwell in us and that the temple where God dwells....because that's where God's spirit resides. That's why when we sin we have to repent quickly, otherwise God's spirit will not dwell there; because His spirit will not be where there is sin, that's why we have to repent of it, so we can be forgiven of it. **What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you**, God's spirit in you, **which you have of God, and you are not your own?** You know what that means? When you were baptized, what did you say? "I'm Yours. I am Yours. I don't want my life selfishly to live my own way any longer. I want Your way. I want to be forgiven of my sin and I want to be in unity and oneness with what is true; the only way that brings fullness and happiness and meaningful life." And so we give our lives to God.

**For you are purchased with a price:** Jesus Christ, the death of Jesus Christ; that was the price paid for each one of us... **therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.** Beautiful verses.

Now, another one added to it; Ephesians 2. Again, individually we're a part of the temple, we are the Temple, we have the temple because it's the holy spirit dwelling within us and collectively we make up the Temple of God.

**Ephesians 2:19 - Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints**, we're brought into a fellowship, fellow citizens; we're with others. The word 'saints' is just about members of the Body of Christ, those who are baptized, **and of the household**, the building if you will, **of God**; it's God's household, His building, His Temple if you want to carry it a little farther, because that's what it's talking about.

**Verse 20 - And you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone**; because this is how God gives structure to the Church. Just like the truths, it's what we're built upon. This is how we grow!

**Verse 21 - In whom all the building is fitly framed together**, beautiful picture. God does the fitting together of the building; **and grows into a holy temple in the Lord**: It's spiritual! Holy temple. God does the moulding and fashioning, we yield ourselves to that process and just like the 144,000, to God that is a perfect structure! Twelve times twelve thousand – perfection. That's what the word 'twelve' is about. Twelve times twelve thousand. Seven is a matter of completeness, the Sabbath, seven High Days each year. But twelve is that which is a matter of perfection from God, and what He gives in the structure of His government is one of perfection, in that respect. And that order, He's placed everyone

in that temple, and so when they're resurrected they're all going to function together perfectly. Awesome! Perfectly functioning Body; Temple of God that's first resurrected.

**In whom the building is fitly framed together, and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are built together for a habitation of God,** God's dwelling place, **through the spirit.** That's where God chose to dwell from the very beginning before anything was created, in that which He would build through time, His Family. Live in His Family and the Family in Him for all eternity, spiritually.

Truth number 25, which is number 4 in order. All of these fitting together, awesome! 2 Thessalonians, the man of sin, Matthew 24, the Temple, it's about the Temple; it's what God is building.

#### 25 (4) **The Abomination of Desolation is about what Joseph Tkach did in the Church.**

Again, separate by itself, very powerful in what this covers here – notice....

This “abomination of desolation” began within the Church as a result of the sermon he gave in Atlanta on December 17, 1994, where he changed the laws of God. This was an attempt to defile and destroy the “temple of God.”

The abomination making desolate! See, the abomination of desolation the first time *was* about Antiochus Epiphanes, it *was* about a pig slaughtered upon the altar and desecrating the altar before God. Never in use ever again! Never had meaning after that because it was about the Church. God was showing through time here that everything is about the Church. What He is building is about the Church, not about a physical temple or a physical altar, it's about a spiritual one. All those things point to that which God is building. And so again here, this is something that the body that's scattered out here just doesn't grasp. They don't understand what the abomination of desolation is. That's what we've been a part of! The abomination that's still working out there, making desolate; it's still not finished, it's still going on, the result of it, all the scattered groups out there are still a part of what has been destroying.

**Matthew 24:14** – Mr. Armstrong over and over and over again quoting this verse, knowing that this was his commission - **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.** Little did we know the magnitude of what this was all about. We knew the end was coming, but how it all fit together, what it meant, and what it meant concerning him.... Awesome here what was taking place. Every group that's come along since.... even what happened during the beginning of Laodicea, people tried to mimic, copy, what Mr. Armstrong did, and yet God was finished with what Mr. Armstrong did. 'The Plain Truth', the telecasts, it was going to become a different work in time, and so it had some of the appearance of what was in the past, but God wasn't doing the same thing. That's why many groups who are scattered want to do the same thing, they want to have a telecast, a broadcast, 'The Plain Truth', 'The Good News', 'Tomorrow's World', 'The World Tomorrow', this and that, whatever it is, so it can be a resemblance of the past. And that's not what it's about. It's not about what God already finished and completed through Mr. Armstrong.

So he said that this witness would be preached in all the world and then the end would come...to the degree God wanted it. It's important to understand this. To the degree God wanted it to, not to man's measurement, not to what people say, “Well, that wasn't enough.” Or “It didn't really go into all the world.” *Oh yes it did, to the exact degree God intended it to,* thank you. Amazing how people think! But 'The Plain Truth' – *millions every month, eight-plus million every month* being produced and sent out

into the world, people subscribing and then people putting their subscriptions somewhere, someone else picking it up and that volume just continually going out there – massive! Especially for a religious organization - unheard of! Broadcasts, telecasts going out there, larger than any other group with tremendous power around the world. Incredible what God did as a witness. You know what that witness is? Same as it's always been, same as what it is now except now it's speeded up. That witness we're going through now is a very speeded up process of what he lived through during his life in Philadelphia. Mankind is the same. Man's the same, he doesn't want it. Even leaders, they think, "Your message is great, you're doing a great work," but they won't change, they won't accept the Sabbath, they won't accept the Holy Days.

**Verse 15 - 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:)** you'd think that'd be easy to understand, but it wasn't. And groups out there have not been able to accept it because they can't accept the first one, that an apostasy occurred, nor the other, and now this one here, number four. To be able to grasp and comprehend what Daniel was speaking of was on a spiritual plane about the Temple of God, and the abomination that was making desolate was about the Church, to destroy the Church. That's been Satan's desire from the beginning of time and he thinks/felt like he did a great number, except it was a part of God's plan to allow it in order to teach something greater for those in the Millennial and the Great White Throne. Because all who can't come through it, you know what? God can resurrect them and wake them up then spiritually. What an awesome thing to understand!

God has the power, Satan doesn't. Satan tried to destroy the Christ, tried to kill Him as a baby. You think, "What a perverted, sick mind to continually fight against God all that time! What a slow learner." Be careful. Okay? And be careful, you don't want to monkey around with Satan. Okay? I, on the other hand, because of what's been given to me, have certain things that are to be said. I continually make those comments to the Church, things you should not repeat, things you should not say. Okay? They have been given to me as a part of a job, because he's to hear what God is telling him. You realize spirit beings and Satan himself hears what God gives to the Church? It's a part of God's plan, that's the way it's always been. God makes that very clear in scripture. So again, I always want to forewarn people in things like that. But you would think that he would grasp and learn through time, but he doesn't. He continues to fight against God. He hates God's way, he hates God. Thank God his end is almost here as far as his influence over man.

So, he's been trying to destroy and was given tremendous power, in a sense, over the Church because of sin, because of man's sin, because of people's sin, because they didn't have a love, agape, of the truth and the love of many began to wax cold, as it talks about in Matthew 24 here as well.

And then it says, **Then let them which are in Judaea flee into the mountains:** so this message to people in the scattered Church is viewed as being all physical too. It's about Antiochus Epiphanes, it's about those who live around the area of Jerusalem and Judea and they're to flee up in the mountains at the end-time here, and that's not what it's about at all. It's about what happened to us as a Church, in the Church. The government of God, as soon as all this happened, was scattered. As soon as the apostasy occurred, everything that existed which is referred to in the terms of 'hills' and 'mountains'; always whether it be physical or spiritual, hills and mountains, Mount Zion, the ultimate – it's the government of God. That is the *ultimate* mountain of government. See? The term 'mountain' is used prophetically to express government. Well, after what happened with the apostasy the ministry was scattered all over the place and it was God's doings then as to what would be brought back, that would be given the power to continue on and God's government to be established once again. But this is a part of what it's

referring to here, to survive, rather than going back into what they came out of or ceasing to stop, God's words here were to flee to something in order to hold on, because there was coming a time of a 3½ year period there basically that was going to be a time that God would begin drawing some out and begin to work with and that's another story I've given sermons on in the past.

But anyway, going on here; this is referring back to Daniel 12, which I thought I would read since we talked about this last Sabbath. We just read about this abomination of desolation back in Daniel 12. **Daniel 12:11 - And from the time, or as I mentioned in that sermon, since/after the daily...this is why they think about the sacrifice, that there has to be a desecration again on the altar. This is not about something physical, this is about the Church. And from the time that the daily shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes/is making desolate is... it's not 'set up', the word means completed/finished, finished – completed, says there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.**

So again, I explained those things of something that began with the sealing at 1335 days, God making clear in this very verse here how it's going to be accomplished – He adds this part here about 1290 days which is the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal and it makes this statement here then adding in the midst of this; **And from the time that the daily shall be taken away, referring to the 1335 and those who are sealed, and the abomination that is making desolate, again, it's not 'set up', it's finished, completed; when it's finally over. When is it over? It's not over until we come to the very end, until this time period is completely gone, then the affects of the scattering are over, Jesus Christ returns, the 144,000 are come to this earth – they're resurrected, everything of the past is now gone, the effects of everything, the scattering is over, those who are intended to live on into a new age will be alive, those who are not will not be. Those who are obviously a part of 144,000 will be there, it's all complete. Daniel is complete, that's what the story is in the book of Daniel.**

I thought it'd be good to tie that in with this Sabbath's sermon here about that, adding on to it so we have full understanding of what this is all referring to.

Truth number 26, number 5 in this era of time....

**26 (5) The stones of the temple are about the people in the Church of God at the end-time.**

All these things are awesomely important, incredible truths that God led us to addressing and accepting. To you, as you go through you might think, "Well, that's all simple." It is for you now, but it wasn't back then. Just like when we went through the 18 Truths, or the first 3 Truths of Sardis, or the last 3 that were still there; they would seem simple but they're *not* when you live through certain things. And to the scattered Church out there these things can't be received, they can't have this, but you can.

The discussion between Christ and the disciples in Matthew 24 is about the end-time.

We came to understand more about what was being said in Matthew 24. This is important to grasp and comprehend, that this is about the Church primarily, first and foremost. It's always been about the Church first and foremost because of what God's doing *in* the world, but in His time, most of which is

going to be during the Great White Throne for the world; and the thousand years that follow once the Kingdom is established here on earth.

The discussion between Christ and the disciples in Matthew 24 is about the end-time. Christ stated that the stones of the temple would be cast down before he returned.

See, if you believe 2 Thessalonians and you come to see those things and you understand what the Temple is then you must understand what the stones of the Temple is about, it's about us, it's about what the Church experienced. We were the stones. We *are* the stones of the Temple, what God is building.

This happened immediately after the apostasy at the time of the scattering of God's Church—the spiritual temple of God.

Because what has Jesus Christ said? Not one stone will be left upon another. You know there are people who still look back and think about whether certain stones of that temple are still... *that's not talking about that temple!* It's not talking about a physical temple! It's talking about the Church; that's what led us to understanding the next truth as well. We are the stones of the Temple; every one of us was cast down. The Temple was totally shaken; every one of us was spewed out of God's mouth.

#### **27 (6) All in God's Church today are Laodicean.**

Now again, this is going back to that period of time because it's not today, today. We're going back to when this was written and what this was about; in other words from the time of Mr. Armstrong's death to the Feast of Trumpets on September 30, 2008, which I'm going to put on the website to make sure everybody understands this who comes along. In other words, when the final sealing of the 144,000 was completed.

#### **All in God's Church today are Laodicean.**

*That...* that's a toughie! If you're a part of the scattered group out there you don't want to be a Laodicean. That's just the mindset of people. You're Philadelphian or you came from the time of Philadelphia, or you have the Philadelphia spirit but you're not a Laodicean. Because being Laodicean has always been looked down upon as..."How can they be that way? Lukewarm? They're not too whippy..." They got lukewarm! They had to be spewed out of God's mouth! Who wants to be a Laodicean? But see, I lived then. Some of you others lived during that period of time in the Church. You lived in the time of Laodicea. You don't pick the time you live in! Thankful I wasn't in Sardis or Thyatira, frankly any of them. I am thankful at the time period I was called in, even though I had to go through what was in Laodicea. It's made me who I am because of God's purpose and what God is doing and it is awesome the blessings we've been given! But again, for a person to come to acknowledge this is a big thing. Why? Because you have to come to admit *who you are*. You have to come to a point in time that if you were a part of all this, you have to come to a point in time where you can say, "That was about me. I became lukewarm!" That's repentance. I had to acknowledge I became lukewarm. I had to acknowledge what it said in other scriptures about falling asleep spiritually, spiritually asleep; because Christ's admonition over and over again in Matthew and Mark and so forth is to be alert, to be awake, to be on guard, to be spiritually alert and not to do, basically, what was going to happen at the end-time, that people would begin falling asleep, begin to be drowsy, or sluggish, sleepy, and fall asleep.

I had a hard time when this happened and I finally came to acknowledge this. At first I was able to say I knew I was Laodicean, I knew I lived in that time period. I knew what had happened to the Church, but I didn't feel that I'd fallen asleep. I thought I was one of those that was getting sleepy, but to fall asleep, not me! Didn't take too long after that I came to see, "Yeah, that was me." It was a process of repentance. It was hard to acknowledge! It's *hard* to acknowledge that when you've lived during Philadelphia, to come to a point in time where you have to say, "Yes, I was Laodicean. Yes, I became lukewarm. Yes, I was spewed out of God's mouth. Yes, *I fell asleep.*" I like the way some have stated it, Wayne Matthews as an example. He said not only had he fallen asleep, he said he was in a coma. That's a better way of saying it spiritually. That's what we were, we were in a coma. God has to wake you out of it. You can't just come out of that one! God has to do it! It's a great way of stating it.

Going on with what's stated under that truth....

The Church of God formerly believed that at the end there would be two eras coexisting side-by-side: Philadelphia and Laodicea.

In other words, Philadelphia and Laodicea would exist side by side until the end. There would be *some* who'd be Philadelphian and those others who were Laodicean. That kind of lent itself to pride and saying, "Yes, I'm Philadelphia. Laodicean, no."

One (Philadelphia) was to go to a place of safety...

This was taught in the Church of God. This is what we believed. We weren't given the truth in all this, but this was what we'd come to believe. That we would literally go to Petra in the nation of Jordan. Some people have visited and viewed the area called Petra where some people had fled once in time's past and then because of the scriptures and prophecies about Petra in the Old Testament, that that was going to be a place of refuge for God's people at the end-time. And it is, but it wasn't a physical one. Again, Petra is God. He is *the Rock*. That's what the word means. See? But we weren't there and so you can't be where you're not. We hadn't grown to that point.

One (Philadelphia) was to go to a place of safety, and the other (Laodicea)...

This is what we believed; this is what we taught....

...would have to go through the great tribulation.

While the others who were Philadelphian would be over in Petra. Laodiceans were going to have to suffer. And we've suffered.

Yet, one era cannot overlap another, [an era is an era] and history has shown that all who are in Laodicea are Laodiceans.

During that period of time after Mr. Armstrong died Philadelphia was over.

While some may exhibit some of the traits of the other eras, all are primarily lukewarm and full of pride, until they acknowledge and repent of this condition in their lives and God begins to work in their lives once again. (Rev 3:1-16)

That's a powerful truth to understand what it says regarding living in Laodicea. Let's read that in Revelation, here about Laodicea. See, until God gives you the truth of a matter you don't know what it is. You read certain things that seem to make sense because you're striving always to understand, that's the way God's Church has always been. We're striving to understand what we have and certain things seem to fit in place and sometimes we put them into a place where they don't fit. Which we're guilty of too. Okay? The return of Christ, 'great tribulation', it's great but we have to understand what that means, that will be given to us more fully as time goes on.

So again here, in Revelation when it talks about these eras and it talks about Laodicea here, these messages to the Church from God, from Jesus Christ, and it goes through here and it's talking about some of these things.

**Revelation 3:14 - And unto the angel of the Church of Laodicea write;** so this is about an era of time, a period of time. After Mr. Armstrong died this was the spirit that was there. Mr. Armstrong knew that it was already very much there before he died, the spirit was already there. **These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginner of the creation of God; I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would that you were cold or hot.** That became more important as time went along because after the scattering it was difficult. Where is God? Where is God working? Through whom is God working? And as God even began to draw individuals back there was this process that people had to go through and some of what they saw out there, there was that which was totally cold, that was confusing to people, that which was still lukewarm and being taught out there, and it was difficult because that spirit of being hot and on fire and fully charged up for God's way of life had to grow again, it had to be built again. God had to stir that spirit up within us again, being hot and on fire for God's way of life. It doesn't just happen overnight, it's something that has to be rekindled as well. And so we began to rekindle it and we began to be given fire again in our life, that which is on fire in God's Church today, you can see it. That which is kind of going through things and learning, is understandable. That which is cold is too bad. But today it's clearly seen; back then it wasn't and so there was much confusion.

**So then because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.** God making it very clear He cannot live in, dwell in, accept that which is lukewarm, nor cold, obviously, that's just cut off totally from God, and lukewarm must be cut off as well. There is no such thing as stagnation or just going along even and having a resemblance of the past. There is either growth or there is not and that's what this is about. And we came to a point in time when there wasn't. So what do you have to do? The message to Laodicea is you're going to have to come to repentance; you're going to have to come to a point of acknowledging something that happens in your life.

**Because you say, that I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;** there was that satisfied feeling that people have. They came to a point in time where they didn't believe they needed any more and that was happening when Mr. Armstrong was alive. The evangelists in God's Church didn't come to his Bible studies anymore and sit at his feet and listen from him anymore, because they already knew it, they didn't need him telling them about the Bible. They were teachers, they were *evangelists*, what did they need from God's apostle? DUH! But they lost sight of that. Rich and increased with goods; and that happened throughout the Church with all people in the Church in time.

**...you know not that you are wretched**, this is what God said about an era of people, **you don't know that you are wretched**; You know what Paul said? The only other place this word is used – “Oh *wretched* man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ...” he was going on to show *how* he would be delivered. But we all have to acknowledge this – that’s a spiritual state of strength and power, to be able to acknowledge what we are. That’s what we are. Paul said this after 25 years in the ministry, “Oh wretched man that I am...” We have to be able to see what our carnal nature is like. We have to be able to acknowledge it. That’s a healthy thing spiritually, not a bad thing! I remember in times past there were people in God’s Church who talked about, “I’m getting tired of going and having Mr. Armstrong and the ministry tell me how *bad I am!* I’m just tired of hearing how bad I am!” They had a little bit of the wrong focus. They were tuned into that part but not wanting to acknowledge how bad they were. It’s a healthy thing spiritually, to be able to say, “I’m selfish! I know that!” You have to see it to fight against it; you have to see it to conquer it and to grow in unselfishness, in sacrifice, in God’s love. You have to *grow* to develop those things!

**...and miserable, and poor**, we have to understand what state we’re in. Though we’re so awesomely blessed today this is nothing compared to what’s coming when Jesus Christ returns. This is nothing compared to what we’re to become. We’re so small and so puny in what we have even now, but we’re so richly blessed, but it’s from God.

**...and blind, and naked**: Laodicea came to that point, blind and naked; had to repent of it. Had to be of a repentant spirit, and that was the problem, a repentant spirit wasn’t existing.

**I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire**, you know what that means? What’s gold? That which is rich in your life, that which is precious, that which you hold onto and value. What do you value? God’s word and God’s truth and God’s ways. And you ask for that which is impure to come to the surface and how does that come to the surface? It has to be through heat, trials, that which is hot. You have to go through trials - that’s what you’re asking for. “Help me to go through whatever I need to go through for the impurities to come to the surface, so I can see them, so I can repent, so I can change.” Laodicea came to a point where it didn’t want to change, where it didn’t want to see the impurities because it felt like it didn’t really have any because it was rich and increased with goods. Self – not God.

**I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire**, meaning that you recognise the need for trials, the need to go through hardship in order to change and grow. Without them you can’t make the kind of growth that you can in this age. **...that you may be rich**; Because of what we went through this is how God revealed these truths to us. There would be no other way to come to understand these truths except that it was done spiritually. As God began to help us to see what we had done we began to repent, He began to show us more, He began to show us about ourselves, we begin to see things that we had to come to acknowledge and rejoice in. Thank God He’s showing us that *we’re* the ones responsible for the scattering, every one of us. Every one of us is responsible for letting down, individually.

**...that you may be rich, and white raiment, that you may be clothed**, in other words being forgiven of sin; so that you can repent and be forgiven of sin. That’s how we’re made white. **...and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten**: it’s a powerful message for that period of time. We have to receive God’s correction. Sometimes people don’t want to hear; they don’t want to hear about the 22<sup>nd</sup> truth, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 24<sup>th</sup>, the 25<sup>th</sup>; they don’t want to acknowledge it because then they have to repent.

**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.** It's a beautiful verse, because that's something that should exist in every person's life at any time, in any era, at any period of time.

**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him,** it's a matter of hearing what God says, hearing the spirit of God, receiving the spirit of God and a willingness to change.

The next one here....

**28 (7) All of Laodicea was spewed out of God's mouth as prophesied, separated from Christ, and scattered.**

So again, all these flow together, but each one stands on its own. It's coming to acknowledge step by step – and this didn't happen overnight. This understanding didn't happen overnight. It was point by point by point. As we repented God gave us more, He helped us to see more. I remember talking about Matthew 24 long into the process of time, that we were *all* a part of the Temple, that it was about a spiritual Temple being shaken and the stones falling down. I remember being in Cincinnati in a basement preaching it, in a person's home, talking about this period of time and this was well into... *well into* where we were – God continually just giving a little bit more all the time here.

This happened in order to help awaken some of God's people. God will not accept that which is only lukewarm and steeped in pride. God will not be around sin and pride is sin. Pride and spiritual sluggishness permeated the Church of God through the mid-90's, and the entire Church was therefore separated from God, as prophesied in Revelation 3:16. Until this condition is acknowledged and repented of, God will not work in the lives of such Laodiceans [or individuals]. Even after that point, spiritual sluggishness is a condition that must always be fought against by Laodiceans today.

So again, understanding the time period this was written. We understand that we are past that era now. So again, accepting point by point here things that had to happen. You have to acknowledge you were spewed out of God's mouth. That's a hard thing for people that were part of the Church, to acknowledge they were separated from God, cut off from God's spirit and have to repent in order to come back into a right relationship with God.

**29 (8) The entire Church fell asleep just as it is described in Matthew 25:1-13.**

See, I can't help but talk about it as we discuss this, fell asleep! It's a part of the story, it follows Matthew 24 of what would take place, the abomination, it's what took place, it's what led to these things. Reading this because it has to do with Matthew 25:1-13....

This was the direct result of being Laodicean and lukewarm. The Church used to believe that there were five wise virgins...

See, you read this today and you have a totally different understanding, but this is what we had then. It talks about the 10 virgins. We believed at that point in time there were 5 virgins that were ok, it says here...

...used to believe that there were five wise virgins who went on to the wedding and that the five who were foolish were rejected by the bridegroom.

Because it talks about 5 being wise and 5 being foolish. Philadelphia/Laodicea - side by side. Who do you want to be? "Oh, the Philadelphian! The wise! I don't want to be foolish! I don't want to be a Laodicean." So it's a tough thing when you have to come to acknowledge, "I was Laodicean and I was foolish and I had to repent."

Yet the Bible says all of the virgins fell asleep,

That's what the story tells there and that's something that the Church never understood; it says *all*.

...the virgins fell asleep, and it does not say who was accepted by the bridegroom. Many in the scattered Church today go through the motions of religion like the Protestant world, talking about the truth, but without genuine zeal for it.

They've forgotten even what Mr. Armstrong gave. They don't understand it anymore as a whole.

Only those who repent of the Laodicean condition will be accepted by Christ at this end-time. Only God can awaken someone out of the spiritual sleep that has encompassed the whole Church.

I could give an entire sermon on that statement right there, and how we came to understand that, and that that was new understanding within this truth here. The ability for God to awaken someone out of a spiritual asleep. When you're cut off from the flow of God's spirit and you're cut off from the holy spirit and you're spiritually asleep, no one can come along and help you see it again. You also can't go out here to anyone who once had this life living through them and all of a sudden shake them, do something to them in order to get them to see what you see. Just as much as when you're first called, you can't know the truth until God's there, it's God's spirit that does it. And so God, by His spirit, by going through certain things that you have to go through, physical and spiritual at the same time, to bring you to a point where *you* acknowledge it and repent through a process that God does. God has to do the awakening as much as He does the calling; it's from God.

30 (9) **Matthew 24 is first and foremost about the Church at the end-time.** As Jesus Christ gave prophecy concerning events that would lead to His coming as the Messiah, he first spoke of events that would occur in the Church (vs. 4-21). These events have been believed to be about physical events that would happen on earth, but they are about the Church.

I don't need to read all this, it's on the site, you can read it. Just today showing that these are all truths concerning the apostasy, about the apostasy. It's because of the apostasy that we came to deeper *spiritual understanding!* Mr. Armstrong told us about the Temple, but we didn't get it to the degree we got it later on. Now God was able to build upon this very powerfully so, to show us the importance of

the building process, to show us things about how His spirit works in our life. Powerful! Things that weren't even known during Philadelphia because of such a trial, because of such a traumatic thing to go through and God used that (which is something Satan has never understood), how God uses trials and hardship to build His Church, to build His Family. It's an awesome thing! Satan doesn't grasp repentance and how God's spirit works in our lives to change us, to mould and fashion something within us in our very mind, to change the way you think! Awesome, Romans 12 – the mind that's being transformed, 'metamorphoo'. Awesome!

**31 (10) The first four Seals of Revelation are about the Church, and these parallel Matthew 24.**

What an awesome thing that God showed that one. We'd always read that physically; the 1<sup>st</sup> Seal, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Seal, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seal, the 4<sup>th</sup> Seal, was all about great war, incredible war that was going to take place in the great tribulation. It was a war alright, but it was in the Church of God because it was about the Church. We didn't realize the first four Seals are fully about the Church and the apostasy that was going to take place; and it goes along perfectly as Mr. Armstrong understood, Matthew 24 and Revelation, but not understanding it was spiritual and not physical. What an awesome thing when we begin to see this and understand it, to understand the countdown had begun.

**32 (11) Ezekiel 5 has been fulfilled (spiritually) through the scattering of the Church of God since the apostasy.**

This is when we came to see, began to put numbers together, and began to realize WOW – because I'd given sermons out of Ezekiel 5 and what was going to happen in the end-time about a third, a third, and a third, and ten percent out of the third – physically. Little did I know this is first and foremost about the Church again; a third that just quit, a third that went back into Protestantism, a third that was scattered, and out of that God was going to draw back a full ten percent. And we know our prayers have been different toward that, asking God for intervention that that might be magnified three times at least. We'll see what happens.

So again here, one thing led to another. They all flow together because they're about the same things. When you come to understand that it's a spiritual temple they all fit together. And finally the last one....number 12, of 33 total that God gave, all these just happened to be on the site in this order that have to do with this sermon today, 'Truths About the Apostasy', learned from/through the apostasy. Simple.

**33 (12) There is no literal physical place of safety for the Church during the time of great tribulation, but there is a spiritual one.**

Goes right back to the thing we discussed earlier. So again, awesome! And to think we're this far through it all and look where we are today. Incredible what God has given to us. And we learn as God leads us and by looking to God's word, looking to God for help and inspiration through His spirit, to teach us, to show us these things as we go along. That's why we're going through an awesome time right now, we truly are. And what's being moulded and fashioned in us can be moulded and fashioned in no other way. What you're living through... those of you who are new in the last few years here, it's hard to comprehend now. Later on you're going to look back, just like I look back now at the apostasy and I think, "WOW! How awesome to have the kind of growth, to be spiritually where we are today

because of what we suffered through then, because of what we lived through then, that oneness with God that we have as a result of that – it couldn't have happened, it couldn't *be in us* in any other way!" And because of what you're living through now, what you're experiencing now, even in the next few months, you're going to learn, you're going to be moulded and fashioned in ways that could happen in no other way to prepare you for things in the future. So, it's exciting being in God's hands, giving your life to God. ~~~end