

We've been covering a sermon series entitled *Sobered Indeed* with today being *Part 3*. And today we're finally back on track, we're having a live webcast once again.

Because of where we are in time and the *time* we have remaining, it's so very important that we focus again on this subject matter and continue focusing on it because we started this particular series some time back, that we do look at this indeed in depth so that we're better equipped to see this to the very end, to the day Jesus Christ returns on *May 27, 2012*. Don't know how much more direct I can be with that. That's our focus, that's what God has given to us to focus upon in a very powerful way and we actually just become stronger and stronger and stronger in that focus.

So we have been focusing on the importance of those things having to do with being sober minded spiritually with genuine seriousness and gravity/importance of doing so. The sermon on the Last Great Day was inspired to help everyone measure their own individual reaction in a serious manner in order to also see the measure of a relationship with God. That's why God inspired that sermon in that way. I've never given a sermon like that in any fashion or form to that degree by any measure, and yet it was something that began working, beginning with Atonement, all the way up until the time when it was finally given on the Last Great Day, as a very powerful tool that God gave us in a merciful way to be able to look more deeply into our own being, our own mind, our own convictions, if you will, as to what we believe.

So indeed everyone *should* seek to grow in becoming more sober minded spiritually, again as I mentioned, marked by circumspection, in other words, of deeply looking at yourself and where you are in your thinking, in your true relationship with God. Because that's what this is all about. And as we draw nearer - May 27<sup>th</sup> - we need to become far more spiritually alert – watching spiritually – after the manner that Jesus Christ has taught us and warned us over and over again.

We are still addressing the first lesson learned by a lion tamer of not stumbling before a lion, as we started out this series, and for us spiritually we cannot afford to be stumbling before that roaring lion who seeks to devour God's people. It's always been that way. And I'm concerned about some who are stumbling by some of your own actions that do not reflect sound mindedness in your judgments, in how matters are judged in your thinking with seriousness and gravity concerning what you're allowing into your life. This is a time to really focus more clearly on a race that God has given to us. Certainly, if everyone understood it spiritually on a spiritual plane through time and those whom God has called, to understand the examples that Paul has given and others have given about a race and being in a race and running with all of our might, with all of our being, of what God has placed before us, to understand for them, as an example if it were back in the period of Ephesus, or Thyatira long ago, that as long as you're in God's Church there is a frame of mind, a way of thinking that we need to embrace. And certainly that *is* one of them. Though our lives might be 20-30-40-50 years or longer in God's Church it is a race. Our life is short! It's here and then it's gone! And it has to do with these very principles and warnings of being sobered, being of a sober mind, that we're able to hold onto during our entire time in God's Church that is so very, very important.

But how much more so now? There has never been a time like this! ...where God has given to His people the ability to see the tape at the end, the line, the ribbon, whatever it is that is in some races is stretched across the finish line that you run through. That's what I'm talking about. We can see it. It's never been given to God's people until the last few years here in the sense of where it is, when it is in other words. And so we're racing toward it and this is a time to be more serious about it, to understand what's happening in the world.

I am in *awe*! I truly am in awe of what's taking place around the world in the news. We don't get it very much here in the United States, you have to go out and look for it, and we have some in God's Church who do a good job of being able to send that news around to others, and that's a good thing because there's much going on...*much* going on. This world is moving into position so rapidly. What's happening in Europe right now...I read some of these articles, I saved a bunch of them for yesterday when we were travelling down this direction and read a bunch of them yesterday, marking with highlight some of the comments being made by various ones around the world, leaders and people reporting and different reporting agencies and so forth. And just in *awe* that here I am watching something come together in this manner – 10 nations – because that's what's going to emerge out of this. To see something we've *always* known about Great Britain – that they would never be a part of this at the end – that they would *never* be a part of it! and now to see how their leadership is pulling back as Europe pushes forward for a stronger union; calling it a United States of Europe now and a desire for some to come together, a desire to save, indeed, a core group with a stronger constitution, taking away, in a sense, individual powers of various nations and uniting them into one in a stronger fashion. There are some nations who don't want to be a part of that, Great Britain being one. They don't even want to be a part of the EU period, now, as a whole.

And so we see the struggle going on; and I hope it's a little dumbfounding to you and quite awesome to be able to sit back here reading these things as they're happening...*and they're speeding up* because they're being pressured because of what's happening with the world economy as Babylon is crumbling under its own weight...*it's own weight*! It's beginning to crumble apart; it can't sustain itself. No matter what they do, no matter how they try to do it, it can't be sustained, and this is all a part of what God said long ago. And it's just, candidly, an awesome thing to see some of it begin to come together in such a powerful way. And this is nothing because it's going to move faster.

We started addressing some of this before the Feast while we were over in Europe. Certain news articles here and there about some of the things taking place and some of the ground work and some of the rippling going on of friction between some of the nations over there. And it's all being lined up, all being put together just exactly like God said it would be; and I don't have words for it - the awe, being dumbfounded, of sitting there and watching it and reading these things day by day now, not week by week, but day by day becoming stronger and stronger, of things they're saying. It's going to take a little while yet, but when it's time it'll be there. So they have their meetings because *they are trying desperately*, not just to save a few nations, because they *really don't care* about certain nations. It wasn't really a matter of trying to save Greece; it was a matter of trying to post-pone certain things, to hold off for a time, to give time to begin passing certain kinds of legislation, if you will, or treaties that are coming in order to make something stronger, in order to *save their banks and to save the Euro*. No matter what the rest of the world has to say, they're not going to go down the tubes the way *they* see it. They're going to fight for it before it's over with. And dumbfounding? More and more leaders in Europe making comments about war. It's dumbfounding!

And in this country (United States), just like I put in the recent posting on ronaldweinland.com, totally asleep – *totally asleep*, unaware of what’s coming, unaware of the magnitude of it all. Incredible, what’s taking place.

And so this is the time indeed for us to realize that we need to be sober minded and put more into this process of what we’re discussing here, in the sense of lessons that can be learned, of *being* sharp, and *being* alert, and *being* sober minded – because we have a battle in front of us. We have a battle in front of us. It’s ongoing, it’s not going to get easier – it’s *not* going to get easier!

So it’s good to be reminded of the account in John that we focused upon at different times here, because it is in the spirit that people sometimes stumble, obviously. Again, this is the account of Jesus telling a large group of disciples about drinking His blood and eating His flesh, and it’s a *good* lesson, it’s a very good lesson, because of a response that was here in people. And we can’t afford for these kinds of things to take place! That’s why we’ve gone through this since the Last Great Day addressing some of these things, especially on that day.

**John 6:60 – Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?** Now this wasn’t done in a good attitude. This wasn’t done with a desire to learn and to understand what was being said and to have *patience* in waiting; it was a judgment. **This is just too hard!** *God* wouldn’t do this! This isn’t the way *God* works! And so it is, just like in a scattered Body, a people and how they think. They look at us, they look at what *God* is doing and they think or say “*God doesn’t work like that! He wouldn’t work through them! He wouldn’t work through a woman, especially, as one of the two witnesses, as a prophet at the end-time!* This is just *absurd!* It’s so convenient for them that it worked out this way, isn’t it?” All the mocking that goes on. I feel for them. I understand the human mind, the carnal thinking. I look forward to the day that they’re freed from this, I truly am. They don’t understand the bondage and the thinking that’s taking place there, just as these individuals didn’t grasp a spirit and a way of thinking... one that *you* never want to have.

Always a desire...*always a desire*, if we don’t understand because we’ve proven this to ourselves, because we *know* there is no other place, to wait... to wait, to have patience when *God* reveals it to us. And then it all comes together... “Yeah, why didn’t I see that before? It’s so simple. It all fits into place!” Incredible! Just like things right now are all fitting into place - not always the way we want them to, but they’re all fitting into place.

**Verse 61 - When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it,** murmuring. This wasn’t a good spirit... **said to them, Does this offend you?** A word that’s used for stumbling. **Does this cause you to stumble?**

In **verse 66** it says - **From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.** Not speaking of the twelve but of others who were there because a disciple is a matter of a student. That’s what that word means in the Greek, it’s just a student, someone who’s learning, wants to learn from Him at that point, to that point in time. So it said many of those went by the wayside.

**Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will you also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.** It’s a powerful thing, it truly is, to understand how *God* was leading them, teaching them. They had enough time by that point in time to see the things that had taken place; and we have as well in *God*’s Church - the truths that we have, that’s why

we continue to go back to them. That's why they were mentioned on the Last Great Day. *Where* does one go? It's not anywhere else! It's only here.

**Verse 69 - And we believe and are sure that You are that Christ/the Messiah, the Son of the living God.** Powerful! Awesome!

So in order to pick up from where we left off in Part 2 of the sermon let's review a few of the verses in Romans 8 that we were in in order to capture the context of where we were heading.

**Romans 8:14 - For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.** And so it's been that way from the very beginning. They continued to follow. They knew where the words of life were from, they recognized how they came into their lives, how they were able to learn and that God gave them these things. **For as many are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God,** which means we choose then to follow, as those disciples did, whether they continued or not.

**For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;** that's what God is freeing us from. Just like the Feast and the message at the Feast, how powerful that that's what God's bringing us out of, bondage, and He's showing those things, how deeply imbedded they are in our minds. And yet the world can't see those things as a whole, where the prejudices come from. They don't understand that that's a type of bondage and slavery that God wants to free mankind from, because it's from those things that harsh judgments, to the point of condemnation – that's where those things come from – wars, and fighting, and bickering, and all the things that happen in this world come from those things that they don't grasp, those things that are deeply imbedded in the spirit, in the mind of human beings.

And yet that's the very thing God's going to free us from, that's what He's freeing the Church from, and in a very short time is going to begin to free this world from! So the Jew and Muslim, because they have conquered and overcome their background, can walk to God's house side by side as *brothers*. What an *awesome thing*! So that men *and* women around the world are freed from the prejudices and the bondage that's there, and the bondage that exists between races and people at all levels, it doesn't matter! To be freed of those things to where indeed we can walk to God's house arm in arm, brothers and sisters – free. What a beautiful thing! It truly is, far more than we can fully grasp. We get a taste of it in a very big way in the Church, in God's Church. We get a giant taste of it during the Feast of Tabernacles period, and we hold onto that, that which pictures that Millennial period.

**... but you have received the spirit of,** it says '**adoption**' here, but it's the word for **sonship**; it's about sonship, **whereby we cry, Abba, Father.** Look to God as our Father, the one who picks us up, the one who strengthens us, the one who is our High Tower, our Petra...not a place, not a hole in the ground where people are going to be *saved* from tribulation, but from the Great God who intervenes in our lives, who fights for us, who leads us, who guides us, who directs us, who directs our paths and we follow; and He's always there strengthening us, powerfully, helping us to become stronger, not weaker, as we go forward. And we're in a time like that where we need to become stronger, more fully focused on running this race and finishing it. Almost there! Under 200 days now...while the world mocks and makes fun. Sad! But soon they get to be freed, those who come through it all.

And so again, these verses reveal a process of how we're led, how we're to follow God, and it's all a matter of faith. That's what this is all about, it's about faith. This chapter, these things are about faith, it's about what God gives us to believe and then our choice to live by it. Because the ability to believe

the truth, God gives to us, and then we make the choice to live by it in our lives. And that's what living by faith is all about. And that's what we were asked to look at in a very deep way on the Last Great Day.

Dropping on down to **verse 27 - And He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit**, God knows us inside and out; He reveals to us our thinking. He reveals to us...thankfully, not all on the first day when we're baptized. We couldn't take it! We'd be so *depressed* it would be like "God can't work with us!" So He shows us a little bit at a time, thankfully, He's *merciful* in how He works with us and then He helps us to see attitude and spirit *deep* in our being, in our mind, and certain events, certain things that happen to us in life bring those things to the surface for that very purpose, so that we can see it and begin to address it and work to change. And that change, so often, and the work involved, is one of repentance; because we want to be different. We want to be like our elder brother, we want to be moulded and fashioned *just like Him*, to become at one with God.

**And He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.** So the process of Jesus Christ working in our lives and the power of God's spirit in and through Him to, as our intercessor, if you will, as our High Priest, and how God's spirit... it's about how God's spirit works in our lives to reveal a truth to us, to reveal things in our minds to ourselves about ourselves.

**Verse 28 - And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God**, we talked about this in times past. There are those in the world who *think* they love God but they don't understand. God has blessed us to learn to love Him, because it's about His laws, it's about Him, it's about His Word; and in order to love God (let's put it this way)...in order to love God one wants to live according to the mind, the will of God, and God's will and desire for mankind is to start with the Sabbath – that He says, "If you want to love Me, you keep My commandments, you keep the Sabbath Day – not just the weekly Sabbath but the *annual* Sabbaths." It all begins there in a relationship to God! And then He shows us relationships with mankind, not to murder, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not all those kinds of things, not to lie, bear false witness, all those things that are there as far as relationships with human beings is concerned. But He also shows us the right relationship with Him; and people think they can *bypass* that! No, you *can't*! You've got to obey God if you truly love Him.

And so, **we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.** What an awesome thing! As we've grown in the last few years more and more God is revealing to us more of His purpose in a deeper way for the Millennium, for the Great White Throne, for things that we've haven't been able to fully see, that are going to be different in both periods of time and *why* they're different. That we see in a greater way of *why* this end-time has to happen in this way, in ways we couldn't grasp in times past but now we see *far more clearly, far more powerfully!* *The MIND of God* – that's what it's about! It's learning about God and coming into unity with that! And not only being in unity but saying, in essence, "Right on! Thank God you're like that!" We're learning, if you will, we're coming in a deeper way to know God. That's the part of the process of becoming at one with God.

And so, even things that are happening now that so many of you have heard about this week that I can't, or won't, fully comment yet on today, only in part, that I'm going to work on as far as some things to be said later on. But, everything works together for good! They're not always fun to go through, but when you begin to see how God uses things for a *positive purpose*, in a way that has *far greater impact* in the way He does it, it is awesome! It is *truly awesome* how God works, and that's what we have to

always grasp and comprehend. God is always there! ...*always there*, and we just have to choose to follow, and we then get to share in some of the most *awesome things*, especially at this end-time, that human beings have ever had the opportunity to share in.

And I'll just mention there – just have a little patience. And there are some out there today who, “Yeah, gotta wait a little longer... (murmur, murmur, murmur)...” Yeah, you've got to wait a little longer because there are some things I'm not going to address yet today and you'll understand why later on...or you won't understand, but the Church will.

**Verse 29 - For whom He did foreknow**, meaning that God has a plan and a timing for His plan and phases to be worked out. God foreknew those things that would happen in the different eras of the Church because He planned them out. Awesome! He planned out seven eras for God's Church. He planned out what would happen in a period called Sardis and why it would be that way, and why the Church would be tried at that time in a unique way in order toward the very end to raise up an individual whom God would work through to begin restoring truth toward the end-time, to work toward the end-time. Because if it hadn't have been for what he did we couldn't be here and we wouldn't have the focus and the ability to do what we are doing, and build upon those things that God gave through him *in* this end-time! We are so blessed! ...of others who have rejected those things, or make snide comments because they don't like *all* of what he had to say, referring to 18 Truths. “Oh, he was a good teacher.” Some who were taught by him and sat at his feet, “Oh, he was a good teacher and helped me in a lot of things.” And basically what they're saying is “...but...” What 'but' is it for you? “...but I don't believe in tithing, I don't believe in 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe...” “...but I don't believe in Passover the way you did, I believe that it was changed in the Old Testament to the 15<sup>th</sup>...”

They always have their 'but' in there.

**For whom He did foreknow He also did predetermine**, that's what the word means, **predetermined**, it's not 'predestinate' in the way the world thinks. It's not that everything is worked out in your life that no matter what you do it's going to turn out exactly a certain way – *not at all!* We have *free choice* in life, everybody does! But God is going to work with and bring certain things to pass and work in certain people's life to bring it about *no matter what*, in one respect. Because God has a plan! Because *God* is a master potter! *God* is the one who moulds and fashions, and once we yield ourselves to that process something in a far greater way begins to happen in life. Before that, before He actually begins to do the work of the potter, He allows mankind to do his own will, go his own way. Now we have that choice too, but you understand what I'm saying – there is a difference there when God begins to draw you and call you.

**...to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow He also did predetermine to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that was His plan from the very beginning before anything else...before *anything* was created, that we would have to have a High Priest, that we would have to have a Passover, to be forgiven of sin so that we could come into a relationship with God, because God won't be around sin. So when we're forgiven of sin He will work with us. He will not only work with us but He also *dwells* in us by the power of His holy spirit! **...that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.** The first of the firstfruits, Jesus Christ is, and then all those that begin to follow at different stages; at the end of this period of time and then at the end of the thousand years and then finally at the end of the Great White Throne when everything is finished. Powerful! Incredible!

Well, let's continue on here now. Let's jump on down to chapter 9 and build upon the story of how we're led and how God works with us, because the more we see and understand this process at work in our lives the less likely *anyone* will be to stumble and to be made weak before the very one who seeks to destroy us.

**Romans 9:1** - These verses have been fully misunderstood as they've been translated by individuals and so I'm going to read the first few verses here the way it's written in the Old King James anyway. **I say the truth in Christ, I do not lie, as my conscience that's also bearing me witness in the holy spirit, That I have great heaviness and continual pain in my heart.** And so here Paul is opening himself up and saying here, in a very strong way to those who are listening that he is speaking the truth in Christ, that He is not lying, and that what he is saying here about himself is very deep and weighs heavily upon his heart and his desire.

And yet now it goes all astray in the translation here in **verse 3 - For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:** What a distorted translation! What a weird thing! That's not what he's saying at all! ...to desire something like that? The word, in my margin here, shows 'separated': **If I were to be separated from Christ for my brethren,** in other words not to have opportunity for salvation, willing to give that up for everyone else. Is that what Paul is saying? ...in order to help everyone else? That's not what he's saying! He *valued* his calling! He *valued* the opportunity to be a part of the God Family, and he knew how it worked. He's saying something in a very powerful way here that goes along with this though, and a part of it is repeated in different words in chapter 10 here.

Notice **Romans 10:1** – and this will help you to begin to understand what he's saying here. **Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer,** that's exactly what he's talking about in this previous verse. **...my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.** In other words, that gave him motivation and desire because he had a desire, as we all do, to see this world come though this, to see the time when others have the opportunity to be saved, to come out of this world, to be able to be free of bondage. And so that's the context of what he's starting to talk about in chapter 9, and he finishes those statements in chapter 9 that we're going to read all of by this verse here in chapter 10, verse 1, because there are no verses and chapters in the original writings. But he comes back around to that and just reiterating the fact that this is his desire, just as we have desire, just as I have great desire for those who are in a scattered body.

I look *forward* to all those individuals whom God is going to awaken. I look forward to that in a similar way of what Paul is speaking, with great desire. And I look forward to, because I know that not very many are going to be able to be awakened by what God says, not because I don't want that - I do, but it's God's will and His purpose of how He works things out and we rejoice in that because there's a plan and a purpose for it all. And so I look forward to the end of a thousand years, to this point in time again, when everyone whom I've known and those whom I haven't known who are a part of the scattered body and *all* that they went through to be awakened, physically to life once again, and spiritually to spiritual life once again so that they can repent, and so that we can embrace them. "The past is the past and you have such an awesome opportunity in front of you now." I look forward to that, I truly do.

And so we understand God's purpose and God's plan in the sense of timing, and our heart goes out to them, it truly does.

And so **Romans 9:3** – of what Paul is truly saying. He’s saying: **Indeed...Indeed I pray**, the word is about praying, not ‘could wish’...wish...wish...wish...wish...wish... what does that mean? It’s about praying/prayer. **Indeed I pray of myself**, not to be ‘accursed from’ but ‘**to be laid aside**’, as in a sacrifice, ‘to be laid aside’. The word has to do with ‘as in sacrifice’. Isn’t that what it’s all about? That our prayer is that wherever we can, if it benefits others, if we have to go through certain things so that others don’t have to, so be it...*so be it*, in order for them to see, in order for their eyes to be opened. Are you willing to do that for others? That’s what Paul is saying here! And I *marvel* at a time that I’m reading this, this is the very thing that can cause people to look deeply in their lives and say, “Yes, this is what it’s all about.” So be it! *So be it!* ...if being laid up as a sacrifice others can be saved, others can begin to see. Awesome! That’s what he’s saying.

**Indeed, I pray for myself to be laid up as in sacrifice for/because of Christ, for my brethren.** Because of this way of life that we live, because of what we believe. The world doesn’t believe this! The world doesn’t understand this! Even the scattered Church today, there is a great gulf between a period of time when Mr. Armstrong died and where we are now. It’s great! It’s massive! So that there are those on one side who can’t even come across. They can’t! Only God can help them to accomplish it if it’s His will. It’s a matter of God’s will, not ours.

So again, **...for/because of Christ, for my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh.** That’s what he’s talking about, this longing, this desire he has. So that should be our spirit. I remember in the very beginning, of having a prayer (I’ve mentioned it before), from the very outset when I was called, that desire for others, because it wasn’t *my* desire, it was something God blessed me to see that I prayed about to Him. And I think how awesomely I’ve been blessed. Those prayers have been answered in a very powerful way and are still being answered and are going to be answered more powerfully as time goes on. Awesome!

**Verse 4 – Who are Israelites to whom pertains the adoption/the sonship**, in other words it was given in the very beginning to a specific line of descendants on a physical plane, not on a spiritual one. **...and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises**, talking about how finally there came a time when Israel was made a nation and they were able to be brought through the Red Sea and they were brought up to Mount Sinai and they were given the law and the covenants and God showed them how to have a physical kind of relationship with Him through the building of a temple, or the making of the tent and all that was with it in the very beginning, from the very moment that they started working those things. God gave the work of a Levitical system there – and this is what it’s referring to talking about **the covenants** and the **giving of the law** and **the service of God**. That service is about the Levitical system, **and the promises**, that went with it all, that this isn’t just all of what it’s about – it goes *way beyond that!*

**Whose are the fathers/which was for/given to the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.** And so it’s showing here a pattern of things, of things that were established by God and certain things that God was going to fulfill in and through Jesus Christ, that it goes beyond that which had to do with physical Israel. And now he goes into explaining all that. That’s what he starts explaining here in verse 6; and so he gives it in a little bit of a nutshell here, what he’s addressing and why he’s addressing it, what was given to Israel, and now begins to magnify what he just spoke of.

**Verse 6 - Not as though the word of God has taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel:** they're not all Israel who are of Israel... this sounds like double-speak. It's not. He's showing here the purpose of the promises was not a physical one but a spiritual one. He's showing here that when it speaks of Israel there's an Israel that's far more important than the physical Israel. It's the *spiritual* one! It's a *spiritual* one! And even there, they're not all of Israel who are called Israel, the true Israel of God, the spiritual Israel of God. They're all different nations of peoples. It's awesome!

And he says, **not as though the word of God has not taken effect. For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel. (Verse 7) Neither because they are the seed of Abraham;** so there was a seed of Abraham but that's not what it's all about *just like what we talked about at the Feast! ...seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac*, speaking of that word there that's about a type of Christ, **but in Isaac shall your seed be called.** And so again, there is that seed that would come in time and not talking about a matter of physical nations, but *a seed*; there is *a seed* that would come, that was a promise that began with Abraham, then Isaac, then followed all the way through the forefathers, as it talks about here. It's about the Messiah.

**...That is, They who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted of the seed.** It's a beautiful picture. See, it's not a matter of that which is physical, as Paul is speaking to the Romans, the Gentiles; he's saying the Israel that God is focused upon is a different one that's made up of far more.

**For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara will have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;** there were two born, Esau and Jacob. And so it goes on to explain some of these things, this process that began and showing that the seed it's speaking of is not a matter of something that's a matter of physical descendant, but one that would become a spiritual one because of Christ.

**(For the children being not yet born, having neither done any good or evil...)** speaking of Esau and Jacob, **(...neither having done any good or evil...)** in other words, still in the womb **(...that the purpose of God according to election/selection...)** in other words, it's God! Everything that God has done is by His timing and by His selection of whom He will, when He will. The vast majority of mankind was meant to be in the Great White Throne. It was never God's purpose that the overwhelming vast majority of mankind have anything other than a second life in another resurrection, or in a resurrection, if you will, to a physical life once again. That's been God's purpose from the very beginning! But in the midst of all that He has a plan for giving salvation to mankind that begins with the selection process of His own choosing. And so here are two children, **neither having done good or evil**, Esau and Jacob, and God had a purpose of how He was working and where He was working, what He was going to perform.

**(...the purpose of God according to selection might stand, not of works but of Him who calls.)** It's not about *our* works, it's not about how well we do something, it's not about how *good* we are. We desire to be, we want to change and repent, but we recognize that that ability comes from God as we conquer and overcome, as we grow spiritually; but understanding there is a basic nature we have of and by ourselves apart from God that we constantly fight and have to be able to fight against and repent and conquer and overcome. That's what he talked about in previous verses here, chapters.

**Verse 12 – It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I...again, unfortunate translation ...hated.** God never hated anyone! God is a God of

love! Some use the word 'love less'. Yes, it means to 'love less'. And another word that could be used there, another phrase that could be used, 'to not yet love'. In other words, God's love cannot yet be given in the sense of salvation. And so, so much of the world has been left to their own because that's God's purpose, not yet to be called, not yet to be changed, to be moulded and fashioned and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ – only a few are selected for that process.

And so it was even with a physical Israel; that God had a process there that He chose to work through, of a selection, to make a nation, a people – and not for a good example, as we talked about at the Feast – but to show in a very powerful way that mankind, even when chosen as a great nation, cannot keep God's laws without His spirit, without being a part of the Church.

**What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?** Because God selected that one should be loved at this time, that one should be called at this time to have a special purpose, work in him and for Him as well, a greater purpose because God, frankly, in those individuals and different individuals through time there, there are those whom God worked through in a spiritual plane; not all of Israel, but different ones – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – different ones that God chose to work through, to work with as a matter of salvation – Joseph – the things that God did in and through him. King David – not all of Israel at that time. If there were others, we don't know who they were, but as a whole through time it's only been a handful of people up to the time of Christ that God has selected and worked with to be a part of the first resurrection.

So, **Is there unrighteousness in God?** Because of how He works? Says, **God forbid! For He said to Moses, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy:** What does that mean? Well, it means a lot of things. Mercy in the sense of what's given to someone who is called, selected for a purpose at a particular point in time, is a matter that God begins to show His mercy in order to work with them. He shows us a lot of mercy through our sins, through being able to be forgiven of sin, and we go back to sin at times and we have to be forgiven of sin and we keep fighting these fights and this battle, but God's very merciful to us because He has a purpose in bringing us through this, and to mould and fashion something within us, within our being, and we become stronger and stronger in spirit, in mind, in unity and oneness with God, and He gives us great mercy and love during this period of time. *Patience!* ...because His great desire is that we indeed yield to His moulding and fashioning, because that's His time for calling us and moulding and fashioning us. All we have to do is yield to it and we get to share in awesome things. But the rest around us that don't have that opportunity?

Is God *unfair*? That's what they're asking here! Is God unjust because of this? Is God unrighteous because He hasn't called the rest? No! He's going to save them as well, at least give them the opportunity for that, but in His time! And frankly, the time when more are going to be able to have the *capacity*, the *ability* to respond in an easier fashion! *This is not an easy time! ...it never has been for the past 6,000 years because it isn't God's world!* But it gets better and better for people to be able to be worked with in a more massive way, like the Millennium and *especially* the Great White Throne! What a beautiful plan God has; that at the beginning of the Millennium the Messiah will be on the earth. Jesus Christ is going to be on the earth with 144,000 to work with mankind to bring justice – justice in everything! No more *governments* who do the things they do. No more *courts* that are established the way they are. ...just God's government top to bottom within the Church, within the world. Beautiful! Everyone in *one* Church, having that opportunity.

And then it gets greater the farther you go, because during that thousand years God is preparing millions (?), maybe into the billions (?) - we don't know – who are going to have opportunity to be resurrected into the God Family at a time when 6,000 years and even some in the other are going to be resurrected back to physical life again and they're going to be on the earth? Awesome! The ability in God's world with God's government, with God's people there to help to teach, to work with you, to help individuals along...it's night and day compared to what it has been the last 6,000 years in Satan's world - truly is!

And so we suffer through more, and it's not a lot of fun sometimes and it can feel like a knife ripping you apart inside until you come back to grips with, '*All things work together for good...*' 'Who can separate us from the love of God?' No one can! God has a purpose in our lives. Rather than defeating us it actually makes us stronger. Everything that's happened since Atonement has worked to make me stronger! Truly has! More convinced and more convicted of *May 27, 2012* – something that just irritates the tar out of some people.

Isn't that amazing? You think, "Why... *Why* wouldn't you want Jesus Christ to return, to be King of kings? *Why* would you *not* want it to be that soon?"

"Well, it's not that, it's just... it's *you!* It's you! It's what you believe."

How can you deal with, how can you help someone like that? That's why God has to humble people, so He can work with them. They don't understand the love of God. They don't understand how God works and you can't give that to anyone. But we have a job to do and it's a matter of a witness of something, of a testimony that has to be accomplished in the short period of time that reflects 6,000 years of time – to be written and recorded forever to help others. It's a beautiful thing, it really is.

**Verse 16 - It is not in him who wills, nor in him that runs**, in other words, of your own ability apart from God. That's what he's showing here. It's not because of what we do of and by ourselves apart from God that we're able to receive blessings from God. On the contrary! So it's not a matter of how good we are at what we do – that's what he's showing here – it's not a matter of how good you are at your works and service and everything else. If it isn't geared rightly because it's to *God's* purpose, because *God's* in it, because God's inspiration, His spirit is in it, then it's of no service, it's of no value. And so God has to be in it. **So it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.** God and what God has given! It's about what God does! It's about *God's* work! Mr. Armstrong had to work *hard!* He worked *far harder* than I ever have. He drove himself; he started as a young man, and certain traits that he learned there, because he lived in an age where you had to work harder compared to today.

I can use a computer to do a lot of what he did back then. I can write a book on my laptop and get it published off of the computer! Don't have to have a whole department of several hundred people working for you to do it; I can do it all right there. Now, the only problem is he would probably have a difficult time with me, saying, "Why have you only written two books?"

But I think of things like that; it's God that was doing it; he yielded to the process. It's God that does the works! He gives us the ability to share in it. He opens up the doors. He calls whom He wills. He puts things out there the way *He* desires it to be. 'The Plain Truth' being out there to the magnitude of eight million a month is what God did, not what any human being did. See? But we have to work to be a part of it, to share in it, and that's exciting!

**For the scripture says unto Pharaoh**, again, showing, **Even for this same purpose have I raised you up**, God saying that of Pharaoh; “I have raised you up! I have made you powerful! I have made you who you are to the strength and power of your military, your army now, everything you have, the riches you have in the height of Egypt at *this* time...” **that I might show My power in you/through you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth.** And it was! And that’s why 40 years later when the Israelites started coming through across the Jordan River that they were afraid on the other side, the nations were afraid because *they remembered the story of 40 years earlier, of what God did to Egypt!* Amazing!

**Therefore has He/God mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens.** If we understand the purpose there’s no problem in that. If you understand the purpose of God! In other words, He lets them go their own way. He let Pharaoh do his own thing. He made Pharaoh great! Pharaoh... power and riches in the height of Egypt, and Pharaoh was able to have all that; but God hadn’t called him for salvation. God raised him up and then how did Pharaoh use it? Ah, he was hard on the Israelites. He became harder on them – that’s what greed does – people taking advantage of others. Corporations today, government today – “Oh, let’s print more money!” There are economists out there who talk about how two and three, four generations are going to be paying for all this because of our printing money. That there’s no way we can get out of this and they have to pay for it. “Bah – who cares! Four generations? Maybe they can solve these problems.” Yeah, these problems of greed, of lying, of cheating, of conniving... I get so frustrated when I see the world and the spirit that’s out there. I am so thankful it’s about to an end.

And so God ‘hardens’ – in other words, He didn’t make him to be hard, He just let him do his own thing after He’d made him great. It’s like what God did with Philadelphia once they came into a period of Laodicea. It started in Philadelphia! All the knowledge and truth and the awesomeness of congregations in city after city and becoming larger and the massiveness of the Feast of Tabernacles and that experience on a physical plane, and those things began to go to the heads of people. God says, “You say you are rich and increased with goods. *Your* mind! *Your* spirit! It’s what *you’re* doing, what *you* have done, what *you* can do!” It doesn’t become about God as much anymore. People go to the Feast of Tabernacles...not as much about being fed and praying about who is going to feed them, what Feast site they might go to, or if they had a choice to transfer somewhere that they might go to where the greater speakers are, because they can have that opportunity... No, it’s about where can we have the most fun? What’s the most exciting site to go to? And there’s nothing wrong with that! But that can’t be the primary focus and vision, and that’s what God addressed.

And so we became rich and increased with goods and we had to learn some tough lessons. So because we were given that what did we do? Our hearts turned hard. Our hearts were hardened in the spiritual plane – began to fall asleep. Amazing!

And so this is what happens in a physical world. If God gives greater power and wealth to individuals, human beings don’t use it well. They love it, they want more power. Have you ever known someone to want less power? Have you ever seen people just walk away from it and say, “No, I did my two year stint.... I did my four year stint and too much is not good because of lobbyists and connections that can take place, and it’s better that others come in and none of them get caught up in this and that we not have these long terms in office with people who get up in their eighties and nineties that become so indebted to lobbyists that...” Anyway...

**Verse 19 - You will say then unto Me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will?** God's all powerful, yes, but again, sin is sin and its man's own responsibility. And that's a part of the story, isn't it? Man has to come to see, apart from God, who he is, what he is – *selfish*! We're selfish by nature!

**No, but, O man, who are you who replies against God?** To answer against God? **Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have You made me like this?** "Why have you made me to live on this earth? ...to live here for 60-70-80-900 years..." (some did – mindboggling) "...and I have to die and live in a body again for 60-70 years more, 100, whatever it is? It's just not fair! I don't like that!" Well, it's what you make of your life! Isn't it an amazing thing about human beings? ...to not recognize that our life is a blessing from God, rather than fight against God? But we fight against God rather than recognizing what an awesome thing to have blessings of life! Is it *owed* to us to have life?

**Doesn't the potter have power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and to another to dishonour?** ...for a greater purpose, in other words? It's just that man doesn't understand what that purpose is yet. Pharaoh? To make him to that purpose? To reveal the glory, the might, the power of God? The things we've been going through the last period of time here, God revealing in a very powerful way as a witness, just like He has in the past 6,000 years, the kind of mercy He's had toward mankind? And man isn't suffering yet... not like he could have been, not like we *believed* he would be from day one, because God's a merciful, loving God. But they can't accept that because they don't believe any of it anyway. But it is a witness; it *is* a true witness of God, of what He's doing.

**What if God willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:** in other words, look at what... just what I said – 6,000 years of this and yet God has shown mercy over and over and over again to mankind, but mankind hasn't acknowledged it, just taken advantage of it.

**And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy,** those whom He has given great mercy to, especially in a calling, especially in the Church... **which He had before prepared unto glory, Even us,** speaking of the Church, we learn about that mercy, we learn about God's love. The world can't understand it, the world can't receive it. They want it to be in a different way, they want that mercy to be in one where you can live any way you want to and maybe go to church once in a while and maybe not even go to church, but at least on your deathbed you can say, "Hey, I'm sorry I lived that way." And all of a sudden you can have some water thrown across you, or whatever, and all of a sudden your next waking moment is going to be...you're going to be in eternity forever... Because that's how they want God to be. They want to live their own life the way they want to live it and at the last minute have a death bed repentance and even if they can't they still have a chance, even if they can't even talk or think anything, somebody can say something over them and maybe... maybe all the garbage and filth and swill and everything they did in their life, all the sins can still be gotten away from and maybe even prayed about for a time if you have enough money, to get them up into heaven...because that's the kind of God they want. Sad world.

**Even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?** God's calling is to all human beings, all mankind. His purpose for salvation is to all mankind. **As He also said in Hosea, I will call them My people who are not My people, and her beloved, which was not My beloved.** One day they're going to be able to be loved and receive forgiveness of sin when they're called, when they have opportunity. Right now they have to learn what it's like to be a human being, and then one day when

God calls them to see Him they're going to be able to make a *choice* because they know what it's like to be a human being for 60-70-80-90-900 years when God gives them His spirit to be able to see Him and to see the difference in the two. Because you can't make that kind of a judgment *until you have lived it*. That's why we have to be made physical and live a physical life, because you *can't* righteously make a choice and a decision. That would be like God *putting* righteousness in your mind and in your being and you automatically being a righteous person, like a robot, and that isn't what God does. It's by free choice, isn't it? Amazing!

**Verse 26 – And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not My people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.** Israel; it's spiritual. The Israel of God, not the physical nation, the spiritual one.

**Isaiah also cried concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:** the remnant. Things that God does at different times, at different moments in different phases; the first resurrection, then a greater resurrection later on, then an even greater resurrection beyond that, speaking of that which is spiritual in His Family.

**For He will finish the work,** a remnant... other places talk about a remnant as well. Some of these things are far more prophetic than we can grasp and comprehend. **For He will finish the work,** what He's been doing. He's going to finish it until the end, to the time that it's all done, at the end of the Great White Throne; but even different phases of it have to be finished before you can go on. The first 6,000 years has to be finished before we can go on in the next thousand; that has to be finished to go on in an orderly fashion into the next hundred years to accomplish God's work then. But, **He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness.** God in it; the Church alive, the Church existing through time as it has; weakened at times, dying out at times, but God reviving it and continuing on. **...because a short work will the LORD do upon the earth. And as Isaiah said before, Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we would have been as Sodom, and would have been made like unto Gomorrah.** To see what we're like as human beings, that if we didn't have a Messiah, if we didn't have a Passover, what would the meaning of life be? Every how many years you lived and that's it – poof – there would be no hope for anything else beyond that.

**What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith.** Yes! Yes, that can be said now! They didn't follow after it, but they've attained to it in God's calling and were able to be brought into the Church, sins forgiven. **But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness has not attained to the law of righteousness.** It's a very physical thing! Especially Judah, they kept the Sabbath, they kept the Holy Days, they polluted them and they came back to them, but they have let down in various areas concerning especially the Passover and observance of the Sabbath and various things that have happened through time, but again, not able to attain to righteousness whereby one can be saved because you can't be saved by how you do the law on your own ability – because you *can't* do it righteously. It has to be in the Church with Jesus Christ as your Passover so you can truly be forgiven of sin, so that God Almighty and Jesus Christ can live their life in you. It's an awesome process!

**Wherefore? Because they didn't seek it by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.** It's about what you *believe!* It *always has been!* See, a great danger entered into the Church of God toward the end of Philadelphia and on into Laodicea, this concept, though not spoken nor necessarily believed, but because of sleepiness and sluggishness and not being able to see on a spiritual plane, that somehow by

tithing, that somehow by keeping the Sabbath, that somehow by going to the Holy Days, that we're okay. There are a lot of people still doing it and they're not okay, they have to come to repentance. And they *hate*! They *hate me* because I say such things, what God says to us. And so... anyway...sad.

**For they stumbled at the stumbling stone/stumbling rock – Christ – as it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offence: and whosoever believes on Him shall not be confounded/ashamed.** So it's a matter of what we believe, it's a matter of what we believe concerning Christ, it's a matter of what we believe concerning how we receive the truth and how we respond to the truth God has given to us, because that's what faith is all about.

Let's go on with **chapter 10, verse 1 – Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.** So there's that which is done on a physical plane but not a matter of the truth. **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness are going about to establish their own righteousness.** I saw that happen in the Church. That's what the Church became in Laodicea. **...have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end, if you will, or the fulfillment/the purpose of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.** In other words there's that process we understand we can be saved by, through the truth that's given to us in our minds and our choice then to live by it is how we're saved, because we live by those truths. That's why we focused upon some of them on the Last Great Day. That's why over and over again, as God has given us more, we have continually focused upon what God has given to us, to understand where it has to come from...so we'll hold fast, so we'll be able to see, indeed, where God is and the *power* of God to give it to us.

**For Moses describes the righteousness which is by the law, That the man who does such things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into the heaven...** It goes on and talks about other matters here, but the first four verses here basically finishes what was being spoken of.

Indeed, we're to live by faith and *faithfully* follow where Jesus Christ leads His Church; and again, that's a matter of believing and living by the truth that He's given to us. It's so simple in that regard, not always simple to do but simple as far as a process.

So finally we come to the second lesson... Ah, we're finally there. We're finally coming to the second lesson that the lion trainer learned from his attack by his own lions. He learned that stumbling automatically triggered the instinct of the lions to attack. And when we stumble at the word of God, when we stumble at what God has given to us, the truth of God, and we choose something else, we pick something else, we make a choice of something else, we become offended at what God gives to us, at any of the truths in any fashion or form, of whatever happens in our lives, that somehow we are not in full agreement with how God works with us in our life – then it's a time of stumbling because it's a matter of sin.

Stumbling is *always* a matter of sin and a *failure to repent*. And when that happens we open ourselves up to a being out there who relishes that, because then he has power in our lives that he didn't have before. When we hold fast and we repent, he flees! He won't stay around! What an incredible thing to understand!

The second thing that he learned was that turning his back on the lions triggered their instinct to attack him again. So he learned by stumbling – they attacked. Got loose – turned his back and they attacked again. What a foolish thing to do! You know your instinct is for survival, and sometimes our human instincts even in the Church are not good instincts. It's a matter of looking to God, wanting to be in oneness with Him, wanting to do *His* will; and that's another story sometimes when you're in the middle of a trial, to *go back to* the things that *He* has said, *to go back to* what God says, how does God say this should be done – not a matter of how do I look at it.

So he forgot the importance of staying alert and continually watching, being always on guard and never letting down one's guard. Because that's really what it's all about; it's being on guard, understanding the danger, the seriousness, the gravity of the moment, that there are things you don't do around something like that, a wild animal like that of that power. And there are things *we* should never do in God's Church on the same magnitude but far greater and far greater importance for us that *we* not do, that *we* not let down, that *we* are guarded always. God has a lot to say about that! He's warned the Church over and over again about such things.

Let's go back to 1 Peter; and again, the reminder of why we are focusing on this particular story here, the two lessons that this man learned in a difficult way; very easily could have lost his life on a physical plane - ours is far more important, it truly is.

**1 Peter 5:6 – Humble yourselves...humble yourselves**, be willing and desirous to wear sackcloth. It's easier said than done sometimes! That kind of goes back to part of the story of what Paul said, a willingness, a desire to be laid up as a sacrifice if need be. **Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.** And so it's an attitude of mind, it's a way of thinking, it's the way we think toward God, it's the way we think toward ourselves in our own lives, realizing a greater purpose is *always* being worked out and wanting to be a part of that purpose, whatever it is. And if we're a part of God's purpose...going back to Romans – what can go against us? What can hurt us? Will you suffer? If it's for the right purposes in Christ then that's what it's all about. God will use that – always has. Something that Satan has never understood, and even if he has in part he still does what is natural to him, to his own distorted thinking. He can't help it, it's just the way he is.

**Verse 7 – Casting all your care**, all your worries, your stressful concerns, your anxieties, your anxious thought...you ever have those? You ever have moments when physical life seems to get a little tough? ...things get a little harder around you? You have to be careful at times like that, that you don't turn inward and begin to think about self and woe is me and all these hardships and this is just too hard and too much and... No, it isn't. It's a part of a purpose for something greater that God is doing in life – our lives. **Casting all your care/your worries/your stressful concerns/your anxieties upon Him; for He cares for you.** I love this, because it has to do with you being the object of His desire, His love. What a great place to be! ...the object of God's love, the object of God's desire. 'If God be for you, who can be against you.' That's exactly what we're talking about! Be sober! So we have a responsibility in all this. Be sober, be of a sober mind, especially when we know where we are in time – and *thank God* we haven't been suffering in a horrible physical way on this earth yet. Thank God you haven't had to dig into your rations. Really! Two to three months, whatever you put aside that you probably have some things not in such good shape right now.... How blessed are you? *How blessed are you?* How blessed is the world?

What *if...* *What if* somehow the vast majority, maybe even all, are able to have the last Holy Day's yet - still able to observe the last of *GOD'S Holy Days because they're God's and that HE BLESSES HIS CHURCH to be able to observe them and have them in peace!* What an awesome thing if God brought that about. I will be so moved if that comes to pass...so dumbfounded; a little dumbfounded thinking about it, but I've seen some awesome things already so I know it's not an impossible thing with God. A lot of evil can come on this world in a very fast way and everything that is written still happen to the magnitude it was written, but thankfully God has great mercy – truly – upon us, upon His people, and upon the world. What a powerful witness to this world!

**Be sober, Be vigilant;** alert! That's what this is about! The word 'vigilant' here has to do with the word 'watchful' – translated as such in some places, talking about being watchful, being on guard, being spiritually alert ourselves, toward self, **because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith,** beautiful verse! ...in the belief, in the truth – that's what it's telling us – in the truth that God has given to us. We don't have, nor was it God's purpose to give it, the miracles of Jesus Christ that He did in a short period of time – most toward the end of His life - but still in a period of time. ...of people being resurrected from the dead just a short time before He died Himself. ...of individuals being healed of *incredible* things! That's not God's purpose at this time! ...to show the world such things. It's a matter of how we live our lives, it's a matter of living by faith, that God has brought His Church to a point of being able to deal with them – not by talking out of a bush, not by talking because He reveals Himself as a High Priest, as a physical being, not because He reveals Himself as a physical being and talks directly to someone – *because they didn't have this book* (the Bible) at that point in time, and *had to have* someone come and talk to them face to face!

What an *awesome* thing that *because of the Church* and all that's written in this book, beginning with Mr. Armstrong, that a very powerful witness in the end is what God has done through the power of His spirit, through the truths that He's given, through His Church through time, through the truth contained in scriptures as He reveals them that we're able to live *by faith*, and He speaks to us, He leads and guides us by His spirit and by the things written here that others can open up and read and not grasp and comprehend a single thing, except what they read into it from what they have been taught. But we see!

We have the ability to see, on a scale, but not to the degree Christ could, our elder brother. It was all in His mind. Everything He read He saw, He knew, He understood fully spiritually in the *deepest* part of His being because of God who dwelt in Him in a way that He doesn't dwell in other human beings. It was Him! Incredible! Powerful!

And so that kind of faith that we've been talking about here has been given to us to live by. It's a powerful witness; it's a powerful purpose that God has given. And so we have the truth. You are sanctified, you are set apart, you are *begotten* it says *by the truth!* ...the Word...the spirit...the mind that God places in *our* spirit as human beings, that comes together and begins to grow. It's an awesome thing! And so we live by faith and it's grown through time; confidence and boldness of what we see and what we know and who we are, and God just works with us and gives us more and more. Incredible!

Let's turn over to **Matthew 24** because that word used for 'vigilant' is used in several other places as strong warning to God's people, just like it is here in the book of Matthew. Again, chapter 24, things having to do with that which is physical and the physical world, but more pointedly about the Church and what God was going to do with the Church through time – some parallels of things that happen on a

physical plane, but again, primarily and first and foremost the purpose in the end being about God's Church and God's people. Picking it up back here in context a little bit, verse 31, coming down to the end and the things that will happen; because we saw a transition in time back in **verse 14** where it says...**and this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, as a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.** And speaking of the *final* time of the end, if you will, the final era, the last era of God's Church as well, all the things that came together, and finally even the final end-time and the final count given in the book of Daniel would all come to pass.

**Matthew 24:15 – 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).** Very few understand that to this day! God's Church does, others who were a part of God's Church who are scattered don't understand that. They don't understand what happened to the spiritual temple. They don't understand it's about a temple and it's about a defiling of the temple – not with a pig...*not with a pig* like what happened during the time of Antiochus Epiphanies when they offered a pig upon the altar to desecrate it, because they knew how ugly that was to the Jewish people, the Jewish mind. And there are people in God's Church, or at least who were a part of God's Church, who are in a certain state right now, that have to be awakened out of sleep and sluggishness, who think at least an altar has to be built so this physical thing can take place again! And it just frustrates me! It's not about a physical altar, and it's not about a *pig* on the altar, it's about what happened in the *Church of God*! What an *incredible* thing that you see and you know so powerfully so!

It's about that which desecrated the Temple, and the Temple came crashing down because of it. Not one stone left upon another. It's clear to you. It's clear to me. Awesome truth! But rejected by others out there that you would think would be able to see it, to acknowledge it, "Yes, that happened to us!" But they cannot! And a word they love, because of pride... No, I'm the one who has pride to say such things. They don't understand my heart. They don't understand God's spirit in me.

Going on down here in **verse 31 – And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a Trumpet** – so we know when this is – **and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** And so all these prophetic things finally lead into the last era of the Church and the thing that would happen at the very end-time, even past the last era on into the very end of the time that the Messiah returns. Because that's what it all boiled down to – it's about, "When are You coming?" And so there's that which is spiritual and that which is literal, *spiritually*, that's going to come to pass – Jesus Christ's return. But in the meantime, for the past 2,000 years He's been coming anyway – just the world doesn't understand that - but the Church does to a point, that God dwells in us.

And so we see something that happens at the very end and a great resurrection that takes place.

**Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves you know that summer is near.** It's an amazing thing when you go outside and all of a sudden that starts changing. You've gone through wintertime and all of a sudden you go outside and you can see them. It's not going to be too long when that happens... you realize that as soon as they start coming on the tree and you see a little bit of green starting to show, because of the buds, it's not going to be very long and they're going to be in full bloom, as far as leaves sprouting and leaves once again on the tree and not being able to see through them anymore because of the denseness of the leaves.

That's the way I see Europe right now. What an *incredible thing* to see everything that we've known for so long and now it's in motion. This hasn't been in motion in the past. This is now in *full swing!* The *meetings* they want to have, what President Sarkozy is saying in France. You would think that maybe the Germans would say what France is actually saying – what an amazing strategic thing that it's being said by the French! ...and having a desire that there be this 'elite group', although they're not calling it 'elite'; but a willingness to give power. Because they know, they understand that you can't have these large numbers out there of countries coming in, eventually like... (I may read a piece later on here, of an article)...later on to have 30 and 33 – and what does all that mean unless they have a central voice. What does all that mean if there be so many out there kind of doing their own thing? What kind of *power* is there really unless there's more centralized power given? ...and now they understand that, so they are going for the *power* – and 10 nations will finally do it because they're going to be forced into it. Not because of what would normally gradually develop here in time, or what might first appear even when they meet, but what they're going to be forced into doing because of a collapse of a worldwide economy, of Babylon, Babylon crumbling, the entire system coming down on itself. That's why they do what they do!

**Verse 33 – so likewise you, when you shall see these things, know that it is near, even at the door.** Time is running out, fast! Time is running out! Takes me back a ways!

**Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled,** everything that's discussed here, that has been going through, that happens toward the end-time. Be another sermon in itself.

**Verse 35 – Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.** These things are going to happen. That's what God is saying! **But of that day and that hour knows no man, not the angels of heaven but My Father only.** Yes, literally, but meaning far more than that! And yes, God to give it in His time, when it's His time. But we've had a sermon about this also talking about and understanding what this means in a greater way, in a spiritual way. Because there is always that which is physical through all this and spiritual in part, but the full spiritual intent is exactly what it goes on to explain.

**But as in the days of Noah so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** Literally, yes. Isn't that what we see in the world today? Isn't that amazing? It's going to be that way. There are those who are not going to believe all the way till finally they can't do what they do anymore, until their life ends, because they're creating something else. There comes a point in time when certain of the scattered nations of Israel can't do anything else as a whole, but others are still going to mould and fashion something out of all this. That's what they see, and they're going to keep working for it. They're not going to believe! There might be some gnawing things in some of them, as far as their mind and their thinking is concerned, but they have an objective of what they believe they're going to have at the other side of this. Just like people today.

There are economists out there right and left who see this is... "We have a collapse on our hands, and you've got to have gold or property to come out of all this. You better invest wisely like people did in the 1930's. Some were made multi-millionaires in the 30's...you can do it!" That's what some of their message is, if you do the right thing, if you don't put your money in Treasuries. Interesting how some are saying that now. They're talking about how *foolish*, how funny, hilarious it is that people are doing this! It's like insanity! Yeah, tell me about it!

**For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark.** Shows the mind and nature of mankind. And so it is that spirit for an individual in God's Church, no matter when they lived, that if they begin to think and live in a certain way it can be their end as well, if they don't do what Jesus Christ goes on to show.

**...and knew not until the flood came and took them all away. So shall the coming of the Son of man be.** Then it goes on to talk about...'the two shall be taken' and so forth, and things that happen on a spiritual plane.

**Verse 42** – Notice the admonition! This is what it's all about! **Watch! Be vigilant! Watch therefore: for you don't know what hour your Lord does come.** Because you know what? Literally, we know the hour in Jerusalem. We know the hour and the day now! **Watch therefore: for you don't know what hour your Lord does come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would have come** -the lion would have come - **he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken up.** Wouldn't have been caught off guard. And that's Jesus Christ's admonition, "Don't. Ever. Be. Caught. Off. Guard! *Always* be spiritually alert! Be sober minded! *Understand* where you're living and the time you're living in! *Understand* the dangers of letting down, *especially* now above all time!" We don't have much time left thankfully before we're through this mess and get on the other side into the Millennium.

**Therefore be you also ready.** This was written for the time of Ephesus after Jesus died, the first era of God's Church. It's been written for every era to follow the admonition, to be watchful, to be alert, to be on guard! Because for those who weren't *Jesus Christ came!* That's the point as we've talked about in past sermons. Because, candidly, He's supposed to be coming into our life *all the time!* And it's when we let down, when that gets cut off because we're not alert and not watchful as we should be, and that power is cut off, that we are at our state of collapse, or falling asleep, or whatever it is, unless God has mercy on us and wakes us up. **Therefore be you also ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man comes.** That's the way it's been. All those *thousands* after the apostasy, caught off guard! Caught off guard, not watching, not alert – every one of us – and those who are here to this day, it's because of repentance and because of mercy of calling a remnant, because God has a plan – not because of how good we were, not because of how well we did things, but because of God's choice and selection. An awesome thing!

**Who then is a faithful and wise servant,** faithful, living by faith, faithful to the truth, the word that He gives to us...**and wise servant,** wise because it has to do a little bit more now, if we were to go on into the parable of the 10 Virgins and the wise and you must strive to do that even though it didn't benefit them at that point in time because of another spirit that was there. But the point being is – you must *strive* to live wisely before God, to understand the importance of a relationship with God in prayer, a relationship of keeping close to God, of striving to do and cry out to do all that you can on a physical plane, understanding that God has to do it in and through you on a spiritual plane. But that's what you desire, that's what you want.

Mr. Armstrong used to give an example like that: do it all like you're doing it yourself knowing full well that you're not, that it's a matter of God doing it in you and through you – but striving in that regard.

**Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom the Lord will make ruler over his household to give them meat in due season. Blessed is that servant whom the Lord when He comes shall find so**

**practicing**...and when does He come? He's supposed to be coming into our life *all the time* if we yield ourselves to it. That's what it's about. Practicing this, living this, doing this so that He can continue to come into our life and dwell within us. Because the danger is if that ever stops... well... and we're not doing it, it's as good as Him having come, literally, at a moment in time as it's going to happen to many.

I am astounded, but I see it more and more all the time, individuals out there who know that the Bible speaks of two witnesses but will not accept them simply because of *who they are!* Sorry. Just is what it is. It's sad to make such judgment. Crazy! Little insane, if you will.

**1 Thessalonians 5:1 – but of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.** What's he talking about? About when it's all going to happen. You know what? In 2 Thessalonians 2 he was inspired to write about of the times and seasons and what had to happen in the Church first; that there had to be (in the Greek) an apostasy, a great falling away, as it's stated there. And told how it would be and what would take place and we have witnessed that age. Incredible!

But he's telling them at this point in time, and for what they know at this point in time, **but of the times and seasons, brethren, I have no need to write unto you; For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night.** Spiritual! Yes, we look forward to the time of Christ's return, but understand this, there is that which you need to understand spiritually – He comes as a thief in the night, when you're not expecting, when you're not on guard. The thief that came and broke into the house was not expected when someone is not on guard. If he's on guard he's being expected and they're waiting for him. That's what it's about.

**For when they say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as travails upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.** Physically? Yes, but even this there's more *to* this. Again, there are things being given here that are on a spiritual plane, of how we can think. It's going to happen in the world on a physical plane and it happens to people in their own physical lives, when you don't realize the danger that's there, when you stumble or when you turn your back. We can deceive ourselves in thinking everything's okay because I'm going through this particular routine...and that's not what it's about. It's more than that.

**But you, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.** Physical/spiritual, okay? **You are the children of light, and the children of the day: you are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others...** yet that happened to the *entirety* of the Church in Laodicea. *Everyone* fell asleep, without exception. *Everyone* fell asleep! And anyone who becomes a part of the remnant has to come to the point where they acknowledge that and repent of what *they* did, that *they* let down. I let down; everyone let down and failed to do what Jesus Christ told us we should do. Incredible!

**Therefore let us not sleep,** a spiritual warning, **as do others,** as the world does, because the world's asleep. Today we see it more than ever before – this country is asleep and they have *no knowledge* of a world war that's coming! It doesn't matter what you say, how you say it – just like I wrote in the post, about that Japanese admiral that made a very true statement, "We have awakened a sleeping giant!" 'It'd been better if they just stayed asleep and we took off a piece over here and a piece over there – why did we mess with them?!' You don't want to wake some people up. The only problem is this time we can't be awakened in time to respond, to do anything about what happens, because it happens in a different way.

**For they who sleep sleep in the night and they who are drunken are drunken in the night;** they don't see, they don't understand. **But let us who are of the day...**and that's our choice, to stay in the daylight, to be in the light, to fight for it, to cry out, to seek to be at one with everything that God has given to us; that where we're not we cry out to God for help to understand and to see it, because only He can give us the ability to see what is true, to be in unity and oneness of mind.

**But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith,** if you will, **and love.**

Beautiful verse! Faith, living by the truth that we're given because we're not asleep, because we're not drunken, because we are alert, because we *want* to stay in the light. We don't want to get off in the shadows and do our own thing. We don't want to be separated from the ability to see clearly. We want to see clearly so that we can be clearly on guard all the time and recognize the dangers and not *turn our back* on the dangers. Because if you get in the darkness and a little bit to the side, off into the darkness just a little bit (like God can't see), that's where the danger strikes. We turn our back.

**...of faith and love.** So it's a matter of what we believe is true and it's a matter of how we live then toward one another and toward the world; understanding they can't help it, but still living a right way toward them. They. Can't. Help. It. I look forward to the time that those who mock and those who do the things they do are able to come to repentance, whether in this age or the next, and so many of them in the age to come next. I want to be there to help them! See, when you know you're forgiven, when you realize the past is the past, it doesn't matter, you couldn't see. Shows the depth of your human nature and that's a good thing, not a bad thing.

**...faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.** We've been given an incredible helmet, truly have, what God has blessed us to wear, what we grasp. **For God has not appointed us to wrath,** to judgment, condemnation, in that sense, on the contrary – **but to obtain salvation by our Lord, Jesus Christ.**

So again, awesome what God gives to us, the love, the mercy, that He also wants to give to the rest of the world in a particular time according to His plan.

So as the sermon ended on the Last Great Day, I'm going to repeat something that was said then:

Don't let anything or anyone distract you or lead you into doubt or disbelief of the truth, or unfaithfulness to the Word of God.

God has to be first, brethren, never to be unfaithful to God.

But seek to become stronger in faith, truth, obedience, and living the love of God toward others.

God is preparing to bring this world out of spiritual Egypt, and we are *so blessed* to share in it.

~~~end