

Today I'm going to launch right into this sermon. It's amazing to see where we are, that we are actually into the sixth day – I think four days into it, if that's correct, four days into the sixth day of marching - as we use that example of going around Jericho.

I have a lot of reading to do from some notes that I have. I'm really excited about being able to give this particular sermon and really dumbfounded of how we're led through sermons, because this is how we're spoken to, this is how God teaches, leads, guides, and directs us. And especially in this sermon here, it begins to wrap up and becomes very clear actually that this is what God is doing in the sense of this age – those things that we need to put the finishing touches on with where He's taken us, what He's been doing with us, where we are now, and that's an awesome thing when you begin to see all this come together like this.

This final three and one half year period at the end of man's 6,000 years of self-rule is one in which we have found ourselves now rapidly closing in on its completion, as I mentioned, it's closing in quickly - because as I said, before the Passover period here it seemed like things were going slow. I don't know, maybe that's just me, but it seemed like it was going rather slowly and now things are going almost too fast. It's been a most unique 3½ years, and before we launch into the context of this sermon today let's first consider some of what God has given us to recognize in this incredible final period of time.

God revealed to us that the era of Laodicea had ended when we entered this final time. I look at these things now, because God's bringing it all together, and you think of the different process of events and timing of events, and this is an incredible one right here, to not understand why but to be shown, to be told Laodicea has ended, the seven eras of God's Church has finally come to a close. Things that in the scattered Body have not been understood and even comprehended as far as Laodicea existing or who it is or what it is or what it's talking about as some have wanted to perpetuate Philadelphia and that particular era, not grasping that there are specific period of time with which God has worked with His people.

And so God revealed to us that the era of Laodicea had ended before this 3½ years began when we entered this final time. It's an era or time that stands alone as unique in God's final work and covers the entire span of man's self-rule on earth in the sense of this final period – stands alone, this 3½ years. God gave seven specific eras that identify His Church through the past nearly 2,000 years, but this final stage has been set apart by God as special, as a time of magnified importance in a transition from man's world to God's world.

It has been in this final 3½ years that God has given seven additional truths that reflect a focus of His work that will be magnified and built upon during the final 1,100 years of mankind that yet remains.

So as we drew to a close in the end of Laodicea, God gave us *50 great Truths* that the Church was to be firmly established in before this final 3½ years...and even at that time of the revelation of the 50<sup>th</sup> Truth we spoke of it as being akin to a Jubilee. And that to me is an awesome thing, spoke of the 50<sup>th</sup> Truth as being like a Jubilee, not understanding where we'd be led a little over 3 years later to see in a greater way what the Jubilee is all about, and the excitement and the intent that God has in that revelation about the return of His Son and what's getting ready to happen to this earth. And so we spoke of that

50<sup>th</sup> Truth, that which reveals the timing of Christ's return, as a Jubilee, a truth of Jubilee. *What an incredible thing* how God orders things in such an orderly fashion. Everything is so precise and we're blessed to drink in of that. To me it's an awesome thing, beyond words.

And what have we just recently been given that's so profound concerning this final period of time of 3½ years? What did God give us to understand concerning the seventy-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 that was not simply about Christ's first coming but about His second also. It is that Jesus Christ had 3½ more days... three and one half... three and one half more days in which 'to confirm...', or more accurately as we understand the word to mean, 'to strengthen the covenant with many'. That is so profound, it truly is. We know that period is fully about the final 3½ years in which we now live and are nearly at its end.

This brings us to another period that is spoken of that exists in this period of time. It's a time of God's final witness to mankind, and this final period of time is reflected in the work that God gave two witnesses to epitomize, to typify, to be a perfect example or reflection of God working with mankind for the past 6,000 years. There's a lot said about this period of three and one half years.

We're going to zero in on this final 3½ prophetic *days* of Christ's final ministry before He comes as King of kings. Think about the sermons, there aren't many left...and this is a series. And you think of the *importance* of *why* we're focusing in on these things and what God is giving to us now. Again, it is an *awesome thing*, it truly is. We're going to go through this in the context of God's two witnesses in a sermon series entitled today, *God's Witnesses*, this being *Part 1*. That's the sermon title here. Again, it'll be at least two, maybe three...maybe more.

In many sermons we're not given where a sermon is headed. A lot of times we build upon it, there are things that God teaches us and leads us by building upon and more firmly establishing His Word, His purpose, His truth in our minds. In this sermon today you're going to be told *exactly* where this sermon is headed and then Christ will build upon and more fully establish God's Word, His purpose, and His truth in our minds. We're going to begin by reading the last portion of that which God speaks concerning His two witnesses at the end-time and it's found in Revelation 11...and this is about the work, this is about what has been going on for nearly 3½ years, this is about what God is doing – but epitomized, or typified, if you will, in two individuals lives.

**Revelation 11:7 -And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast who ascends out of the bottomless pit – interesting, we just talked about that in another sermon – God gave us a little more understanding of these things and the timing of some of these things and what it means... the beast who ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great City, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindred's and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three and one half days, and shall not allow their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they who dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry and shall send gifts to one another; because these two prophets tormented them who dwelt on the earth. And after three and a half days the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them who saw them.**

This is where the sermon is going. The two witnesses will *not* be killed in the literal city of Jerusalem and their dead bodies will not *lie* in the streets for 3½ days. God's two witnesses will live right up to Jesus Christ's coming to this earth as King of kings. This three and a half days spoken of here about the two witnesses is *fully* about the past nearly *three and one half years, what we have been living, of Christ's*

*final* ministry of 3½ days and those things He is doing in the Body, the Church of God; and *this* is not good news to Satan.

We talked about those things during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Before we continue here we need to remember what was partially discussed in the sermon given on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. And this will now be put more fully into terms that fully apply to us, to God's Church, and Satan at this end-time. Again, remember, things focused upon here in Revelation 11 are about the beast who ascends out of the bottomless pit, things that he does, things that he will be involved in during this period of time spoken of about two witnesses.

Let's turn over to Exodus 13. It is an awesome thing to understand that there is a great war, always has been as long as man has been on earth; that has continually existed on this earth. To read things in the book of Daniel about how that angelic beings couldn't even make it to Daniel's aid because they were in a war, they were in a battle. God allows them to participate in His plan. God could stop those things. God could prevent Satan and the demonic realm from doing things that they do but it's not His purpose, and it's not His purpose to fight the battles but to let the angelic realm fight them.

There are things that have been misunderstood about Israel and their participation in some of the things that took place through time, about some of the wars and things that they did. God could have gone through and cleared out the land for them but they wouldn't have learned, they wouldn't have grown, they wouldn't have *shared* in, they wouldn't have been a *part* of what God was doing. God's plan is about sharing! His Family is about sharing and things that we learn – and not only that, but those faithful angelic beings who remain faithful to God, who did not go with Lucifer, who did not betray God but were excited about what God was doing through time, remained faithful to God, have shared in over *long* periods of time those things that God is doing.

God doesn't do it for them! He let them share in His plan! That becomes exciting to them! What we're blessed to share in is *exciting to us*, it's *exciting to me*! I am *so blessed* to be able to go through this series of sermons, to *see* what God is doing. I have been so moved by being able to see what God has been doing with us in a sense of bringing it down now... I never have known where sermons are going! I've mentioned it so often as being like the Red Sea - God has to show them to us, and to see where we have gone, where He has taken us, and now to wrap all that up is absolutely *awesome*. I feel very inadequate of being able to preach about it, I truly do. But to go back through some of these things and I candidly...

I was talking to Wayne a little bit about it here this morning, walking along and talking about certain things that we're seeing more and more of and told him, "There are things I don't know yet." It's like as I come to various - as I'm going through this – to various words God is showing me as I'm going along. I don't know where all this is going yet. I don't know... I know what the end of the story is, I just gave it to you.

And that's exciting to me...for me toward my *wife*, for one, to understand that truth, of something we are *fully willing* and would have done in any fashion or form that God would have asked. But as a husband, I think you can understand, very thankful that I don't have to experience that, that I don't have to see that; she doesn't have to see that and go through that. We serve a very *merciful* God but He saved it toward the end because there's war going on.

There are things of a spirit realm that are *still going on* – wars being fought - and God has not given us all the truth from the very beginning, that's why we have what we refer to over and over again, the present truth, which is *quantum* light years ahead of, in front of, beyond where others are stuck in time in the Body that was scattered. God has brought us a long, long way but He still reveals truth to us *as* we go along and He doesn't give it all. He hasn't given us all understanding when we began this. He didn't give us all understanding at the beginning of 3½ years for a purpose and for a reason – because then that being would know exactly what God is doing. And we share in this because we actually grow through this process, we grow in faith, we live by faith, and faith strengthens us, we become stronger and there are things moulded and fashioned in us that can only happen because of this experience of what we're going through, as it has with all of God's people through time.

We understand more now what it's like to be brought up to the wire of something and not seeing something fulfilled – because we *live by faith*. We believe God. We can't give it to anyone, we can't explain it to anyone. It's just here in the mind, we know it's true because God gives it; just as much as when He gives you the Sabbath day, the Holy Days, and you see them and they're so clear to you, but you can't go out and give it to anyone else unless God... Because it's a *spiritual thing*...and man is physical and He can only understand that which is spiritual *if God grants it* to the mind. It's not a matter of intellect! What a beautiful thing to understand. So no one can be *puffed up* with pride! It's not a matter of intellect! As a matter of fact intellect just gets in the way, truly does, when we try to analyze God and God's plan and God's purpose and what God is doing it. He doesn't let you analyze it and learn that way; you learn because He gives it by His spirit.

So please understand, there are things that Satan is learning even now that he does not know, as it's given - as things have been given at the Feast at different times, talking about his end and what's going to happen to *him*. See?

**Exodus 13:17 - And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go;** Just to tell you this is spiritually akin to a time when Satan had gained power to enslave, to take captive the Church through the power exerted through the man of sin, the son of perdition. It's a story of something physical that relates to something at the end on a spiritual plane. Satan so relished what he had done that he *bathed* in, he *gloated* in the state of God's Church. We're talking about the time of the apostasy – because he gained great *power* over the Church.

When you are spewed out of the Church it's not a good thing; you're separated from the flow of God's spirit into your mind. You are *on your own*, spiritually, separated from God.

And so again here, Satan so relished what he had done that he bathed in, he gloated in it... *big mistake*. Pride is such a big mistake because when something happens and you think you have such a great victory in a matter like this and you begin to gloat in and bathe in what you think is the power amongst the other beings that are with him, of what he had accomplished, he lost sight of what was happening around him. *Awesome!* Part of God's plan!

So he gloated in the state of God's Church, of God's people, and Satan was *pleased* to see the Church and the ministry in such a state of confusion and disarray as it repeatedly splintered, bickered, and further watered down and diminished God's truth. Ah, he bathed in that, truly... and Satan knows this is true.

And as Satan bathed in his supposed victory over God he failed to see himself as Pharaoh, he failed to see that God had a plan in all of this. He failed to see what he had let escape because he was too busy bathing in the glory of it all at a time when God protected a group of people that He was going to lead out of Egypt... out from the grip of Satan's hold. And He gave this small group, this small remnant, protection; a group that seemed of *no real significance*. It's awesome how God works!

It's awesome what God did when a child was born and He told the mother and the father to go down into Egypt. There was a war, even at that time. Satan so moved a king that the king went out to go and destroy the babies of a certain age, all the way up through two years old. Incredible the things that have happened though time that sometimes we read as a little story and we don't realize the significance of it.

And so God gives protection in different ways at different times.

And so in this example here in what has happened to us at the end-time. God did not lead this small group in a 'way' that would be apparent to others – not to any of us – not to any of the Church that was scattered and *not to Satan himself*.

**Verse 17**, again... **And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them through the way of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, The people will repent,** that's what it's saying, the words there 'lest peradventure' aren't even there in the Hebrew language. It wasn't a matter of a question lest this is what happens. He said, "This is what they will do!" God knew what they would do – He said, "I'm not leading them that way!" so we could learn from this...where God said, **the people will repent**, in other words, that word means 'to change their mind' **when they see war**, in other words, are confronted with battle, **and they'll return to Egypt: But God will lead the people about**, or turn them aside to a different/another way, is what this means, **through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed in order out of the land of Egypt**. Has a lot of meaning here, truly does, that applies to this very time right now. Something that happened physically back there that's really about this time right now on a spiritual plane in a very powerful way that God is revealing. So much that God saved a transition in time, 3½ year ministry that God gave in the very beginning...3½ days, 3½ years to His Son to perform, working with His disciples who did not yet have God's spirit in them, and He worked with them, teaching them, bringing them to a time, a transition in time.

Because before this, for the first 4,000 years God just worked with individuals through time, not a large group of people at any one time, just a few here and there; at any one time, just a handful, just a few. For 4,000 years that's the way God worked! ...and then this transition in time, 3½ year ministry to 'strengthen the covenant with many', that which would last for the next 3,100 years, but especially in the following 2,000 years through His disciples, because there were those truths and magnification of God's purpose and God's plan that was given to the disciples to start a work. Now, a Church that would exist on the earth, *one Church* through time, the Church of God that would *bear His name*! What an *incredible thing* that God said it would bear His name! The Church, the called out ones, the congregation of God, if you will – and yet today there are so many names out there, thousands of names that have nothing to do with God. Luther's church, the Catholic way, whatever it is, so many different ideas out there! Where's God?!

It was never meant to be a large Church. It wasn't God's plan but the world thinks that it is because of that being who has so deceived the world for the past 6,000 years, that being that is about to be put away, *finally* put away... who *thinks* he has the upper hand and he doesn't, God does.

And now we're at another transition where Jesus Christ for the past nearly 3½ years now, 3½ days, is finishing His ministry that it spoke of there in the book of Daniel, the seven days that He was to do His work, that seven day prophecy...3½ at the first time and 3½ at this time, and He's strengthening the covenant with many. Incredible to understand that! Truths, things that will be built upon for the next 1,100 years and God has saved them for now. *Awesome!*

So, after the apostasy what *seemed* the most likely way to go as we were fleeing the captivity that had engulfed so much of the Church? What *seemed like* the most likely way to go? Well, we went there for a little while – it *seemed* the most likely way to go. That was the great question – what do we do? Where do we go? For the Israelites there were two basic ways to leave in order to flee Egypt and Pharaoh – the way of the Philistines and the way of Shur which was on the other side, above the Red Sea area. There was no 'way of the Red Sea'; there was no way of travelling across there! It was not a highway!

And to us, to be candid about it, there was one group...one that was way out in left field that had started at a time that made it obvious that it was not the way to go, period, so it was not even counted as a way. But there were two others. Well, one that hadn't started yet and one that had; one that had started that was called Global and one that was in the making called United. It *seemed* the likely way to go to everyone, to the being that's out there as well. Where were people going? For us, a small and insignificant group, there seemed to be only two ways, two choices in front of us. And we began our journey by following a way that would not work. Did not understand number 1 of the truths, the first one given through Mr. Armstrong, the first one attributed to him as being put back into the Church when Philadelphia began – government! I had lost that! *I had lost that*, became weak in that, had to be strengthened in that, to become *so frustrated* with seeing that all the things you could write in bylaws, in reams of books, didn't mean a hill of beans if you were not spiritually following God on a spiritual plane and God was leading it. If you weren't faithful to those things it didn't matter how much you wrote in laws.

Look at this book – like the Talmud and other things that have been written through time – does that make man different and change? No. It's the spirit in us. And as I sat in various meetings and heard people quibble over different points of things we should or shouldn't do I thought, "This is nuts! This is insane!" Duh! It's number four of all the truths. There's a way that God works and we either follow that or we don't. If God works through an individual and that individual is faithful and God's spirit works through them then we'll be blessed and people will follow and God will work with them. It doesn't matter how much you write down, how much you put in laws and how things are done. Some of you understand what I'm talking about, others, because of our history maybe don't. There is a way that God has always worked.

He worked through Peter, through the other disciples that were there, the other apostles – Peter was the chief apostle, the main one through whom God worked to the other disciples, the other apostles at that time in the beginning of the Church as far as Judah was concerned. And then God makes it very clear that there was another one who would go to the Gentiles – Paul. And because of the system at that time, travel, communication, it had to be that way; it was the best way to organize the Body, the Church.

In Mr. Armstrong's time – there was one – and it became clear at this time – one. That's how God works. There's no confusion in that; there is confusion in the other.

And so we thought there was a way to go, yet that way didn't work. And yet as we did so God was protecting and hiding us...awesome to understand! Because there's a being still out there gloating and wanting to be able to further deceive others who were scattered. And so God was protecting and hiding us until we had the kind of strength needed in order to begin passing through the Red Sea, yet we were small and insignificant to others, even insignificant to Satan. It's an awesome thing to understand how God works, it truly is.

Finally, after one prophetic day of marching, once we left United - one year later, obscure and of no threat to anyone, God fully re-established His Church 3½ years after the apostasy on Pentecost of 1998. Awesome! So God led us about in the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, a way that no one would go unless they were convicted that they were following God indeed.

Exodus 14 – this will mean *more* to those who went on that journey; this will mean *more* to those who were a part of the apostasy and came through that and were blessed to be a part of this journey. For others of you it's a matter of history.

**Exodus 14:1 - And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Tell the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: for before it you shall encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled, they are confused, perplexed, in the land, and the wilderness has shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he will follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; so that the Egyptians may know that I am the Eternal. And they did so.** We've talked about what Egypt means, this world and the way of the world, and what this world is all about, reflected in other ways as Babylon and spoken of in those terms, that God is going to bring down the world and the way of the world. But Pharaoh's heart? Fully about Satan. And 'his host'? Fully about those who follow him. All the way here to the end, something happening that God is doing on a spiritual plane that was done here very much so on a physical one.

It was stated on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread – I want to read this, what was stated concerning these verses.

This was about entrapping Pharaoh and Egypt in order to magnify God's greatness. And this was not about the Israelites being entrapped, much less entangled, confused, and perplexed. This is very much about what is happening *at this end-time* with God's Church and how Satan and the demons have been pursuing it, seeking to entrap and entangle it.

Awesome! Once Satan grasped what God had done, that He, speaking of God, was leading us, a very small group, seemingly totally insignificant with no apparent strength and power, He was leading it off by ourselves...then we seemed an easy prey. But through all the battles that confronted us, especially with all the doctrines that were being attacked, God used those things to make us much, much stronger. It's spiritual and Satan doesn't get it. He doesn't understand those things that are spiritual. He truly doesn't get it. And so God used those things to make us much stronger.

Satan doesn't grasp how God uses trials, how God uses various things to mould and fashion. He doesn't understand how we can become a part of the God Family. He can't comprehend that! To him, God is nuts for what He's doing. He *hates* what God is doing! Why would you use *these... human beings...* when he saw what he was and the majesty and the glory of what God had created him as a spirit being with such *power* and such might...and then he sees us *human beings* who are so *easily deceived*, who are so *easily* led around and guided around, who are so *easily enticed* because of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life', and he sees us an incredibly weak! And he doesn't *grasp* what God is doing! What an incredible thing!

The very reason we're this way is so that God can mould and fashion our minds and make us a part of Elohim in His time. Satan *cannot grasp those things* because they are spiritual and he is not. I hope you all understand that. He is not! He is a spirit being but *he is not spiritual!* There is a big difference...big, big difference. That's why we talked about at the Feast...we talked about those things, about the angelic realm, of those things they have access to and what they do not have access to.

That's what's unique about the God Family; God will dwell in them for eternity. God does not dwell in the angelic realm in that way on a spiritual plane. There is a different creation, a different thing taking place in *our* lives and in Elohim than there was in the angelic realm.

So there are things that Satan can't grasp, and the things that are written about Pharaoh are the things that God is doing toward that being... **And I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he will follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Satan, and upon his host;** *that's* what this is about because it's about *that* power being brought to a screeching halt for a thousand years, and then he's released for a short period of time at some point later on.

And even now as we address this subject of God's witnesses and final end-time events Satan has believed he had us entangled in the wilderness more than once – confused and perplexed – and this is *far* from the truth. Instead of our being entangled and entrapped it is Satan that has become entangled and entrapped, and *his* time is almost up. He has missed and *squandered* his time *foolishly* and now he knows that.

It's an incredible thing to understand about that which is spiritual in how we use the word 'spiritual' as we just talked about in part...that it is something that can only come from God. When we use that term 'spiritual' – not 'spirit', not 'spirit life' but that which is 'spiritual' - *it comes from God*, the *source* is God Almighty and He has to give it in order to see what is there. What God says is not understood on a spiritual plane unless God specifically gives it. That is an *incredible* thing to live, to experience, to come to understand. And we grow in that kind of understanding through time. And I know of so many who have been made shipwrecked, as Paul talked about, so many through time in God's Church who have not understood that there is that which is spiritual that God and God alone can only give to the mind to understand.

So, it is possible to get knowledge about things that God has spoken, but to *see* what is spiritual must be received from God. The Sabbath as the seventh day of the week being the day that God commands, to be observed, can be understood by man, but to *see* it and understand it *spiritually* must come from God, as with everything that has spiritual meaning in it; otherwise it can only be seen or understood on a physical plane in understanding or by knowledge. And that's important to understand as we focus on what God is revealing about Revelation 11 here finally before everything comes to a close.

Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians 2 and be reminded of these very, very basic points; verses here that we've gone through in times past, basic scriptures that we often read and have often read through time but scriptures that seemingly are *not fully grasped* or held onto as they *should* be when we consider things that God has told us.

**1 Corinthians 2:9 - But as it is written, Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the hearts of men the things which God has prepared for them who love Him.** Even how this is written is incredible in what it's talking about here. Even for us, when do *you* begin to love God? You *never* did until God began to draw you. People think they love God, they love Jesus Christ – I hate that in the protestant world – 'Give your heart to the lord'. They don't understand what they're saying! They don't understand Jesus Christ, they don't understand who God is, they don't know who God's Church is, they don't understand that they're to obey the Sabbath day, that they're to keep Passover once a year. They don't understand those things! They reject the truth and the true God and the true Christ – they believe in a false one, one that the Catholic church started. Incredible! They *agree* with the popes. That's true! ...and with a being who influenced them to do so.

And so God is showing here that even for us, for those who love Him... So when you begin to be worked with, when you begin to be drawn, when you begin to receive God's help and He begins to call you and work with you and you begin to truly love God and love His way of life and love His law and love His truth, and love His people because you're brought into fellowship with them – when you begin that process and you begin to experience that... **But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither entered into the hearts of men the things which God has prepared for them who love Him.** We have to *learn* even through time what these things mean. We do not *grasp* in the beginning what God has prepared for us. And as we grow we become more excited, we begin to see it on a spiritual plane. God uses that entire time of our life to make it clearer to us and reveal more and more to us...and it indeed enters into our hearts and into our minds and becomes more exciting, because it's a spiritual thing that you have to learn through time once you are a part of God's calling and His life living in you.

**But God has revealed them unto us,** we're the ones who can begin to love Him, learn His way of life, be excited about His Word, and they're revealed to us **by His spirit,** these things: **for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what can man know about the things of a man,** of mankind, in other words, **except by the spirit of man which is in him?** Knowledge, physical things, the physical world around us. **Even so, the things of God no man knows but by the spirit of God.** And so there are things we see on a spiritual plane, that we begin to learn on a spiritual plane because of God's spirit.

**Now we have received, not the spirit of the world,** it's not about the world; it's about the spirit which is of God. That's how we learn, that's how we come to see and understand these things, that's how we're able to be at this sermon today – because of things that God gives by His spirit to magnify it, to help to understand Revelation 11 in a deeper way, in a more profound way. And because of everything that God's given to us in the weeks before this to prepare us for this day, because it's spiritual. And so it's something we grow in that's exciting and inspiring!

**...but of the spirit which is of God so that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.** So, what an awesome thing there, it's just freely given to us. You can't earn it; you can't get it on your own – something that God has to give.

**Of which things we can also speak, and not in the words which man's wisdom teaches but which the holy spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** This is what we're doing today! This is

what we do Sabbath by Sabbath; we compare spiritual things with spiritual. Because as God gives more – as an example, the 3½ days, the seven days prophecy in Daniel. Half of it was fulfilled by Christ by the time He died. We can see that, 3½ years of His ministry as He solidified, strengthened that truth, if you will, with many, the covenant with many during that ministry. And then we see the other 3½ days and we build upon it, we add to it... When we started going through Daniel and God gave understanding that the seventy-weeks was fully about something to do with a period of time not in the first coming of Christ, but Christ's second coming. I had no idea where those verses were going! We did that in a sermon later on because God built upon some things and we began to compare spiritual things with spiritual, we grew a little bit at a time and we just kept building upon it, spiritual with spiritual. It's an *awesome* process!

And that's what we're doing today – 3½ days – should be so clear what it's all about. Didn't drive the point home until we finally got here and realized 3½ days in the streets of Jerusalem, well, that City, and what it means and what it's all about. Duh! But you know, we can't know until we're there, until it's God's time to give it. And so everything we've had has been orderly done by God to bring us to today. Incredible!

And then it goes on to say here, **verse 14 - But the natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him;** that's powerful in what we're talking about here in Revelation 11. 'The natural man', someone who doesn't have the flow of God's spirit or even who has been cut off from the flow of God's spirit, because this is what they *become* again without God *in* them or them *in* God, in the sense of something that's actively working in their life. And so, what could be otherwise than that which is true is foolish to everyone else - foolishness. Why should it be a surprise that everyone scattered there, that everything we do is foolishness to them, and even worse? ...*worse* than foolish as far as they're concerned.

**The natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** It's only that which has God's spirit or led by God's spirit, drawn by God's spirit, can receive of God's spirit, can see whatever it is that God's revealing.

**John 2:12 – And after He, speaking of Jesus, went down to Capernaum, with His mother, His brothers and His disciples:** it says **they continued there for several days.** Isn't that amazing? A verse right there that to my knowledge the Catholic church still doesn't acknowledge – Jesus' family – brothers.

**And the Jews' Passover was at hand,** and this has puzzled some people: Why does it speak of the 'Jews Passover', wasn't it the Passover that was at hand? Yes, it was! But what is being pointed out here also is the 'Jews Passover', because it's like the Jews Passover today or other things that they might do; it's not God's, it's not being done God's way, it's theirs. That's what it means. So there's something significant in understanding here that this is something about *them*, not about God. **And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,** because it was that time period and He's going to observe what is right before God, His Father.

**And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and money changers, here, sitting around: And when He had made a whip of small cords, He drove all of them out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;** What an incredible thing! Most people in the world, in the world of traditional Christianity, have no concept of Jesus Christ being like this, of doing something like this, of making a device with cords on it like a whip

and going around and whipping and throwing tables over and letting the money fly everywhere in the temple. Incredible! He took charge in a powerful way – dumbfounded the people who were around there!

**And said unto them who sold doves, Take these things away from here and do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise.** I get so perturbed sometimes with people out there that write various things who ought to know better, about God, things that are written sometimes about, supposedly, about Jesus Christ, that He never claimed He was the Christ, the Messiah. He did over and over again! Not in the way sometimes that we think that He did! Claimed to be the Son of God? *Absolutely!* ...by the different things He said and the way He spoke it – even before Pilate, the fact that He didn't deny it and said, 'for this reason was I born...' But there are some people out there that are so ignorant, willingly ignorant of what is true, in a scattered Body that ought to know better about some of these things! Things that sometimes just rile me up!

So He said, **Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up.** When did they remember that? A lot later when they began to write, when they began to preach, when they began to understand. **Then the Jews answered and said unto Him, What sign will You show unto us, seeing that You do these things?** "Who are you that you have the right...that you say this is Your Father's house?! ...to come in here?! Then what sign do you show us?" And **Jesus said unto them, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. Then the Jews said, It took forty-six years to build this temple, and You will raise it up in three days?!** It's foolishness unto them! It's like what we read about in Corinthians, absolutely insane, you are nuttier than a fruitcake! (I don't know if they had fruitcakes back then, but anyway... I don't know if you have fruitcakes over here in Australia.)

What an incredible thing that took place! Forty-six years! I think sometimes of statements that are made about things we have said, I have said, things that God has given to the Church, and people are so outraged by some things because they're just to them so insane! "How could you say something like this?! Who do you think you are that you can say something like that?!" And so they don't understand, and so they read it or they hear it in a certain way, a very physical way because they don't have God's spirit, they can't see and understand that which is spiritual, and so they get *mad* and they get upset and on it goes. They get *ugly*, they mock and they ridicule! That's the way it's been for some time, especially over the last 3½ years.

**But He spoke of the temple of His body.** So simple - over and over again - what this is about. He spoke of the temple of His body not about a physical building! And this even comes up later; this is some of the stuff that the rulers, the Jewish rulers wanted to find fault with Him and this is some of the allegations that came forward, "...well He said that He would destroy this temple and raise it up in three days..." Because they were lying and they twisted and distorted because they heard what they wanted to hear, other things that were said about... and then someone else came along and said something else that didn't quite agree with another false witness. People hear what they want to and then they start spreading this around. This is what He's saying, because they can't understand the context, because the context is spiritual.

**Therefore, after He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the scriptures and the word which Jesus had said.** They did not know that He was referring to, that He was talking about Himself, '...destroy this temple...' until after He had died and been resurrected. That's what it says, '...after He had risen from the dead' then they believed, they

remembered these words. It's like we do so often, we hit ourselves in the forehead and think, "Man, that's so clear! Why didn't I see it before?" It's because it's spiritually discerned, God has to give it in His time and you can't have it before that! *You just can't have it until He gives it to you, until it's His time!* And so it was their time and all of a sudden it's like, "Wow! I remember Him saying that... three days – He's talking about Himself!" Do you think Satan understood what He was talking about? Do you think *he* understood the things that Christ taught and said? He didn't understand the spiritual things of God, what God is doing. He hears things and to him those things, as a whole, they are physical things he... anyway...

It is in the natural mind of man that we take things that God has said on a limited physical plane, even when He is speaking of those things that are prophetic and/or spiritual in nature. We can't help it...as God must reveal the spiritual to us. Even in the Church it's that way...it's *that way!*

Things we have tried to understand because of the present truth in the time of Philadelphia, if you will, about the end and about tribulation, and *knowing*, just like the knowing that Germany is going to rise again, that *Assyria*, the people of Assyria who are the Germanic people, to know prophetically that they're going to be a part of, the spearhead again, of the final rise of Europe - to have those things revealed to you, to know those things within a period of time, within the period of Philadelphia...and then to have lived through that, especially if you lived through World War II and what happened to the Jewish people... and then to read of some things in scripture about 'great tribulation' and about things that are going to happen at the end, and then to read some of these things in Revelation. It isn't hard to build up in your mind some horrifying physical things that are going to happen before the return of Jesus Christ and a final period of time. On the contrary, it's normal and natural with what you see to that point in time. And that's exactly what we did!

My wife grew up as a young person in the church. Her parents came in when she was six and she'd heard some sermons along those lines and ministers speaking about things at the end-time and what would happen, and things quoted out of something called, 'Fox's book of Martyrs' - horrifying stories of things that have happened that painted a picture in her mind. I remember the old Bible Story Book, the 6 volume 'Bible Story Book', an individual who had at one time did pictures for 'Mad Magazine'. He did some of those pictures in there, very graphic in some of the things he pictured, these pictures were just horrifying. And some of that isn't bad, to have a measure of fear of disobeying God and what that means...and yet God allows those things to exist.

And so we've gone through a process of how we learn, and how we grow, until God reveals to us something different, because He reveals more and more about Himself and His purpose to us, but in His time. And so much of that still because there is a war going on out there on a spiritual plane, bringing an individual to his end just as God brought a nation and its leader to an end in the Red Sea – because He entrapped them, He engulfed them and destroyed them.

And we're at that time, where they aren't going to yet be destroyed but they're going to be entrapped, literally, placed into prison, if you will, on a spiritual plane, kept away from mankind for over a thousand years, Satan and his demons, and then released just for a little season. *Then* his end of existence.

So again here, we can't help it, the way we think as human beings, until God reveals something that it's what it's all about in the first place, that which is on a spiritual plane. Otherwise, we can't help what we see because we see physically. And *Satan* does not know that which is spiritual that comes from God. Although, again, his composition is spirit he doesn't grasp that which is spiritual, as I said.

1 Corinthians 3:9: let's notice some more verses here that actually tie in in a very powerful way to what we're going through in Revelation 11. In time here it'll tie in in a very powerful way, what is being said here, what is being spoken of here, what is being shown here.

**I Corinthians 3:9 - For we are labourers together**, Mr. Armstrong used to use the expression 'co-workers' and this is the same sort of thing, this is what it's talking about, co-workers. There were different people who helped support what was taking place in the Church at that time and believed in a message that Mr. Armstrong was sending out although didn't believe it for their life in the sense of making the changes, weren't called to that actually. And so there are a lot of people who helped support the work at that time that were referred to as co-workers, a good term to explain that in that respect.

For here, though, it's speaking of within the Church, **We are co-workers together**, if you will, or **labourers together with God**: working together with God. God calls us to do a work and works in us and we function as a Body then. **And you are God's husbandry**, which means His 'field' or His 'cultivation'. God calls us, He works in our life, He cultivates us. Jesus Christ used that example in John 16 about the vine, 'My Father...' speaking of being a part of the vine and '...you are the branches' and '...My Father is the husbandman, the vinedresser...' the one who watched over it all, in essence.

And it goes on to say, **you are God's building**. 'You are God's building'...it's what God is building and if we yield ourselves to that He continues to build. **According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another build thereon**. And so He was showing how God works, that there are those truths being given to the Gentiles and this foundation is being made for you, in the sense of what you're being established in, and then others will come along, God will use them to build more, to build you up, to teach and to continue the process that God has begun.

**According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let everyone take heed how they build thereon**. Now, that's important for those in the ministry through time; it's important that they take heed as to how they build upon what is given. It's important for us individually, that we're careful how we build upon what God starts in us, what He begins to work with in us, and this is what the admonition is of, individually and as a Church.

**Verse 11 - For no other foundation can anyone lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ**. It starts with the Passover! That's what it's all about! That's why that exists as a commanded assembly before the Holy Days are given. I mention this so often, every time we go into Leviticus 23 we talk about it - you can't go into God's plan, you can't enter into God's plan, you can't begin to come out of sin, you can't receive the power of God's spirit into your life, on and on it goes, until you have received the Passover! It starts with Him; He is the foundation of it all! God's building *everything* upon Jesus Christ from beginning to end in His Family. Beautiful! Powerful!

So, **no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble**; interesting here of what he's showing, because there are different things you can build, different things that people have done. And the first three here; gold, silver precious stones, are things that endure, going through fire, going through trial. That's the example through scripture. Hay, wood, and stubble – not good for building in God's Family – not good in how things are built upon as far as God's plan is concerned. That's how these

things are to be understood here, because they can be destroyed by fire...that's the point. And we all have to go through *fire*, trials, and so we have to be careful how we build upon it, not something that can be easily burned up, that's here one day and then... it has the appearance of the same structure and then all of a sudden it gets burned up through the trial, because people can't go through the trial because they're not building in the way that they should, *yielding* themselves the way that they should.

**Every man's work**, every person's work, in other words, **shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire**; So, in other words, how we build, in time, is going to become quite apparent as to whether it endures or not, whether we come up to a time we can't continue on. Like the 50<sup>th</sup> Truth! God had mercy upon us and let us receive that truth sooner than on the Feast of Trumpets *when it was going to be given*... He gave it to us many months earlier in order to strengthen, in order to help others who would not have come through that, they would have been burned up beforehand. And God knew that and He had mercy upon us because of knowing where we are as the Body, knowing at what point we were and what we'd developed. So God had great mercy on us because of a purpose and a plan that He has. We're blessed to be a part of that. I am only here because God has a plan and a purpose.

I was thinking about that this morning and all those who are scattered out there, those who do not know, those who are confused... I would be right there with them if it weren't that God had a plan for what He's doing, not because of any greatness, not because of any strong abilities! On the contrary!

**Every man's work/every person's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it**, the time... time will bring it all about, **because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work/everyone's work of what sort it is**. ...whether it will endure or whether it won't, as to what we've really built, of what we've really yield ourselves to, or whether we're just going through the motions and we're not deeply convicted and we allow and tolerate sin in our lives and not really repenting like we should...and etcetera, etcetera.

**Verse 14 - If anyone's work abides/continues/remains**, that same word; **which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward**. So again here, it's a part of a process of our spiritual lives and how we grow and how we build; and we go through trial, we go through fire, that example there.

**Verse 15 - If anyone's work shall be burned, they shall suffer loss**: What an incredible thing, but it's not over with yet. Because when God calls us, He calls human beings, He... I think of the Church, especially what happened because of the apostasy; fire came... and where were we at that point? What we had built was run down, was in shambles, was in bad shape, and things burned up bad, they truly did, in a bad way... and the whole Body had to be spewed out of God's mouth, shaken to its core of its being...and some God called out of that, helped to come to repentance, and began to change and began to do a work.

**If anyone's work shall be burned, they shall suffer loss: but they themselves may yet be saved**; as the words mean here in Greek, '**may yet be saved**' and the word, 'so by' here just simply meaning, **may yet be saved as in the manner through fire**. In other words, there is that which can still happen in your life, that there can be other fire, other trials later on, and depending on our response at those times when God begins to work with us will determine whether or not we can come through all this yet. It isn't over with in God's plan. And so all those...and I'm thankful for that, I truly am, thinking of all the people I've known. I think of the song/Psalm that I've mentioned so often, 'We walked to God's house side by side and council blended sweet...' and yet through time turned, those who were friends became enemies.

That's what God says, turned against us, turned against God's Church, those with whom council blended sweet at one time, went to the Feast of Tabernacles together, sat down together, sang songs together, ate together, fellowshiped together, and in time became enemies. It's a horrible thing that's spoken of there in the Psalms, but it's happened in God's Church over and over again, and it happened in a massive way here toward the time of the apostasy.

But in God's plan it's not over with, people can be saved out of a fire yet...**so as yet by fire**; by trial. And it's going to come in different ways because of what it does to you in your life, the trials that come to you. For some, the trial will be at a resurrection when they finally are able to come face to face and see certain things, will see what they've done, see what the choices led to, to bring about a deep, deep, deep conviction of a change in their heart. So, you talk about being pricked in the heart, that's going to be a big double whammy – if pride isn't in the way. ...**may yet be saved as in the manner through fire**.

**Verse 16 – Do you not know that you are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defiles the Temple of God, them shall God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, of which Temple you are.** Now in the midst of this has already been given, and is a part of the story, that there is an ability to be saved out of those things, but it depends upon each individual and their reaction to God. Some have no desire, will have no desire in the future, just as some of what happened in the demonic world, or to the angelic realm at one time.

So, incredible story here about building and how we build thereupon and understanding how fire is used over and over again in scripture and especially here in 1 Corinthians by Paul.

Let's turn over to 2 Thessalonians. So the disciples did not grasp what Jesus was saying and the Jews certainly did not understand, nor did Satan himself understand when Christ said, '...destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.' And he's made the same mistake again!

Then we just read how Paul explained that those who are *in* the Church are a part of the Temple of God... as God has His Church focus upon the importance of being *in the Temple* of God that is spiritual, and not *in* a physical one. So even in the Church that went through the apostasy, that which was scattered lost spiritual sight of the truth about what the Temple of God was concerning the Church. Now, you hear these things and you think, "How can anyone not know what the Temple of God is?" and this is the big downfall of the entirety of the Church that was scattered, and still is, because they don't know what the Temple is, they can't hold onto that, they can't grasp the significance of it, the spiritual Temple.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1 - Now we beseech you, brethren, by**, the word meaning, 'concerning' **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him**, looking forward to the time of His return, **That you not become soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no one deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come an apostasy/a falling away from the truth of God.** For those who know it – what an *awesome* thing - to be able to read this and see this and understand what took place in our recent history.

**...lest there come a falling away/an apostasy first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition who opposes**, meaning to oppose God, as the same word means 'to stand against' or 'to be an adversary' like Satan's name; Lucifer became the devil, the adversary of God. And this word here means the same thing, to be an adversary, to stand against God... **who opposes and exalts himself above all**

**that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he as God**, only God can tell us what is right and wrong, how to live life, what is true, **sits**, we came to understand that this has to do with authority and how the word is used in the Greek language, not a matter of sitting down in a chair here today and listening to a sermon, it has to do with where they are in the Temple, in the Body...**sits in the Temple of God**, power and authority, **showing/displaying/declaring himself that he is**, in essence, **as God**. Went through that before, one being did that a long, long time ago and he finally worked with the Church, God's own Church, God's own people, to lead an individual to do *exactly* the same thing that he did. Incredible what we've lived through and what we've experienced.

But again, the Temple, so simple, so basic - it's the Church! It's not a physical place, it's the Church over and over and over again, and it's about us being a part of the Temple, in the Church.

So there are things that cannot be seen fully on a spiritual plane until God gives it, so it is with things that are written here in Revelation 11 concerning God's two end-time witnesses; and just this matter of the Temple helps to drive that point home.

So let's begin again here in Revelation 11 focusing on the use of the term of 'temple/Temple' as we also focus more deeply on the entire meaning of what we're being told in this chapter, chapter 11 that's only been *partially* understood and seen in recent past, or recent times, if you will...and still far, far ahead of or beyond the understanding of anyone else who's been scattered, and they're being stuck in time like I mentioned earlier.

**Revelation 11:1 - And there was given unto me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship therein**. So again, we have understood that this has to do with the Church but have not understood just how much, and especially understanding the whole story flow of what it goes into. It's almost like there's been these verses in there and all of a sudden we start talking about two witnesses. No, there's a timing factor here, powerful indeed.

**And there was given to me a reed**, it's used for measuring, that's what it's about, it's about a device used for measuring, **like unto**, in other words, in the form of **a rod**, a staff, a scepter; that's the word. So there's this measuring device like unto, or in the form of...beautiful language how God gives things so often and writes things and then reveals them to us what He has already written so that we can be inspired and moved by it.

The reed here is a measuring device in the form of a sceptre or a staff which carries great meaning with it, obviously. A staff, a rod, a sceptre are all good words that describe this one Greek word and this word is used in two primary ways if you look at how it's used in scripture here in the New Testament.

1. As a kind of walking pole or a walking stick; a pole.

And that's all it is, it's very simple in its use. But the second by context to be able to know what it is, by seeing what it is, it's also a word that's used to do with...

2. Power, authority, and rule...and often when speaking of *correction* and *enforcing judgment*.

Let's notice how it's used. **1 Corinthians 4:17** – just to get a feel for how this word is used, about this particular staff, sceptre, the particular words that are used there. Because this reed was given that was used for measuring, but now in a specific form, in a specific way used to measure the Temple. **For this cause have I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall remind you of my ways which be in Christ**, pretty bold here, strong, because it's the truth, it's just the way it is. And so Paul is telling them, he says, **I've sent to you, Timothy, who is my beloved son**, my influence in his life, how I feel toward him. You know, that happens in the Church, those individuals who work together and how they feel toward others that are being drawn and worked with, and as they're moulded and fashioned. Laura and I talk about that oftentimes, there are those who are just like our children.

**...as I teach everywhere in every Church. Now, some are puffed up**, and so he goes on to show here that there is a problem within the Church in something that's taking place. He said, **some are puffed up**, in other words, filled with pride, **as though I would not come to you** – in other words, "Paul may not make it here so..." What happens? He's saying here that individuals then, because they have no one there that's working with them in that same fashion, I'm sending Timothy now, you receive him as you receive me, and because there are those of you who don't feel I'm coming – so it kind of emboldens them. He's saying it kind of emboldens some of you to go ahead and speak out when you really shouldn't be doing so, and teaching and doing things you really shouldn't be doing in the Church. And so he's kind of giving them a warning here about certain things. He says, so some of you feel kind of emboldened to speak out, to do various things, to place yourself in a position you shouldn't place yourself in while I'm away, thinking I'm not coming.

But he says, **But I will come unto you shortly**, trying to shake them up a little bit, to straighten them out a little bit. **...if the Lord will, and you will know not the speech of them who are puffed up but the power**. He's saying, so you're going to learn quickly here if I'm so blessed to come to you, if God wills, that you're going to hear the power of God and not some who are puffed up and think that they understand certain things and are your teacher or whatever. That's what he's telling them.

**For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power**. In other words, of the holy spirit and how God works, like we talked about earlier. **So what do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod**, the staff, the sceptre, **or in love**; I can tell you how Paul *wanted* to come to them, it makes it easier for everyone...but how did they want him to come? Probably want you to come in love... and hopefully that brings some to repentance. That's the message here being given... **So what do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?** ...a teachable spirit, a different attitude.

So again, just showing how the word is used; it's used as a matter of authority, of power, and so forth.

**Hebrews 1:8 - But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre**, that same word 'rod' that we read about; **A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your Kingdom**. So He's showing here the authority and power of 'Your Kingdom' is one of righteousness. Regardless of how the rod is used it's one of righteousness because it's of God and God makes it very clear, as in Revelation 19, that this rod is not always used...it's a matter of judgment oftentimes, but it's a matter of righteousness in how it's used.

**Revelation 19:13** – again, scriptures we're very familiar with but it's good to understand the usage of the word, that it's very clear when it's talking about a walking stick and it's also very clear when it's used in scripture as something as a matter of authority, a sceptre, like Aaron's rod that budded. It was a matter of a show, a reflection of, that which pictured authority, a sceptre that's used by a ruler, if you

will. **And He, Christ, was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth...** I think about what it says in Revelation 11 about the two witnesses... 'out of their mouth goes fire'. I hope everyone understands it's not fire that goes out of anybody's mouth, no more than a sword that comes out of His mouth. This is spiritual in what it pictures and what it means.

**And out of His mouth went a sharp sword, and with it He should smite/strike**, if you will, or strike down **the nations**: It's what it means. It has to do with the Word of God, it has to do with how they're judged, it has to do with the power that's there that comes from God. So not a literal sword - and fire ought to be pretty clear too, what that's about. We just read about it in Corinthians... What brings those things about? How does it happen? Where does it come from? Why is it there? Who is it to? **...that with it He should smite/strike/strike down**, literally is what it means, **the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron**: strong, powerful, to correct, to bring everything into what is right and just before God and how life is lived; no longer allowing governments to do and go their own way; on the contrary, where force needs to be used God will use it, righteously so.

**...and He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.** This is not a very pretty picture here in what's being spoken of on the day of His return, because it has to do very much with the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God at the end of 6,000 years in that one day period of time, of what God pours out upon the earth on the day that Jesus Christ returns.

**...and He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.** Says He comes back as a lion this time, not as a lamb! First time He came as a lamb to be killed, to be the Passover lamb. This time He comes back with power to rule because people aren't going to yield to Him without *power*, without such power being exerted upon them.

In the Middle East, do you think there are nations that are just going to say, "Oh, I'm just *so thankful* that *I was wrong* about my religious beliefs *and everything I've ever believed* and I'm *so glad* that you are the one that's coming...!" Sorry, they hate it! They're going to *loathe* what's happening unless they're brought down, unless they're humbled. And that's what God will do to mankind so that people will have a little bit sharper hearing. It's not a pleasant time because of man's stubborn pride and the way this world is today.

Let's return over here to **Revelation 11:1 - And there was given me a reed**, used for measuring, **like unto/in the form of a rod**, a staff, a sceptre: **and the angel stood, saying, Rise up and measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship therein**. Again, there are things we have understood but not in the context of what we're going to go into now. So measure the Temple of God? Again, this should be very, very clear. The Church of God is to be measured with *authority to do so*. It's not just a measuring device, it's one that carries with it power and authority to do so...and to do so as a matter of, if you will, righteous judgement, because it's from God concerning *all* that is to remain *in* it, judged as being *in* it, *in* the Temple, to be part of the Temple – as this is about those who are obviously going before the *altar*.

What's the altar about? It's about seeking God's mercy and forgiveness of sin. Those who are *utilizing* in their life that powerful sacrifice of Jesus Christ, those who are fighting the fight and fighting against their nature and fighting against sin and going before God and repenting of the things they're *told to*

*repent of*...not just in their own lives. Because we all understand certain basic things we're to repent of, but *some of this* is a little different because they're being *told* what to repent of, and if they're not going before the altar and repenting they cannot be a part of, measured in, the Temple. That's what the context here is all about.

So those who do not *believe* they have need to go before the altar cannot remain in the Temple, counted in, measured, in the Temple, and those who truly desire to worship within the Temple God will manifest and make clear.

**Verse 2 - But the court which is without the Temple**, in other words, this is that which is outside the Temple area, it cannot be counted, it cannot be measured as a part of the Temple unless certain things are a part of it. Again, what's it all about? It's all about the Temple, it's about the Church of God, and it's about the Church of God up until to the very end-time here. That's where we are in time, as it thrusts you into a period of time about a work, about something that's to happen over a period of forty-two months, 3½ days, 3½ years; something that's to take place toward the end to prepare for the end, of something that's going to come upon the earth in time before the return of Jesus Christ that leads right up to His return.

...**But the court which is without the Temple**, in other words, outside the Temple area, **leave out**, in other words, there is that which cannot come within the Temple and cannot be measured to be a part of it; **and do not measure it**; authority – God says **do not measure it**; can't be a part of it...**for it is given unto the Gentiles**: different kind of word here, used oftentimes just as 'the nations' but it's one that has to do with basically those who are on the outside that don't believe, non-believers. It's a very loose term but that's the gist of it, how it's used scripturally and oftentimes here throughout the New Testament, those who are Gentiles, non-believers, of the other nations, because there is one nation God was working with on a spiritual plane.

Going back in the beginning of the New Testament, Gentiles was used in talking about the other nations other than Judah, because Judah was the one that was supposedly the one to be worked with there and the one that was given first opportunity, in that respect, the one that still had the Sabbath and the Holy Days present and yet was not really following God, and Jesus Christ condemned them for their practices and their teachings and what the rabbis were doing and so forth, even at that time. But that's how the word is used, this word for Gentile and so forth here, the other nations, and it just mean's everyone else.

Well, we are a nation of people. God's Church is recognized through scripture here, we understand that, a nation of people. And so it's talking about that which is a part of Mount Zion, that which is a part of God's government, a part of God's way of life, a part of Jerusalem as we talk about often times, spiritual Israel, if you will, all these terms that are so often used that have to do with the Church...and then everyone else. And when it comes to the Church we know what that means. And sometimes we... there's a distinction here toward the end that has to be made because there is that which is obviously a part of the world, it's never been called yet, but there's that which was a part of that Church. They're the ones – everyone who was a part of the Church, that's what's being measured up to the end. That's what it's about, because there is still that which has to do with the impregnation of God's spirit, it's just that there's that which is asleep. And God will wake it up in His time, but there are reasons why those things are written and they are going to go through what they must go through, because of what God is doing in the end-time....

But again ...**for it is given unto the Gentiles...**to those who do not believe. Believe what? What is it that they're supposed to believe? What is it they're rejecting? What is it they won't receive? ...that they can't be in the Temple? **And the holy City**, the holy City...What is the holy City? ...Mount Zion that we've talked about so often? **And the holy City shall they tread under foot forty-two months.** How long is that? It's about the 3½ years – something brings them up to a period of time, and this is where they will be at that time by the time the measuring is taking place, and there's something they will do for the entire period of time.

So, God is giving authority to measure that which will be determined to be part of the Temple and that which will be determined as outside the Temple and not to be measured as a part of it. Not about the world, not about those who have never been called; it's about those that were a part, who believe they're a part – but God is making a distinction saying, “No, you're not, not right now you're not.” So again, we've understood this in part in the past but now Jesus Christ is making it fully clear what all this is about in Revelation 11.

What we've just covered summed up much of what this work has been from the very beginning. It began on Pentecost 1998 with a very clear focus of a continuing process of warning the scattered Church. That has been our life! It's *always* been about the Temple! Primarily the focus has always been about the Temple from the beginning.

And so again here, it was a continuing of a process in 1998 of warning the scattered Church and it began to reflect that in a publication called 'News Watch for the Church of God'. A little later it was reflected even more intently, if you will, in two publications. One was called 'Time is Running Out' and 'Time Has Run Out'. The Church, the Temple was being measured. That's what's being spoken of here in Revelation 11, that's what leads up to this final forty-two months of what happens, of what God said would take place. That's what He's revealing about two witnesses to the very end.

I thought it would be good to go back and look at some of these articles from 'Time is Running Out', and I'm just going to mention some of these things. The very first article:

### 1. 'The Stones of the Temple'

When I went back and looked through some of these things, I'll tell you, chills just went up and down my spine thinking about what God did starting clear back then to lead up to this, of what God is revealing and giving to us in a more powerful way – all about the Temple, all about that which would be rejected. Did what God say come to pass about the stones of the Temple or did it not? Are you going to go before the altar and repent because you understand what this means about your own personal life, or not?

### 2. 'Dead, Revived, Rejected'

History of Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and what happened to us in a Church; in a Church that God would reject. Did it experience being spewed out of God's mouth or not? But *pride*... pride is so powerful, to where individuals cannot acknowledge, “I'm a Laodicean.” Now, if you didn't live in that, it's hard maybe to understand some of that...and I'll just tell you it is. You know, it's one thing to have knowledge of something but another thing to live it. Until you've lived certain things it's difficult to grasp the spirit of it, it truly is.

And so to understand how individuals could be so deeply entrenched in Philadelphia, because that's where they were called as a whole, some later on then in the period of Laodicea, but all the way through there no one ever wanting to acknowledge that they're a *Laodicean*. I mean, that was just.... If you're a Laodicean you're just... I can hardly say it.... spiritually. That's the way we looked at it in the Church, and that's so deeply entrenched in the hearts and minds of people that it's still there to this day!

How can you repent of something that you won't accept, that you won't accept the truth that with Mr. Armstrong Philadelphia ended, that you cannot and will not because of pride, accept the truth, that you're living in Laodicea. And if you lived in Laodicea what does that mean? Yes! You were a Laodicean and you did *exactly* what God *said!* It's what *God* said, it's not what I said, it's not what anybody else has said, it's what God said, it's what God gave to Jesus Christ and what Jesus Christ gave to the Church, to the Temple! And He said, 'You are going to have an attitude of mind of being rich and increased with goods and you're not going to understand that you're wretched, miserable, and poor and blind spiritually. You're going to have an elevated idea of yourself that you're Philadelphian, for whatever that means to you, and you can't acknowledge that you were something 'lower' than that.' Because Laodiceans were really looked down upon!

I remember the process I went through early on going through Matthew 25, and when I finally...when God started revealing about the ten virgins and finally came to understand there they all sinned. Because there was this concept at one time that there are these five wise virgins and five foolish virgins?! Who wants to be one of the foolish virgins? It's like, "They're the Laodiceans! You know who the Laodiceans are...?" Anyway... But there are these five wise... and so generally that's where you want to see yourself in the Church.

And so pride entered in, a spiritual pride that's so dangerous, so horribly dangerous. And to be able to acknowledge that means you've had to be able to go before the altar of God and say, "Father, forgive me, for I did exactly what You said." And I had to in the parable of the ten virgins because God gave to understand that that was about all ten, that all ten failed to *watch*, to be spiritually alert and on guard meaning they *all* sinned! Wise or foolish is immaterial, it doesn't really matter, you've all sinned! And it talked about 'to slumber and sleep'. See, I had a difficult time coming to say, "I was asleep." Slumbering, I started to kind of doze off - that's what I had in my mind - I'm kind of dozing off and starting to fall asleep but I didn't quite go that far to really just fall asleep. Yes, I did. But I remember what I went through spiritually to come to that point to be able to say that, because of pride, because of how we sometimes see ourselves and how we think.

### 3. 'Time is Running Out'

...explaining what was to follow Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's work of fulfilling Matthew 24:14. Incredible! 'And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and *then shall* the end come.' Again, at a time when people were just talking about Mr. Armstrong, saying he was a 'good teacher' and ministers would talk about how, "Well, he was a good teacher, *but...*" Everything they had, everything I have, everything *you* have, you would not have if it hadn't been for what God did through Mr. Armstrong, see? If God hadn't did what He did through the disciples and what He did through Paul and all the things that Paul did...we wouldn't be here. And if it hadn't... era after era and God working through individuals, but especially at the end-time because of where the Church was in Sardis and what God did then in raising it back up again through Mr. Armstrong...and so they couldn't come to acknowledge that, that they were there *because of* what God did through him.

#### 4. ‘Will You Escape?’

Incredible!

#### 5. ‘What are you Building?’

Wood? Hay? Stubble? That’s basically what was being asked on a spiritual plane because the admonition was to build upon the truth beginning with Passover. And two profound statements that were highlighted...

God’s Spirit actually works to expose false doctrines in order to help lead brethren to repentance [the altar] so they can come to a closer unity with Him.

And then another one...

True unity comes only *in* spirit and *in* truth, otherwise it is a false unity [this thing of building bridges] which will not produce Godly fruit.

And how was that received by others? When I go through things like this history just flashes in front of me. I think of different times, going out and talking to different people. I remember at one point in the beginning of being invited up to Minneapolis, St. Paul, to talk, after writing some of these things. ...and at one time being invited to (was it Phoenix? Tucson, Phoenix, area?) to speak at one time to a group of different ones of some of the different groups that had gotten together, building bridges, this attitude of mind, and they didn’t want to hear the truth. They didn’t want to hear you’re going to have problems building bridges because you’re going to have some who believe in a 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Passover and others who don’t. How can you build a bridge in that? How can you build a bridge with something that’s false and you’re going to have to stand up for what is true for the 14<sup>th</sup>? How can you build a bridge having to do with Pentecost and the counting of Pentecost if someone believes on certain years that it’s to be counted beginning outside of the Days of Unleavened Bread. And on and on it went! Guess what? Was never invited back. That’s how it was received!

Do people *love* God’s truth and want to go before the altar? On the contrary! ...and that’s been our history. This has all been a part of the process of the Temple being measured. God has used this, this strengthening of truth and talking about these things in a plain language that God gave – and people had a choice, to accept it and to go before the altar and to worship God in spirit and in truth or not. And that’s had an affect then on *their* thinking and *their* mind in how they think towards *God* today, towards *Jesus Christ* today, towards *God’s true Church* today. It’s a pretty sad testimony, truly is.

Another article here:

#### 6. What Am I to Hold Fast?

And this was the one, I guess, that went back to the trunk of the tree and to the twenty-one foundational truths. That’s what it was all about; hold fast to these things, make sure these things are built up in your life and that you haven’t lost some of it – build upon them again.

I'm going to go ahead and spend some time on some of this, just to read some of these things. Consider, again, this one here: 'Time Has Run Out'. I want to read from part of the introduction on this one here, the second booklet:

This booklet is written first of all to those who were once united as God's true Church in a single organization called the Worldwide Church of God. But as God forewarned His Church, in the end-time there would be a great apostasy (falling away from the truth). This booklet speaks of those things that have already come upon God's people at the end of this age. None in the scattered Church will receive what is written in this booklet unless they have been called to become a final remnant of all that were scattered from that one organization.

How does that make people feel? Does that bring people to repentance? Not unless God's drawing them; otherwise, because of pride it instills something else in their heart, an attitude of mind that's reflected in the past 3½ years with everybody that's out there.

Going on in this article...

If this is true, then what you read will ring true only because of God's Spirit drawing you. If that happens, then you and you alone will decide whether to respond or not.

And then the first article... [other article titles follow]:

1. 'Now IN the End-Time'
2. 'The Ten Virgins' – Matthew 25
3. 'The Spiritual Temple' – Matthew 24
4. 'The Man of Sin'

Can we not at least *acknowledge* that we had an apostasy? Can we not *acknowledge* there was a man who was set, who sat in the Temple of God with power and authority, the only one in the history of God's true Church who 'set' in power and authority, who could do what he did in power and authority, to tell God's people you no longer have to keep the Sabbath day, you no longer have to keep the Holy Days, you no longer even have to keep clean and unclean meats. You can go out and eat whatever you want...and then that night people went out and ordered shrimp. They were so excited to be liberated, to be freed. What a *horrible* thing that happened so quickly!

5. 'Final Eras of the Church'

Again, because people could not accept that there was a Church, an era of Laodicea, and that was the only one remaining.

6. 'Desolation of the Temple' – Ezekiel 5
7. 'The End-Time Elijah – Fulfilled'

... to that point in time, not understanding fully what God was doing yet, but acknowledging something that needed to be acknowledged in the scattered Church, that not a one of them would have anything if

God hadn't done what He did through Mr. Armstrong in doing a work in a powerful way, of the Elijah to come, where he fulfilled those things.

#### 8. 'Clarifying the Seals of Revelation'

Because there were those things that we hadn't understood in God's Church, thinking that it's always about the world and not understanding that the 1<sup>st</sup> Seal was about the Church and about the apostasy. Again, whether or not people would receive those truths. And those of you who are new? You read those things and it's like the book of Acts, you know it's true and it's there and it's just a matter of history now. That's good.

#### 9. 'First Five Seals Opened'

#### 10. 'The Sixth Seal of Revelation'

Going in and talking about these things. And if you're in that position of mind, that kind of mind, people began to think, "You're just nuttier than a fruitcake, to think that the Seals have already started being opened." And a little bit later some began to acknowledge that maybe some Seals were opened, but to speak of it with authority...with *authority* because God gives the authority? Yes, the Seals of Revelation have already been opened. Yes, we've seen 1-2-3-4, they're plain, their clear, and it's about us, it's about the Church that was scattered.

On this particular article here I wanted to go ahead and read this, especially for those who were a part. The end of this article says much about what we're covering here in Revelation 11, speaking of the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal of Revelation.

Yes, before the seventh seal is opened and the end-time physical tribulation is unleashed upon this earth, the work of Pentecost will be concluded. All who are to be [a part of] in the first resurrection will have been determined—all will have been sealed.

You know when that happened? When we came to understand deeply when all this came about? Just before the last 3½ years, just before the beginning of forty-two months we came to understand that everyone had been sealed. Going on...

It should be profoundly sobering to understand that at the time this book is being written, we are in the time when the sixth seal has been opened. We are at a transition in time when end-time spiritual tribulation upon the Church is about to conclude and end-time physical tribulation on this world is about to commence.

Little did we know what all that meant. Certain things happening around the world, yes, but *nothing* to the magnitude we'd ever believed. And as I was even praying this morning up here, thinking, talking to God like you do when you pray; I believe it, I see the things as we talked about at breakfast here this morning with some, of certain things that are set in motion already that can happen with a combination – just like an article that was sent to me here today; China and Russia in military games, war games, Japan concerned because it's in a region that they claim from both China and Russia, that they squabble over. One little thing – Iran messing around like they do, North Korea – on and on it goes, Syria, Russia, Russia who now has ships, who are bringing in more because they're not going to allow a NATO type

event again like what happened in Libya and they're making it clear...and no one's taking them seriously. And people in this country and in the United States and other places, they're not hearing news like that, you have to go look that kind of news up. You have to go out there and *search* for it, and that's only because you know what to look for, to realize how quickly things can happen... – but as I was saying – talking to God, it's there, the potential is there but I really can't see it. I believe it and I go forward believing it, knowing at some point in God's timing it's going to happen, it's going to happen fast all over this earth...and thank God we're able to meet here like this today. A year ago I believed with all my being we couldn't be here today because of the five-month matter that we've talked about recently.

Anyway, going on here....

This time, between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals, is when the final determination of all who will be firstfruits—the temple of God—is completed. When the sealing is complete, great destruction will come on this earth because the first four angels of the seventh seal are no longer restrained.

We're learning through this process too and we'll have more in this series.

Another section here I want to read, take the time to do it... but let's go on to Revelation 11 just to make sure we get through a little bit more here today; that way you can build upon this and have that much more by next Sabbath.

**Revelation 11:1 - And there was given to me a reed**, again, used for measuring, **but in the form of a rod/a staff/a sceptre**, power/authority: **and the angel stood, saying, Rise up and measure the Temple of God**, God's Church, those who are a part of it and those who are not, **and the altar, and those who worship therein**. It has nothing to do with the world outside, nothing whatsoever; only those who have ever been a part of the Temple.

**But the court which was without the Temple**, outside the Temple area, **leave out**, in other words, that which cannot come within the Temple and cannot be measured as part of it, of 144,000, **and do not measure it for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy City shall they tread under foot forty-two months**. So again here, just driving the point home. What *is* the holy City? Well, again, it is that which is about the Church, it is about those who have been called to be part of *spiritual Jerusalem*, to become part of the Temple of God. Yet there is that which happened in this end-time that changed so very much about the condition of the *holy City of spiritual Jerusalem*, of the Temple of God that experienced all the stones falling down, that experienced an apostasy.

So the Temple needed to be measured, from God's authority, and it was measured by the truth God gave it, especially that which has to do with the end-time, of what happened to the Church. That which went before the altar in repentance and as a living sacrifice, as it says, in other words in true worship in spirit and in truth would be measured in judgement rendered as coming or continuing *in* the Temple, and the rest would be or remain outside the Temple, to the Gentiles, to the other nations, to the non-believers, to those who don't believe the truth that God gave in which to measure the Temple by.

So, two groups came into existence that were once fully part of the Temple; a remnant that would repent and seek to worship God in spirit and in truth, and two, a much larger group that would not repent and remain part of a scattering in or part of over 600 different splinter groups – but only one that God was now abiding or dwelling in, the Temple.

This is important to understand when you understand what it means by 'the holy City', by the one that's called 'Sodom'.

So who, again, would tread underfoot the holy City? The holy City is because God is in it, in the Temple, being blessed to be a part of the Temple.

The holy City became that which was the remnant, those who would dwell in the Temple spiritually awake and spiritually alive – holy again because God's dwelling in it or in them and they in God. And all others would be measured outside the Temple, scattered, spiritually asleep, not dwelling *in* God or God in them - 'These are those who would tread underfoot the holy City', those whom God measured to be in the Temple, the holy City, and those who are not a part of it.

Again, this word 'Gentiles' as I mentioned earlier, talking about those who are outside.

I'm going to stop there today because it's about God's true Church, who has repented, who is a part of that, and those who have been a part of God's true Church who are asleep, but a judgement that has come upon them and what they have been doing and their attitude basically toward God and toward God's true Church for the past 3½ years.

~~~end