

The first place in the New Testament where the word 'Church' appears is **Matthew 16:18**, and it's where Jesus Christ was speaking to Simon Peter and Jesus said **...I will build My Church**. The inspired Greek word for 'Church' is *Ecclesia*, meaning 'called out ones'. Jesus Christ said, I will call out of Satan's world disciples who will be in God's Kingdom, and **the gates of hades**, talking about the grave, **will not prevail**. Better said, **it shall not be victorious against it**.

And in **Ephesians 5:23** it is also stated that Jesus **...Christ is the head of the Church**.

So this we know, whatever the Church is it belongs to God and its name is 'The Church of God'. Jesus Christ is the founder and He is its living head. If it is God's Church and if Jesus Christ founded it and today heads it, the Church, it is something that is very important to our God. We need to understand why Jesus Christ created it, what it is, how it fits into the divine purpose that is being worked out here below.

Let's turn over to Isaiah 34 and look at one scripture. **Isaiah 34:8 - For the Eternal has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion**. In another translation this says, **'this is the time when the Eternal will rescue Zion and take vengeance on her enemies.'** So we can see that this is an awesome prophecy about the Church. You and I are in the 'day of the Lord'.

When we look at the Church today we find it is just like God told us it would be in His book. The title today will be simply, *The Church*. God told us that it would be a little flock and that it would be a persecuted Church, and we find that to be very true, especially at the times that we find ourselves in, the time of the end.

Jesus Christ said, as we heard Wayne say earlier, '...if they persecute Me they will also persecute you.' We are a persecuted Church and that's what we want to talk about today. God's book tells us that it would be so and as a minister I can see that there are sufferings, and there are some that suffer mightily, especially in our past. God's book tells us that this is the way it would be, so we find ourselves persecuted at the end of an age. What we want to do today is a little self-examination about what God tells us about the Church of God.

We understand that we were called to suffer and when we understand our calling and what it's about it helps us to understand our sufferings and the persecutions that we endure. And brethren, there is no one immune in the Church of God from persecution or from suffering. The Church of God has to be humbled to really understand who they are and what they are to become a part of.

Turn over to the book of Daniel. We want to go back and see what God says to confirm what you and I already know, that we are to be persecuted. God told it. God said it...and we find it to be so true. Because of the way the Church is structured and because of the Sabbath day that we keep and the Holy Days it does not always fit well into man's society and so we find ourselves faced with situations that put us at odds with the ways of this world. I think all of us have experienced this.

Daniel 7:21 - I was watching, and the same horn was making war against the saints and prevailing against them; what this is telling us is that we are in a war, a spiritual war, and sometimes I think

because we can't see Satan and the demons, because there is an invisible spiritual world, that we don't always realize how much of a spiritual battle and a spiritual war that we are in. The Church of God has always been in a spiritual war - always! And it does seem that Satan is prevailing sometimes but we know the end of the story, we know who wins in the end.

Let's look at what God says in **verse 22 - Until the Ancient of days came and a judgment was made in favour of the saints on the Most High; and the time came for the saints to possess the Kingdom.** And that's not very far away, brethren. So we can see the end of persecution; there is coming a time when it will be over but you and I are not quite there yet. We are a persecuted Church and God has told us that this was the way it would be.

Daniel 12:1 – God tells us of a time when Michael, who is one of the archangels, will stand up: **And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people: there will be a time of trouble since there never was since there was a nation, even to that time:** and let's notice... **at that time your people will be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.** And we understand that this is in our very near future now. We understand there is coming a time of trouble upon this earth such as we have never seen. There are so many nations upon this earth that now have nuclear weapons and some are ready to use these weapons if pushed in the right direction. We can just look at the news and we can tell that our time is short, without this book.

Let's turn over to Revelation 12:17. We find that God tells us a lot about the Church and what we can expect as the Church of God. Brethren, in the times that we are in it's imperative that we realize who we are and what we were called to be a part of, and that we were called to suffer, as we heard Wayne say. From time to time we do get a little relief from the suffering, and I understand that some are suffering and it's not fun when you're in the middle of it. But after it's over, when we can look around and see, and if we stay close to our God we can see that our vision sharpens and we can see things more clearly, and you have a better understanding of God's ways and God's truth.

Revelation 12:17 – God tells us in this book - **And the dragon, talking about Satan, was enraged with the woman,** and we know this is talking about Satan and the Church. Let's notice what he did and what he is still doing – all through time, brethren - **and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.** That is you and me. *That's* the Church of God. *That's* who this war is against. The scriptures tell us that Satan is like a roaring lion and it's *us* that he's after, you and me, the Church of God, the ones that are persecuted. It's our time to be persecuted now. There are many who have gone before us. Satan knows the end results. He knows that God's Church will prevail; God told us so in this book. You and I find ourselves in a time in the end when God's Church is persecuted very sorely, just as it has been down through time, and you and I are not an exception. But God tells us of a time when it will be over.

Revelation 13:7 – God tells us that Revelation 13 is about Satan and the power that he has had down through time, the power that he was granted to have. And let's look at verse 7 and see some of the power that he has had and still does until his time comes, the time when he will be removed. **It was granted to him,** talking about Satan, **to make war with the saints;** God allowed it, brethren, **and to overcome them: and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth will worship him,** let's notice... **whose names have not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** We can see that this tells us that there was a plan put in place from the foundation of this world, and I don't think we understand the power that has been given for a purpose. It's for a reason; God allows it for His purpose. This power gets stronger and stronger as

we head into the times that are in our future, until he is removed. Remember that God tells us; Remember God tells us about Jacob's trouble that is coming. Well brethren, we can see that it is coming very fast now. We are in the 'day of the Lord' and a lot of these prophecies will be fulfilled.

And in **verse 9** God tells us - **If anyone has an ear, let him hear.** That's us! We are the Church of God that has ears to hear, and with these words of warning to the Church, the ones that have ears to hear, let's turn over to Hebrews 2 and look at verse 1.

God tells us that there are some things we should do, and there are some things that you and I should be aware of, especially at the time of the end. God tells us in **Hebrews 2:1 - Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, let's notice, lest we drift away.** Since Atlanta, Georgia, [the apostasy], our understanding in the Church of God has been so magnified, there are 57 Truths now, brethren. And even today as I think back, as we have been as the Church of God, God tells us to give earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we drift away, and we've been given so much! When we are under attack and when we are persecuted for the things we believe God gives a warning and tells us what to do.

Verse 2 - For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation: Do you really understand who you are and what you've been called to become a part of at this end-time. Do you really grasp it? Do you really understand the salvation that has been offered to you? God tells us that we can neglect it, but we cannot neglect the things that you and I, as the Church of God, must do. God does give us instructions.

Since Atlanta, Georgia, for those who have been around for a while, we have been steadily marching at a faster speed toward the end, and I hope you understand how gracious God has been to you, how merciful He has been to you just to be here and just to understand those 57 Truths that have been given.

God tells us in **verse 3 – How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him; God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, as we heard Wayne say, and gifts of the holy spirit, according to His own will?** It's God's will, brethren, not ours, and it is the purpose being worked out here below and it's by God's will, it's by what God allows.

Hebrews 3:12 – God says beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

And back up in **verse 1** God tells us - **Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, it's us. We are partakers of that calling, and He tells us to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ; Who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house...as we just heard. For this one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who built the house has more honour than the house. For every house is built by someone; but He who built all things is God. Moses indeed was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things, let's notice, which would be spoken afterward. But Christ, as a Son over His own House; whose House are we, let's notice...if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.**

And in **verse 7** God tells us that **if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion...**

And in verse 16, **for who, having rebelled**, it's an example for you and I. God tells us that these scriptures were given to us upon whom the end of the ages has come as an example so that we can understand.

Verse 19 - ...we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Let's be turning to Luke 24. We'll not read this whole chapter but this is where Jesus Christ had appeared on the road to the ones that were there. **Luke 24:25 - And He said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have said: Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.** We've been told in many, many sermons the things that are coming to pass upon us as the Church of God, and as we look to the future of this nation and of the world we know destruction is not far away.

We've heard down through time, those of us that have been around for a while, we've heard these things and now we can see them on the horizon taking place before our very eyes. We can see things coming together; we can see the destruction that will take place. It's going to be a time of trouble that God tells us about in this book, like there's never been before. We read about it earlier in Daniel, and Daniel told us that there would be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation upon this earth. It tells us that this is the time when God's people will finally be delivered, the ones who are found written in this book. You and I, as the Church of God, should be prepared for these events that are coming upon this world. We are now in the 'day of the Lord' and we will live through these events. We should be aware of our surroundings, we should watch and pray, watch and pray for one another. I don't think we comprehend just how close that we could be.

Zephaniah 2:1 – Zephaniah's words for the Church of God are just as valid today as it was when it was written, and it was a call to repentance then and it's also a call for repentance for you and I at the end. God tells us; **Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation; Before the decree is issued or the day passes like chaff, before the LORD'S fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger comes upon you. Seek the LORD all you meek of the earth who have upheld His justice; seek righteousness, seek humility,** God's instruction's brethren, and let's notice what He said; **it may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger.** It tells us what we are to do. We know that there will be a remnant when Jesus Christ returns so we know that there will be some of us that will have to face what is coming upon this earth, the prophecies that the Church has understood for so many years. We know they will come to pass.

Turn to Mark 13:10 – we know that one by heart probably, but let's go back and reflect. This is the verse that tells us that the gospel will be preached to all the nations, and we understand that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled this. **Mark 13:11 - But when they arrest and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak: but whatever is given you in that hour, speak that, for it is not you who speak but the holy spirit.**

And in **verse 12** we find - **...brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death.** We saw what took place when the abomination of desolation stood in Atlanta, Georgia, in the Church of God. Some in this room lived it,

we saw it take place. Those that walked side by side by God's Sabbath and God's Sabbath day, we saw brother against brother, father against child, and by living through these things we see the Church of God in the heartaches and the persecutions that arose because of what we believe. We see where we are in time by these events; it's how we know. We can see 'Jacob's Trouble' on the horizon. We see it on a daily basis in the news. And brethren, when you understand that those in the Church of God are to be persecuted it helps that God enlightens us to His plan, to understand what is coming upon this world and to understand what is on the other side and that it will come to an end, that there is relief in sight.

Let's look at **Romans 12:1**. Let's look at what God tells us. He tells us what we are to do and how we are to live and He says: **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice**, and that's what it is, it is a living sacrifice, and God tells us we are to present our bodies, **holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service**. That is what we are expected to do and it is our reasonable service to our God.

Do not be conformed to this world: We don't really fit. This book tells us that we are strangers and pilgrims upon this earth – God's laws and man's laws don't always work well together - it's been our history down through time. God tells us, **do not be conformed to this world**, Satan's world that has made its own laws, **but be transformed**, let's notice... **by the renewing of your mind**, it's how it's done and it's about the mind - the battle for your mind - and it is a spiritual battle! God tells us... **that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God**. It's through this book and it's done through the mind, God revealing it to your mind.

Paul said, "After twenty-five years..." we heard a little bit about Paul in the first sermon, and Paul understood that it was about the mind and he said, "After twenty-five years, o wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" And I understand this and I think you do too.

Verse 3 - For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly: God does give us a sound mind and as the Church of God we should be able to do this, to discern, to be sober-minded, to think soberly in the times that we find our self in and to look around at what's happening upon this earth. Look at what's taking place – you can see the words of God before you, you can see them being fulfilled, and God tells you to **think soberly, as God has dealt to each one of us a measure of faith...**to help us through. It's how you get through it, with God's help.

Verse 4 - For as we have many members in one Body, but all the members do not have the same function: and that's true.

Let's turn to **Ephesians 4:1** – God has structure in His Church. **I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you were called - (verse 2) with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering;** it has been long and we are just like those of old, we ask the same questions, "How long?" "How much longer?" "How long will we have to endure?" And God tells us to **forbear with one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace**. And this is what we try to do.

God tells us in **verse 4 - There is one Body, there is one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all**. And without Him allowing it nothing can take place, brethren, it's all in God's hands. There was a plan put into place in the beginning.

Verse 11 – God gave us a structure in the Church and nothing has changed, brethren, for the Church of God. This remains the same today just as it was then. It’s how the Great God of this universe and His Son, Jesus Christ, have structured His Church, and it is still the same today. **He gave some, apostles;** and this has not changed, regardless of the circumstances that surround us; **and some, prophets;** that has not changed – remains the same, **some, evangelists;** that remains the same, **and some, pastors and teachers;** **(verse 12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ:** the Church of God, brethren.

Verse 13 - Till we come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness and of Christ: In other words, until it is all over and done, brethren.

Verse 14 – God tells us and instructs us; **That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, Jesus Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joins together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, make an increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

Ephesians 5:1 - God tells us, **Be therefore followers of God, as dear children;** it’s the way it’s explained, and we’ve come to understand this because we have God’s spirit and we understand how God leads us and we understand that we are the children of God, and we do **walk in God’s love, as Christ also loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering...** and if you want to talk about sacrifice, He gave the ultimate sacrifice and suffered persecutions that our mind can’t endure, and He gave it **for a sweet smelling savour** God says. Jesus Christ gave the ultimate sacrifice and we can’t comprehend the sufferings that He went through. You think your trials are hard? Always reflect back to what Jesus Christ went through when He was upon this earth.

Let’s turn over to **Romans 12:9** – God gives some more instructions and He tells us: **Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love; in honour giving preference to one another, not lagging in diligence.** We are to be... **fervent in spirit;** and I understand that with the trials that many are having it’s hard to be fervent in spirit all the time, especially when you’re suffering, but God tells us that this should be our focus regardless of what we endure. We should be **...fervent in spirit, serving the Eternal God and His Son;** and we should be **Rejoicing in hope;** because we know the end of the story.

We should be **patient in tribulation;** and that’s another one that’s not easy. God tells us to **Bless those who persecute us:** and we are persecuted, but this is what *God* says to do and it’s not always easy to do but it is our ‘reasonable service’ to God, as we heard, to do it this way, to do what God says and to do it the way that God says to do it. And He says to **bless,** bless those who persecute us, **bless and do not curse.** He also tells us that we can **rejoice with those who rejoice,** in those times, and tells us that we can **weep with those who are weeping.**

And let’s notice **verse 16;** He tells us to **Be of the same mind toward one another.** And **do not set our mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in our own opinions.** And we really need to pay that one attention in the times we live.

Verse 17 – Repay no evil for evil, and to have regard for good things in the sight of all men. And if it is possible, as much as depends upon you, live peaceably with all men. And that's a hard one because we do find ourselves in bad situations. Even in the Church of God we find ourselves in bad situations – surprise, surprise – but God tells us of the way to live and not to take it upon ourselves because that's God's job.

God says in **verse 19 – Do not avenge yourselves**, and sometimes we want to. God says don't do it, **but rather give place to wrath: let's notice, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay it, says the Lord.**

And God tells us in **Romans 13:11 – do this ...knowing the time, that it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.** This was written a long, long time ago but I believe this to be very true at this time that we find ourselves in. I believe **the night is far spent, I believe the day is at hand:** and God tells us if we believe this to **cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.** In other words, focus on God's ways and what we should be doing.

He tells us to **...walk properly in the day; not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, and not in strife and envy. But to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to fulfill its lust.** It's the downfall of man, fulfilling their lust.

God tells us a lot about His Church in this book and He instructs His Church in a way of life, in a way to conduct ourselves, as we've been reading. And even though we are persecuted God gives us a way to live, the right way to live. And even though we are persecuted this produces peace, when we live God's way. It gives us a peace of mind that God tells us about that this world cannot know at this time. God gives us a sound mind and we understand about making provisions for the flesh and the lust of the flesh, because most of us lived in Satan's world and we understand about those lusts.

Ephesians 1:1 – Let's look at where Paul was writing to those who were faithful. It says, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, it's how it was done then and it's how it's done today, by God's will. God places those in the Church and there is an apostle upon this earth today and that does not change regardless of the circumstances. **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ,** and he was writing, **to the saints who were in Ephesus, those who were faithful in Christ Jesus:** and he said; **Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.** What he is writing about is about redemption in Christ, and he said, **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ:** and He has. And I hope you understand what you've been offered and how much you have been blessed.

Verse 4 – Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world – there was a plan in place. God did not make this up as He went along, and He says that we should **be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predetermined us to adoption as son's by Jesus Christ/through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,** God's will, brethren, **To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the beloved.**

Verse 7 - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace; Which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Verse 9 - Having made known to us the mystery of His will, the mystery of His will... it's not a mystery to us, the Church of God, and as we've said many, many times it's a mystery to everyone else except the

Church of God. **Having made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed** – let's notice...**which He purposed in Himself:** it was a plan, and it was a plan made from the beginning in **which He purposed in Himself:** and let's notice.... **That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times** – God has a plan and it's right on target, and you and I are told that we can look around and it's like looking through a dark glass but we can see this plan unfolding, we understand. **...which He purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times that He might gather together in one,** let's notice what's being said; it's the plan... it's the plan for the Church of God – **He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; in Him:** It *will* come to pass, brethren.

Verse 11 - In Him we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will: not our will, but God's will. It's about how God and Jesus Christ are working it out and it's according to His purpose, not ours.

Verse 17 - That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: it's how you understand, because it's God that gives the understanding. He is the one who opens the mind so that you can understand, and He's still doing it.

Verse 18 – He gives understanding, let's notice, so **that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling,** and we do. We understand and we have faith. What is written in this book, God's book, we believe and we will understand with His spirit. God has always done it so that you may know what is the hope of His calling **and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

And in **verse 19** He tells us - **What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at the right hand in heavenly places...**and that is where He is at today, brethren; He is sitting on the right hand of the Great God of this universe, and He is working things out here below according to God's purpose, according to God's plan.

Verse 21 - Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, let's notice, **but also in that which is to come:** talking about the future, **and He put all things under His feet, and gave Him,** let's notice what is being said, **to be head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.** So this is what Jesus Christ is doing today; He is the head of this Church... and everything is going to plan, to God's plan.

So, we can see and understand what our calling is about. It's about who you are. It's about what you were called to become a part of. It's a mystery to this world but it's given to you, the Church of God, to understand, to understand who you are and to understand the persecution and why you are persecuted and to come to understand why it must be this way. Even though some trials are hard and harsh it's when you get through on the other side that you understand that you were actually made stronger. Happens every time! And your understanding is even greater.

Ephesians 2:19 we find – **Now, therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God; having been built,** let's notice what's being said, **upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone;**

the head of the Church. **In whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy Temple in the Lord: In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God through the spirit.**

Ephesians 3:14 – It's Paul talking about the appreciation of the mystery, and he said - **For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole Family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through the spirit in the inner man;** and we heard Wayne talk a little bit about this, the inner man, and this is how it's done, when you stay close to God and you focus on God and you put your cares upon God and His Son Jesus Christ. God will strengthen you when you do these things the way He says to do it.

Verse 17 – we find - **to be strengthened with might through His spirit in the inner man; that Jesus Christ might dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend,** let's notice...**may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width, the length, the height, and the depth,** so understanding is what it's talking about; you will be able to understand. ...**to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge,** and it does, **that you may be filled with the fullness of God.** This world does not understand this brethren, but you do.

Ephesians 6:10 – God tells us what to do, and we'll finish up... He says, **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,** I think we understand this one very, very much, and we understand that **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but spirit beings with power, against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places...**but their days are numbered and we know the end of the story.

It's hard enough to grasp, even in the Church of God, because it's not seen by the eyes, but we know that this spirit world exists. We know that Satan and a third of the angels became demons and we know that Satan is like a roaring lion seeking to devour you...and it's you and me that he's after, the Church of God. A lot of the persecution, that's where it comes from, but not all, we understand human nature; that's why God had it written for us to let us know about this spirit world so that we will understand.

There are things you and I have to do as the Church of God that we've just been reading about. God tells us what to do. And if you look back up in **verse 10** it says to **...be strong in the Lord...** I don't think we comprehend the power that is out there. Sometimes I don't think we see the importance of staying close to God. Brethren, if you don't stay close at this time Satan will tear you to pieces. He has but a short time and he knows it, and if you don't stay close you will lose out on your calling and you will come up in a different age, a different time.

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