

I'd like to say welcome to everyone on God's Sabbath. This is the day that the Eternal God has set aside for us to come before Him and to learn more about Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

We have been learning so much about how God works, and as Ron addressed in the post, about the physical creation, that when we look through that Hubble Telescope and when we see the size of our own sun, which would take over a hundred earths placed side by side just to reach across it, the diameter of this sun, our sun, how can we grasp the magnitude and the power that our God has? We can only *imagine* what took place when He began to create these things that we can just see a little of. Man has the technology now to look far out into space and to see the magnitude, just some of it, of what God has created, and when we just consider 'time', just time and what it means...and you and I with this human mind cannot have any ability whatsoever to grasp just that. And when we look at the size of what this universe is and what God created and He sustains to this very day, and when we look at the number of stars that are in the universe, and when we can just imagine in our minds how long it would take to visit every star and the time that would be involved to do so... And the point of all this is once we're spirit beings, even then we will be ever learning. And I guess the point of all this is that God will be revealing new truth forever, new knowledge, and new understanding just to understand how these things came to exist. Can we imagine how long that would take in just the magnitude of visiting each one and seeing the beauty of what each one entails? And I don't think the process, that process of ever learning will ever end, and that's why we can't grasp how great God is.

And when we've been going through this about Moses and how God dealt with him and the children of Israel, and how we have been learning how God worked with Moses and how God revealed truth in the moves that Moses was to make when God commanded each one to be made, we looked at how the plagues came about and how the people began to see a difference was being made between the Egyptians and the people that God was delivering. And knowledge will never end; God has been revealing truth for millions of years, and we don't even know how far back that goes or when He started His creation and when He began creating the spirit realm.

But how God reveals truth, we've seen how it tries and tests those that God has called down through time, and we've learned that God, by progressively revealing His plan and purpose the way that He does, that it can test us as we go through this ever-learning process. And it's the age old story, it's what man does. Once God opens this mind and reveals His way of life and His truth to us then we have choices, and we saw how Moses chose to suffer with the children of Israel as God was delivering them. And the way that God reveals truth is no different today, it is through the present truth – that's how God does it and that's how it will continue to be done.

Progressive revelation of new truth that then becomes our present truth is sometimes rejected by God's own people, as we have learned, those that God has called. And there have been a few that have rejected what God gave as His 'prophetic day' for the Church – from Pentecost 2012 to Pentecost 2013 – and it's always sad when some come to believe that they are right and that this could not come from God when the present truth is brought forth. And sometimes when that carnal thinking rejects what it does not like about what God is revealing then those individuals have to justify their thinking by twisting scripture to fit their disapproval, or they seek to find some fault in the new truth from the one that's teaching. And this has happened as long as I've been in God's Church, even in the time of Philadelphia,

even when Mr. Herbert Armstrong was leading God's Church. And like I said, it's the age old story; rejection of the present truth is not a new thing, as most of us know that are from 'the old school' so to speak. Pentecost has been a testing thing for the people of God; it was back in the days of Worldwide when Pentecost was kept on the wrong day, and we move it forward to this time and it's always been a situation for some and they cannot accept what God was revealing. God will not allow a mind that does not fully agree with Him, and when we go back in time that's exactly what happened to Lucifer, and Lucifer could not be allowed to walk with God anymore, and he rebelled and he became our adversary.

And so when changes that God reveals as part of His plan and purpose is part of that progressive revelation that becomes the present truth, it can and it does put people to the test sometimes, and it brings forth how one thinks and makes judgments in this physical life...and one will either be in agreement with God in doctrine, in truth, in prophecy that God has revealed through His apostles and prophets, or they will not. All righteous judgment that a person can make is based on what they are able to receive of God's very word, the revelatory thought from God, and then how they apply that to life in other revealed truths rather than relying on their own reasoning to form their judgments. And it is through the mind that God does this.

So we're going to go back today to the book of Ecclesiastes (and you can be turning to Ecclesiastes 1, if you will), and God had this written in His book for you and I upon whom the end of the age has come, and we're going to go back in time and look at how one of the wisest men that ever lived summed up about human life. And sometimes this human life does seem futile to you and me when we look at the problems and the trials that we face. We all look forward to when the Kingdom of God will be here upon this earth and this physical life and the trials that we face will be done away with. We look forward to the Millennium, to when Jesus Christ will be here to teach us the right and correct way to live even in this physical life. So we will have a thousand years of education, so to speak, when God's Government is upon this earth and all the governments of this world are done away with and a *righteous* government set up upon this earth.

But God had in His infinite wisdom, He had words written in this book, the Bible, for you and me to learn from, and Solomon asked some good questions and we're going to look at some of the questions that Solomon asked today, and we'll look at some of the conclusions that Solomon came to. Solomon wanted to know what was worth working for, what's worth doing in this life, this physical life, and God had it recorded in His book. Solomon asked some hard questions, and you and me with the trials that we face, I know we wonder sometimes, is it just worth it. But I can assure you that it is because it's the way we learn. We learn in the physical so we can apply it to our spiritual lives, and that's what we've been learning as we've been looking at Moses and the children of Israel and the trials that they faced in their captivity. And we can apply that to our captivity, because brethren, we are in captivity to this system. Solomon asked some questions, some hard ones.

And in **Ecclesiastes 1:3** Solomon asked a question and it says... **What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?** It's a good question, and he asked, "What profit is there?" And I know that when you and I have trials we wonder some of these same things, "What profit is it to us?" And this will be the title today, *What Profit*.

And down in **verse 13** let's notice what Solomon said. And he said, **I sent my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task that God has given to the sons of man by which they may be exercised, or better said, to be busy with.**

And in **Ecclesiastes 2:3** Solomon said: **I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine while guiding my heart with wisdom; and how to lay hold on folly till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven, all the days of my life.**

Verse 22 - For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? And sometimes I know most of us probably think about these same things and we wonder, "Why?" and "Is it worth it all?" And when we get into the daily routines of what we do with our jobs it seems to be an endless task sometimes with no end – never ending – and especially when we're dealing with our jobs with carnal minded people. We wonder, "What do we have for all this labor that we're doing... and the striving that comes with it, and the stress that comes?"

Solomon asked in **Ecclesiastes 3:9**, we find - **What profit has the worker from that in which he labors?** So these are good questions. And what profit *do* we have from all the work that we are doing?

Ecclesiastes 4:8 we find - **There is one alone without companion; he has not a son nor brother: yet there is no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches.** So Solomon was beginning to see some things and understand some things. And let's notice...**but he never asked, For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?** They never think to ask these things, brethren, they just go about their daily routines never giving a thought about the creation, who created it... why are all these stars out there... why is all this space... why is it there? And they never think to ask, "For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?" In other words, "Why am I alive? What is man?" Mr. Armstrong was given to ask these things a long, long time ago. "What is man that You are mindful of Him?" as David asked.

Solomon said, **For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good? This is also vanity and a grave misfortune.**

In **Ecclesiastes 5:15** Solomon says...let's notice what he came to realize - **As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand.** So we can see that Solomon was beginning to understand that there was a greater purpose for man and it was not just this physical life, and he was beginning to realize that whatever man accomplished physically in this life he would ultimately end up with nothing when his time came to die. There was nothing he could carry with him from this physical creation; not a thing, not a dime.

Verse 16 - And this is a severe evil, just exactly as he came so shall he go: he was very observant, and **what profit has he who has labored for the wind?** It's the way Solomon summed it up, as laboring for the wind. In other words, it was useless, there was nothing there at the end, nothing that man could carry with him.

Brethren, these examples were written for you and me upon whom the end of the age has come so that we can learn, and God had these things written for you and me. He had Solomon write it down in His book. And as we know, Solomon had vast experiences of life, more than any other person that has ever lived upon this earth, and God had it recorded for you and me. And Solomon was a man who wrestled with this life 'under the sun' as he put it, and Solomon wrestled with the world that you and I are beginning to understand, the purpose of it all. And I hope you understand what you've been given, to understand some of these basic things that Solomon is addressing.

Let's go back to Genesis 3:17, and let's go back and see what God told Adam. This is what God told Adam that would happen in his day upon this earth. **Genesis 3:17 – Then to Adam God said, let's notice, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it:** so we see that it was about obedience. They had sinned, they had disobeyed the Great God of this universe, and now God was telling Adam what would befall him and He said, **cursed is the ground for your sake;** up until this point in time Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, until they were banished from the garden, and we can only imagine in our mind what they had supplied for them. We know that they didn't have to toil to eat so they had life that was very easy for them, that God had prepared for them. But here we find that something had taken place and God was now making a change and they would have different conditions put upon them, upon this earth, and all man would that followed Adam and Eve.

And God said, **cursed is the ground for your sake,** so it's an interesting way that God put it, and He said, **cursed is the ground for your sake,** in other words, it would begin a learning process for man down through time, and we're seeing some of the questions that Solomon was asking by the time his time came upon this earth...and it's the result of what was given to Adam and Eve. And it says, **in toil you shall eat of it,** and that's what we're finding Solomon addressing, the futility of it all. And it says, **in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground;** and this is why you and I have to work, we have to sweat for our bread, to put food on the table. And God says that all of us should work, and if we don't work we don't eat; and God makes that very plain, that this is something that man should do to provide for him and his family. And He says, **in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground,** and we find this is the situation at this time, it's been passed down through time and we find this to be a true statement. **...for out of it you were taken: for dust you are and to dust you shall return.** And it's just as Solomon said, we come in with nothing and we take out nothing with us. There is not a dime, nothing of value you can take physically out of this life.

So we find that this is the world that Solomon was dealing with, a world that God had told Adam about, that it would be by the sweat of his face that he would eat bread. In other words, it would not be easy for man from then on. Adam and Eve had the Garden of Eden, but now they had been banished, and so we can see the world that Solomon was dealing with when he was asking these questions. And Solomon strived to make sense out of this world, Satan's world as we know. Solomon knew what God had done with Adam and Eve.

So, let's be turning to Romans 8:19 and let's see that God has a way of letting us know in detail, as Paul describes what Solomon had considered. And in **Romans 8:19** we find - **For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God, for the creation was subjected to futility.** And we're seeing that Solomon understood some of these things and it's not that he would deal with them well in the end, but God had a purpose and He had it written for you and me upon whom the end of the age has come. And I hope you understand the amount of understanding that has been allowed for your mind to conceive. God has a way of letting us know in detail because He has opened your mind, He's given you a portion of His spirit so that you can understand what the creation is about, and it is not about the physical creation, it is about the spiritual creation that God is bringing about, and you are one of the most fortunate people on the face of this earth to understand what God is doing.

Verse 19 tells us, **For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits,** let's notice what's being said, brethren, **for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility;** and this

is what Solomon wrestled with, the futility of it all. And it's the same thing that some of us wrestle with on our jobs and what we do for a living. It's hard to focus sometimes when we're focused on the creation of God, but we do have to provide for our families and we do have to have a certain amount of focus, but not to become too involved, because this is what it's about. And the first stage of this will be the 144,000 in the beginning of the Millennium to set up the Kingdom of God and to establish the Government of God upon this earth to do away with this futility of it all.

...But because of Him who subjected in hope, the creation was subjected to futility not willingly. Because the creation itself also will be delivered, let's notice, from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And the first stage of this will be the 144,000 at the beginning of the Millennium. **For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pains together until now.** That's what it's about, the physical creation groans in labor pains. And when we look around at the condition of this world, when we look around at the world news, we can see the pains, we can see the stage being set for the birth, we can see it all coming together, those of us who have eyes to see, those that have God's spirit. So brethren, without the sacrifice that was made by Jesus Christ and without God's plan for mankind it would be just as Solomon summed it up, it would be useless.

So let's turn over to 1 Corinthians 15 and let's look at verse 54. You and I, as I said, do understand that everything is groaning in labor pains. We can just look around and see that those pains are getting closer and closer. And God tells us in **1 Corinthians 15:54** when this will begin to change and it says, **When this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O hades (the grave), where is your victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

And as we've been looking back at Moses and the children of Israel we understand the importance of being able to look and wait for God to make His move. And we understand how obedience became an important thing when Moses and Aaron were alive and leading the children of Israel out of Egypt for their deliverance. And we understood that it became important that they be steadfast and immovable in what God was doing.

And this says in **verse 58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, this is what God tells you and me, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor,** let's notice it's not like Solomon was saying, **our labor is not in vain in the Lord.** It's what it's saying. Paul understood what it was about and God had him write this in His book for you and me and for those that He would call down through time. And it says, **be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.** And it's not.

Solomon said in **Ecclesiastes 1:14...** let's go back. And Solomon said, **I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind.** And it is if that's where your focus is, on what you can obtain in this physical life. It's not what it's about. When we look out into that universe and how vast it is and see all these things that are unfinished, our minds cannot comprehend what God has in mind.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 – He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance with increase: Solomon says, **this is also vanity,** if that's what your focus is, if that's what you're working for. And I have seen this over and over in this world; people think to be successful it's by the abundance of the things that you can possess, by the amount of things you can purchase or you can accumulate in

this life...and I have *never* seen a u-haul trailer with anything of value at a graveyard. So brethren, I hope you understand what you have in your hands, what you have been offered, and I hope you understand about the truth that you have and what the value of it is.

Ecclesiastes 1:4, let's notice what God had written - **One generation passes away and another generation comes: but the earth abides forever. The sun also rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rose. The wind goes toward the south and turns around to the north, and comes again on its circuit; All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come there they return again.** Everything runs the course that God set for it, brethren. God set it in motion and God is continuously setting it in motion to this very day; it's what God is doing. And it just repeats itself again and again, and in all the creation, everywhere that you look, it's the same. God is in charge. The moon orbits the earth, the earth stays in it's orbit, as all the rest of the planets, unless God allows it to be interrupted... so God is in charge. It's just like Solomon noticed, the sun rises and the sun goes down every day.

Verse 8 - All things are full of labor; God keeps it all going. God and Jesus Christ are working to this day. The physical creation is there and they maintain that, but there is also another creation taking place that they are bringing forth, and it is God's plan for mankind, the one that Satan rebelled against, and a third of the demons followed him to thwart God's plan. But as sure as God set this plan in motion back in Moses day to deliver a people, God will deliver a people again. **All things are full of labor; man cannot express it:** more than one can say, or as Paul says, 'All of creation groans'. You and I are groaning as the Church of God. It's painful when someone loses the vision, and we do groan when we see brethren that were amongst us lose the plan of God and they cannot take another step, when they come to their Red Sea and they can't put their faith in God any longer. It does make you and I groan when we see it happen, when we see people become disobedient – we know what follows.

Solomon says, **the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is what we will be; that which is done is what will be done: and there is nothing new under the sun.** So it does seem that we find ourselves just repeating ourselves over and over, week after week, and in this physical life, if that's your focus, it does seem like it's never ending. But when we look at the plan of God it's exciting and we're not repeating ourselves over and over because we're excited about the creation that God is bringing about and we don't focus on the physical duties of this life because we see what God is doing, we see the creation that He is bringing about and it's never dull, it's always exciting, and God feeds us every week, every Sabbath, Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day by Holy Day. But if you're just looking at that physical life as Solomon was -- Solomon was observant and it was written down for you and me -- God tells us that man's eyes and ears are never satisfied, that man is *always* craving for something new.

That which has been is what will be, is what Solomon said, **that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, See, this is new? It has already been in ancient times before us. There is no remembrance of former things;** and when we look back in time, when we look back to the past, those that have gone before us, the lessons that God had recorded for you and me, mankind does not heed the lessons of the past – that's what Solomon is saying. **...and there is no remembrance of former things;** man is quick to forget, as we've been seeing in the past sermons. It doesn't take man long to forget what God has done for them, physically and spiritually, we see it on both sides, and mankind does not heed the lessons of the past and man is quick to forget, and we see it over and over...and it is the age old story of man, brethren.

And Solomon summed all his findings up by saying, **it's all like a breath.**

Ecclesiastes 1:13 - And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven: this burdensome task that God has given to the sons of man by which they may be exercised. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. Solomon was very observant and he asked some good questions and he summed it up by saying, if your focus is just on the physical things of this life, "...you are grasping for the wind," brethren.

Ecclesiastes 7:13, Solomon came to consider something and let's notice what he came to consider. He said, **Consider the work of God: for who can make straight what God has made crooked?** ...or as Paul said, 'God subjected the creation to futility', so it's all part of God's work and purpose, and it's only with God can a way be made straight, or that something new can come forth by truth, the present truth...and that's how God feeds us Sabbath by Sabbath, the present truth. And that's the only way that something can be made straight and something new can truly come forth. That's the only way.

Turn over to Psalm 39. I hope you understand how blessed you are to understand what God is doing and what God's creation is about. And you are the only ones that their paths can be made straight by the present truth, and you and I are blessed to understand.

Psalms 39:4 - LORD, make me to know my end and what is the measure of my days; that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, you have made my days as handbreadth; and my age is as nothing before You: certainly every man in his best state is but vapour. Selah. Means to think about it. **...every man at his best is but vapour.** It's not saying much for man. We're here, God says, like dust on the scales or like a flower that comes up and blooms for a while and dies. So we only have a little space in time that is ours, and in that space of time if God has opened your mind up to His creation I hope you understand how incredibly blessed you are, because in the scheme of things and in the scheme of 7,000 years what you have been offered is so minute, brethren, in God's plan. And David says certainly every man in his best state is but vapour. Kind of narrows it down to what we are.

Verse 6 - Surely every man walks about like a shadow; surely they busy themselves in vain; and they do when they're just physically focused on this life in what they can obtain. Let's notice what David is addressing: **he heaps up riches and does not know who will gather them**, and he doesn't. And it is in vain if that is your focus. Nothing wrong with having nice things but that's not where your focus should be. Solomon asked, "What profit has a man from all his labor?" ...and without God, brethren, there is none, absolutely none, and it is just as David said, it's in vain, there is nothing profitable under the sun to you and me except God's plan. *God's plan* for His Church, His creation, it's the only thing upon the face of this earth that is profitable for you and me.

Ecclesiastes 2:11 - Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed, all was vanity and grasping for the wind, there was no profit under the sun.

And down in **Ecclesiastes 5:16 – This is also a severe evil, just exactly as he came so shall he go**, and let's notice the question that was asked: **What profit has he who has labored for the wind?** Because that's what you do without God's spirit, you are laboring for the wind.

Ecclesiastes 2:22 - For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? It's better said **...striving of his mind with which he has toiled under the sun;**

puts it in better perspective. **For all his days are sorrowful and his work burdensome; even in the night his mind takes no rest,** (better said). **This also is vanity.**

Let's go over to Luke 12. Let's turn over to Luke 12 and look at verse 19. Brethren, you and I live in this world, Satan's world, but we understand what Solomon was talking about, and hopefully we see the uselessness of it all. I hope that we do understand, that if that is our focus it's like grasping for the wind. And I know some of our jobs, it does seem like they're endless and there is no purpose for it, but there is, it provides a way for you to come and hear God's truth and to go to God's Holy Days and the Feast of Tabernacles. And sometimes the trials are hard, but Solomon is beginning to understand some things about where our focus should be, and it was about focusing on what God was doing.

Luke 12:19, and let's notice what Luke had to say; **And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.** So we can see that Luke was addressing someone, and those in time, all of mankind, that would have this focus, and here is something that was focused on the physical things of life and he had laid up much, according to Luke, because it said, **you have many goods laid up for many years.**

Verse 20; let's notice what **God said to him; Fool!** That's what God calls it. **This night your soul/your life will be required of you, then whose will those things be which you have provided?** So what value had this man put up that was used for an example? It was like grasping for the wind and it was just as Solomon said, "He brought nothing into this world and he was taking nothing out of this world." ...not a cent, not a dime, didn't matter how much and how many goods he had laid up in this life.

Verse 21 - So is he who lays up treasure for himself, because that's what you do when this is your focus, **and is not rich toward God.** So brethren, without God we see it is useless, but you and I have a blessing that others don't have at this time, but it is coming in the future because we understand and know God's plan, and it's eventually about all of mankind, what they will be offered. And we come before God on His Sabbath day for the present truth, to learn more and more about God every week. That's how it's done.

Solomon said as he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came, and that he would take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand. And that is so true!

Ecclesiastes 5:16 – Just exactly as he came, so shall he go; and what profit has he who has labored for the wind? Because that's what it is. **All his days he also eats in darkness,** because he has no understanding. But you do, you have been enlightened to what it's all about, what this creation is all about and what God is creating, His spiritual creation. **All his days he also eats in darkness and he has much sorrow and sickness and anger.** And without God's spirit this is very true, and Solomon understood it.

So we see without God, without God's plan, it's not profitable for those who labored for the wind. But we understand that God in His mercy has another time for these unless they have been caught in and created the unpardonable sin. We know about the Great White Throne.

Romans 6:23; it tells us that, **The wages of sin is death.** Solomon came to understand that he should consider the work of God, and he understood that God was the only one that could make straight paths for man. All of man's efforts, say Solomon, are like grasping for the wind; and they are, without God.

The apostle Paul drew the same conclusion as Solomon did. He said [1 Timothy 6:6-7], "...godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we should be content." So we *should* be content because we have the greatest treasures that could ever be offered to mankind, and God likens it to like treasure found in a field. It's like telling us to go sell everything that we could own in this life and go and buy that treasure, that it was priceless...and it is.

Solomon came to a conclusion in **Ecclesiastes 12:13**, and Solomon said, **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:** and here is Solomon's conclusion, **Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.** Brethren, you and I understand what Solomon was saying. We understand the uselessness of focusing on the goods of this world, and you and me have to be careful and keep our focus on our God and on what God is creating, His spiritual creation. And we have to focus on what He has in store for His Church, especially in the times that we find ourselves in. We know what Jeremiah said about the heart, that "...it is deceitful above all things and beyond cure," and "Who can understand it." And we have to be careful that we don't go back to this physical mind and the ways this carnal mind and use our own understanding. We have to focus on where God is leading us Sabbath by Sabbath, and it is through the present truth week by week.

Let's turn over to **Hebrews 3:12**. When we face the trials and the pressures of this world, whether it be our job, our family, whatever it may be, we always have to be on guard, we always have to be careful and not let it affect our vision of who we are and where we are going and what's in store for what God is creating. We have to understand that we cannot let what happens in this physical life affect our spiritual lives, regardless of what it is. **Hebrews 3:12** God tells us - **Beware brethren**, in other words, God is warning you and me and He's telling us to be alert and understand and to be aware...but to understand His plan, His creation, and to understand what it's all about. And God says to be, **Beware, unless there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief**, because that's where it takes root, in the mind. Just that little seed of doubt and it can lead you into parting from the Living God. I've seen it over and over. And when you let it happen it's like flipping a switch. Ron says it's like 'the body snatchers', and we've seen it happen down through time in God's Church.

Verse 15 - Today if you will hear His voice, let's notice what's being said. We've been going back and looking at how they rebelled back in Moses' day, and we understand that these examples were written to you and me, the Church of God, and God says, **do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion**. Those examples! So God is warning us and telling us what to heed and what to be aware of.

Let's look at **Hebrews 4:1 – Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest**, let's notice, **let us fear**, and I am amazed sometimes at how there is no fear of going against God and how quick it can take place. And God is warning us, **let us fear, lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed, the gospel was preached to us as well as to them, but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it**. And we've looked at these examples and we see how important faith was, but we also see how they rebelled over and over after all the miracles they saw God do. And it's the same in the Church at the end, even with God's spirit, we see this happening over and over and it will continue to the end, till it's all over.

Verse 3 - For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said, So I swore in My wrath they will not enter My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has spoken in a certain place at the seventh day in this way, And God rested on the seventh day from all

His works. And again in this place, They shall not enter My rest. Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and we know who those are, those that have faith, faith in the Great God of this universe and His Son. Jesus Christ said, would He find faith when He comes back, and we know that it will be few that find, find this way of life and are accepted to be in that first resurrection. But there are some that are to live into the Millennium, so we have to understand what's taking place. And let's notice the rest of that verse... **and to those whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience:** and that's where it starts. **Again, He designates a certain day, saying in David, Today, after such a long time; as it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.** And it's a warning. **For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.** It's who it's for. It's who will enter it. **For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.** Let's see; **Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.** That's why it was written, brethren, and it's why we're going back and looking at it, what took place.

So brethren, let's not let the cares of this life, whether it be jobs, family, whatever it is that can become useless...and this is what God is telling us that we should be laboring for, to enter the rest of our God. And it would be a wonderful thing just to see the return of Jesus Christ to this earth, to begin this Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, that rest.

God tells us in **verse 12** that **the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow,** and let's notice what else it is, this word of God which cuts both ways **is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,** of the mind. Better said, **It's the discerner of your thoughts and the intents that are in your mind.** So we have to be careful, brethren, and not get caught up in the futility of this world, and remember what the prophet Jeremiah said, that the mind, the heart is deceitful above all things. And when we rely back on this physical mind for understanding it can take you away from the Great God of this universe and His Son. God tells us that the word of God....God tells us that it is quick and powerful and sharp – and it is, and it does cut both ways.

Let's look at Luke 21, and let's look at verse 29. God tell us about the cares of this life, and we know that it's not always easy to keep our focus. Some of us have jobs that are very demanding, and it does seem useless as Solomon said, but there is a purpose for that job. We're to be good stewards to the employers or the employees that we have, and God tells us through His word how to deal with those situations. You and I are told to watch, those that the end of the age has come upon. We're to watch and understand what is taking place in this world. And when we look at the events that are coming together, Russia, China, the Middle East, Iran, all the things that are moving in place for a crescendo at the end of this age. And our lives can so change in one hour, brethren, that we can't comprehend it.

And in Luke 21:19, it's Jesus Christ speaking... **And He spoke a parable;** and He told... This is what He told. He said, **Look at the fig tree and all the trees; When they are all ready budding you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.** And when we look at all the nuclear weapons that are put on the face of this earth, and we look at all those submarines that Russia has just deployed with their nuclear weapons that are deployed – can kill every man, woman, and child on the face of this earth more than one time. And all it would take is just to push a button, brethren. That's the times that you and I live in. And it is like looking at the fig tree and to know the time is at it's end, and it's an example that was given. And we can look around at this world and the values, the morals that are out there, look around at our surroundings and we can see this world degenerate; it *is* like Sodom and Gomorrah. And we can look on the horizon and see the gathering of events that will bring this nation down, and the

other nations as well...and it is all like looking at the fig tree. And it's the same for you and me when we look around at these events and we can tell that the time is near, nearing the end, the end of this age.

Verse 31 – And Jesus said, **When you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near. Assuredly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will by no means pass away. But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness** – and it's just like what we've been talking about, and cares of this life, the focus on this physical life and the abundance of things that you can possess. Because if you do let's notice what happens, what happened... **and that day come on you unexpected.** So our lives can change in an hour, one hour brethren, so we need to keep our focus. And that's what Jesus Christ is telling us. He's telling us, don't let it distract us, don't let the trials take your focus off of God's plan, His creation for all of mankind. Don't let the cares of this life take you away, especially in the times that we find ourselves in, because our God is getting ready to reveal Himself to this whole world, to this earth, and to come and usher in a new age where Jesus Christ will be the King. A new age where futility will not be an issue. God tells us, don't let this distract us, the cares of this life.

Verse 35 He tells us that, **It will come as a snare on those who dwell on the face of the whole earth;** they just don't believe it can happen, brethren, they think they can fix it.

Verse 36, God told us to **Watch ...and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are coming to pass and to stand before the Son of man.**

Let's turn over to Ephesians 6:5. Most of us in this world have taskmasters one way or another, even if we are self-employed, doesn't make any difference. We have taskmasters in this world, we are captive in this system, Satan's world, and it's not always easy to serve these taskmasters. Most of us find ourselves making brick without straw – it's a good way to put it. It's not getting easier, it's getting harder and harder to find the straw, so we pray for God's Kingdom to come swiftly. Can't come too quick for most of us.

God tells us in **Ephesians 6:5 to be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart as to Christ;** in other words, we're to live a certain way of life before those. **Not with eye service,** tells us how, **as men pleasers; but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;** In other words, the way we should be good workers, we should be a good example. We are ambassadors of Christ.

Verse 7 - With good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men: in other words, do it the right way, the correct way, **knowing that whatever good anyone does he will receive the same from the Lord whether he is a slave or free. And you masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven and there is no partiality with Him .** Jesus is telling us of a way to live and a way to treat one another, both in the world and in the Church of God.

Verse 10 - Finally, My brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. And we know this very well, very familiar with this scripture. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places.** So this is where our battle lies at this time. It's not so much the

physical battle that you and I have to worry about, it's the spiritual battle that we find ourselves in. And sometimes we find that our taskmasters are hard, but we have to keep our focus on a better time that is coming, and when we look around we can see it won't be long. We know that the Kingdom of God is not far away. And we need to keep our understanding about where the battle lies, and that it is in our mind and it is against wicked spirits that want to take from you what God has given you. And we understand that Satan is the God of this world and He has great power at this time. And we understand that it is us that Satan is after at this time; we don't need to let the cares of this life influence our spiritual lives.

God tells us in **verse 13** what we have to do: **To take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all, to stand.**

God tells us how in **verse 14 -Stand therefore, having girded your waists with truth**, and that's why we come before God every Sabbath, to gird our waist with truth. That's when God teaches us, on the Sabbath day. It's the day that He has set aside to feed us. And God is revealing more and more through His present truth Sabbath by Sabbath, and He's given His Church more understanding as we go through His plan. And it's imperative that we understand who Jesus Christ is and what is about to take place upon this earth, and it's by the present truth that you will know it as it takes place.

And God says in His word...and He says **to stand therefore having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness; And having shod your feet**, let's notice, **with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all**, let's notice what's being said, **taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.** So we can see the importance of faith, and that's what Jesus said, would He find when He comes back to this earth. God tells us how we have to fight this fight and it is with faith; faith that God is leading this Church, faith that this is God's Church. And it says, **taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench**, let's notice how it's said and what's being said, **all the fiery darts of the wicked one.** And they are many. Satan doesn't give us much rest anymore and if we let our guard down at this time it can get the best of us... and these darts hurt sometimes.

Verse 17 - And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, let's notice what's being said, **which is the word of God: the sword of the spirit. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit**, let's notice, **being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints:** God tells us how to fight the battle.

Let's go over to Psalms 11 and we'll look at what David had to say. This demonic world can really throw some fiery darts at us sometimes. Let's see what David tells us in the Psalms. **Psalms 11:1 - In the Eternal I put my trust: how can you say to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?** So David is asking some questions; **For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string that they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart.** And sometimes we are blindsided and they do shoot secretly at us and we don't really understand what is taking place at the time and we are blindsided sometimes. And when this happens it hurts, it stings.

Verse 3, let's notice - **If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?** So it's another question. And if you don't destroy the foundations of what you believe in your mind there is no solution for you, brethren. And when that mind takes that turn and destroys all that foundation that has been built through the present truth, most likely you can't find your way back.

Let's notice **verse 4**, David says – **The Eternal is in His holy Temple**, that's the only place you can find God, brethren; that's where He's at. It says **the Eternal's throne is in heaven and His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The Eternal tests the righteous: but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.**

Verse 6 - Upon the wicked He will rain coals, fire and brimstone, and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup. So we understand that it's everything in time, in God's time in His plan and in God's timeframe. You and I have to face the trials and the futilities that we face in this life at this time, but we have to keep our focus on God's plan and on the future of the coming Kingdom of God to this earth. God tells us that there will come a time when He will rain coals, fire and brimstone, and it shall be the portion of their cup. And it will be a different world for you and me. We understand that Satan and the demons will be chained up for a thousand years, and then we find that God will deal with Satan, and you and I understand his fate. And God tells us that there will come a time when it *will* take place.

Verse 7 - For the Eternal is righteous and He loves righteousness; and that's what it's about, to bring about righteousness: **His countenance beholds the upright.**

You can be turning to Romans 12 but I'm going to read **1 Corinthians 10:12** if you want to note it in your notes; you don't have to turn there, I'll just read it. And because of the futilities of this life and the focus that we need to have, we have to be aware of Satan and his tactics, and it says, **Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**

And **verse 13 – No temptation has overtaken you except such as common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able;** so if we stay focused...the trials will come, they will still be here until it's over, but God tells us that if we stay focused that we will not be tempted beyond what we are able if we stay close to God and that with that temptation **that there will be made a way of escape that we would be able to bear it.** That's what God says. God doesn't say it would be easy, we have to fight for this way of life. I think most of us understand that by now. But God said that we would be able to bear all that is put upon us if we just have faith and put our trust in Him.

Romans 12:1, God tells us what we should do. He says, **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** In other words, that is just what is expected when you are called by God. It is expected that you become a living sacrifice by the way that you live your life, by the way that you conduct yourself in this life against people of this world and people in the Church of God. Even with all the trials that we find ourselves in there is a way that we conduct ourselves, and it is as a living sacrifice. We are to become ambassadors of Christ, examples to everyone in the world and in the Church. God expects you and I to conduct ourselves in a Godly manner, and God says it is to be a living sacrifice.

Verse 2 - And not be conformed to this world: let's notice, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** And that's why you are here today listening to the present truth, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, to see where God is leading us, to see whether we turn left or turn right, to see if we will be obedient. And we just read about how important obedience is, going all the way back to Moses, and obedience has always been a thing that man always has problems with. He says, **don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** And that's how you do it Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day by Holy Day, by putting your faith in God. **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; and this is an age old story too – pride, lifting one's self up, to think that they are in charge or they are better than someone else.

And sometimes when you give someone a little authority it's not a good thing for them, but if they put their trust in God and learn it's a beautiful thing. But there is a way that we should conduct our self in the Church of God and there is a way that we should think, and we should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. We know what we are. But man has always had this problem. Satan had this problem; he always thought he knew more than God, and he was not always in agreement with the way God said do things and therefore he rebelled. And we can do the same if we're not careful; if we don't like the way things are being conducted in the Church of God we can rebel, even with God's spirit. And God tells us not to think more highly of ourselves than we should, **but to think soberly**, to know what we are, to know what God is creating, His spiritual creation. It should bring you to your knees when you understand what is taking place.

You know, you are more blessed than any creatures on the face of this earth to have God's spirit, brethren, and God has dealt to each one of us a measure of faith when He does that; it's how it's done. And you do have a mind that you can think soberly with at that time *because* of that spirit, but man *still* has the capability to lift himself up and it's a dangerous thing when he does it.

Verse 4 - For we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function: God places us where He wants us. **So we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of one body. Having then gifts different according to the grace that is given to us let us use them** in a Godly manner.

Verse 6 – Having then gifts different according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, *let us prophesy in proportion to our faith*; Our ministry, *let us use it in our ministering*; he who teaches in teaching. In other words, where God has placed you. We have an apostle, we have prophets, we have evangelists, and we have elders...and that is the order of those things, and it's where God places you that you use them, and you don't go above what you have been given.

Verse 8 - He who exhorts in exhortation: he who gives with liberality, he who leads, with diligence; in other words, do the job that's been given to you with diligence. **...he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.** It's the way to do it.

And it's telling us of a way to behave; it says - **Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love; in honor giving preference to one another.**

Verse 11, let's notice how we are to be. It's what our focus should be, God teaches us, **Not lagging in diligence.** Are you diligent in the way that you serve God? Are you **fervent in spirit serving the Lord**? It's how we do it and it's how we should live our lives, even with all the circumstances and the trials that surround us, even with Satan throwing His darts at us.

God tells us this is what we're to do, and we should still be doing as **verse 12** tells us. We should be **rejoicing in hope**; because of what you know, because of what you understand, brethren. I hope you understand what you've been given. We should be **patient in tribulation; continuing continuously steadfastly in prayer**; and it's how we get through it. We should continuously be praying to our God and **distributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality.**

Verse 14 - Bless those who persecute you: and this is hard for human beings, to bless those that are persecuting us. And this is a hard task for mankind, and I understand this, but God says this is what we should strive to do, to **Bless those who persecute you:** because we know in God's plan that there will be a time for them. Their time is coming, it just may not be now. ...**bless, and do not curse.** So be careful... be careful.

Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. There should not be anything against anyone in the Church of God. We should have that same mind toward each other. And **Do not set our mind on high things but associate with the humble.** In other words, don't raise ourselves up. **Do not be wise in our own opinion;** pretty much sums it up, to think more highly than we should of ourselves. **Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all the men. And if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.** So we should see that God tells us that we should strive to get along with everyone, even those that are in the world, *especially* with those in the Church of God.

Verse 19 – Beloved, do not avenge yourselves but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink: for in so doing you will heap coals of fire upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, let's notice, but overcome evil with good. It's how you and I are to live, even with the futility of it all, as Solomon came to understand. God tells you and me that there is a way for us to live, because we have vision, we have understanding of what God is creating, and it's where we should be rejoicing in that knowledge.

Let's turn to **Ephesians 1:3** - God tells us that He has enlightened the eyes of our hearts, our minds (better said), so that we may understand what is taking place...and it should bring us to our knees just because of this understanding. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** it tells us right here that God was the Father of Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ:** I hope we understand this and I hope we understand what's being said; **...blessed us with every spiritual blessing,** I don't think we can comprehend this. I don't think we've ever really focused on it. I don't think our minds can, but this is what God says, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ. Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:** It's the sacrifice that was made, the Passover. Jesus Christ became the Passover so this could take place; and this was done, this plan was set in motion before time ever began, brethren.

Having predestinated us to adopt us as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace by which He made us accepted in the beloved. And you and I are so blessed to understand about this plan that was put in place before time ever began, brethren. And I hope you appreciate what God has let you see. Because when you look around at mankind you can tell that they are in futility and they don't even know it, they don't comprehend that this *age* is coming to an end. They don't really believe it, they think they can fix it all.

Verse 7 - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of His grace; and that's what sets us aside from the rest of mankind, because we have this forgiveness of sin and because of God's plan. And it's not futility for you and me as Solomon came to understand about the carnal man and his place upon this earth.

Verse 8 - Which He made to abound toward us, let's notice, in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known to us the mystery of His will, and it is this mystery that you and I understand, brethren, and it is a mystery to the world at this time. They don't have a clue what is about to take place. But God has made known to you and me the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Jesus Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth in Him: In whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will: That we who first trusted in Jesus Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation: in whom also having believed you were sealed with the holy spirit of promise....

Let's notice **verse 14 – Which is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.** And I hope you understand what you've been offered, and the guarantee that if you don't turn away, brethren. It's a guarantee of your inheritance unless you foul up.

Verse 15 - Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 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: let's notice, **verse 18 – That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** let's notice, **that you may know what is the hope of His calling;** it's how it's done and it's why you understand, because the eyes of your understanding have been enlightened to the plan of the Great God of this universe and you understand what is taking place, you understand about the spiritual creation, and you understand the futility of this physical life without God, just like Solomon said in his book that was written in God's book, but you also see the hope of the rest of mankind. You understand. You understand the hope for the future and you do understand the plan, God's plan for all of mankind, when all eyes will be enlightened to His plan. **...that you may know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,** and it is why you know, because God has enlightened your mind. And I hope you do understand the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...I hope you understand. **And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.**

Verse 20 - Which He worked in Jesus Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, let's notice, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come: And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

And let's finish up in **Ephesians 2:1 - And you He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sin: in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience: among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** And it's so true! Our God has awakened us and most of us were fulfilling the desires of the flesh of the mind, and if it was not for the grace of our God we would be just like the others - there we go except for the grace of God.

But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses made us alive together with Christ, (by grace you have been saved), and raised us

up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved, let's notice, through faith; and that not of yourselves: let's notice, it is the gift of God: it's where it comes from... Not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Jesus Christ for good works, let's notice, which God prepared before Him that we should walk in them.

This plan was laid out before time ever began, and it is by the grace of God that we are sitting here in His Church to fulfill His great plan. And we are God's fellow workers and we are God's field. We are the Church of God and we are what God is building. And you do not have the futility that Solomon was talking about, but now you have the excitement and the blessing of knowing what our God is doing and what is about to come to pass in our future.

So brethren, stay strong, and remember it is by grace that you and I are here to understand this great plan that our God has laid out before us.

~~~end