

Welcome, everybody, to God's Sabbath.

The title of this sermon is *God Is For Us*.

There are times in our life when we are bold and confident and then there are other times when we are discouraged. That is a normal part of life. We've just come back from a Feast where we have spent time with God's people, we have enjoyed all this experience of sharing during these eight days, and of course after two or three weeks, after four weeks, after five weeks, it can be a letdown if we are not careful. And this let down can be a physical component of our life, but we have to be on guard that it is not a spiritual let down that takes hold of our life.

There are many examples in scripture where people have been very confident because God is with them, God is for them, and there are other times when they get into their thinking that they don't believe that God is for them anymore.

We have been called to do a job, to fulfil a role that God has established for us. That role is, that job is, to prepare for the Kingdom of God – hence the name of the Church, 'the Church of God – Preparing for the Kingdom of God.' This is a task that we have undertaken on a spiritual level. This is not a physical thing that we are tackling. This is actually a spiritual role, a spiritual job that we have undertaken because God has called us to this particular role.

There are going to be times when we *are* bold and confident spiritually then there are going to be other times when we feel more in the sense of being discouraged. We feel like we are not doing that well on a spiritual level. So these times of being discouraged *are* from our human reasoning. They're not based on God's word. If we just stand back now and just look at what is God doing with us... Now, God has a plan and that plan is to create a family, and the process that He is using is the fact that we are born as humans, we have this natural carnal mind that is hostile against God, but then God calls us and He calls us into a relationship with Him *and* into a relationship with His people, His Church, the Church of God – PKG. Now, during this process we learn to overcome ourselves by the power of God's spirit. So now, what is God really doing? Well, He's building a family, and for 6,000 years, that's what God has been doing. He has built a structure.

So if we look at it, this structure is described in God's word as a 'temple,' or a 'building,' or a 'house.' Now, if you look at it, what has happened is that God has established Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone. This is going to be the measurement that is going to define the building. So it is set in place as a chief cornerstone. Jesus Christ had the very mind of God so He was the thinking, the Logos, the Word of God made flesh. So He had this very mind. So it is God's thinking that the rest of the building will be established on. It is God's way of life, the way God lives, that the rest of the building was built on.

Then we see in scripture that the apostles and the prophets were the foundations and that foundation has been layed over a process that God has used and He has used that same process for all of us, and that is to define each person into a shape. As you know, we are the stones of the Temple, so we are then shaped. Because we're rough when we're called, we need to be refined. We need to be shaped into a shape to fit into the Temple, or to fit into the Body of Christ. So we're going to fit in *perfectly*, but to fit

in where God wants us to fit – and we're all different shapes and sizes – we all need to be trimmed. We all need to overcome what we are – the natural selfish carnal mind. We have to overcome self by the power of God's spirit. So it is *God* that is shaping us. It is *God* that is molding and fashioning us each to hold a position within His House, within His Temple. So we have to be refined. We have to be cut into shape, and that shape is, of course, based on the Chief Cornerstone, which is Jesus Christ. So we have to take on the very mind of God and to finish this course we have been called to fulfill, and that role is to overcome self. So we have a part in this! Our part is we have to desire to fight ourselves. So once God calls us there are choices to be made. We all have choices to make every day in our life. Will we fight the battle? Will we knock off the rough edges of the stone that still exists? By the power of God's spirit it can be done. But we have a choice. We have a choice in this to whether or not we're going to take up this role, take up this fight and battle against ourselves, whether we are going to take on the task, undertake the spiritual battle that God has called us to.

Now we, at times, will become discouraged in that because we do fail and we do sin and we look at ourselves and think, "Well, *this* is impossible! I'm *never* going to overcome this particular sin that I've repeated many times in my life!" And we've just been through a sermon series about pride and that is our biggest problem, because pride is the motivation or the driving force behind *all* sin. No matter what sin it is it is motivated by pride. It is about lifting the self up *against*, against God.

So God is forming a Temple, creating a Temple, and we know that the end result is after 6,000 years, that God has established that He will bring 144,000 back to this earth with Jesus Christ. Now, they will have been refined and shaped, and of course that has been fulfilled by Pentecost of 2012, where that has been achieved and it has been fulfilled. Those days are fulfilled. So now we see that God has shaped and molded and fashioned the stone into its location where it's going to fit in, and from that point more stones are going to be added to the Temple, that after 7,100 years the Temple will be complete. This structure, a spiritual structure, the Kingdom of God, a spiritual structure of spirit beings in the Family of God will be complete.

So that is what God's plan is. We can take encouragement *by* that, by understanding that, because from this we can see that God is *for* us! God is not against us. He is *for* us! He is setting out to achieve a plan and we just have to have our desire to be part of His plan and not lift ourselves up against God. So let's look at some scriptures that look at the areas of being encouraged and bold and confident, and then to be discouraged, what it means. But in all of this we have to understand that God is always there and that God is for us because *He is shaping* the stone into a perfect shape, and that shape is the very thinking, the mind of God, and it *will* fit into the Temple where God has set it out to fit. It *will* fit in! And now, of course, it's up to us to accept that correction, accept that chipping away of the stone, because it hurts. When the stone is chipped, it actually hurts us, of us being the stones. It actually hurts because part of our natural carnal mind is being removed and the thinking of God is being replaced.

So at the end result we will be into a shape that God can use us *in* a spiritual Temple called the Kingdom of God, and at some point we will enter that and we will fit in perfectly and in harmony, and I'm sure God will give us the vision as spirit beings to see what has happened in our life that we can see *how* we fit into that Temple to be part of a Body, a perfect Body. Now if you look at the body, where scripture talks about a body, we can't do without one part. You know, we can't do without our little finger, for example, because your hand doesn't function the same, or if we lost our left or right hand the body just can't function the same. Well, God is working toward completing a structure, a body. We are the Body of Christ now and we're being molded and fashioned into a shape and that shape is the image of God, Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone.

Well, let's look at some scriptures and let's look at the reasoning behind why we get encouraged and why we get discouraged. If you'd like to turn to 1 Kings 18.

1 Kings 18:1-46 – And this is the story of Elijah and his interaction with Ahab and Jezebel. **Now it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.** Now, prior to this, of course, we understand that God had said that there would be a drought for three years in the land, and that Elijah was in hiding basically during that period and Ahab had searched for him, looking for him trying to find out where he was during these three years.

Verse 2 – So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now, the word 'Elijah' actually means 'my God is salvation,' and 'Ahab' is 'father's brother,' and Ahab, of course, was the king of Israel and Jezebel was the queen of Israel at that time. **So Elijah went and presented himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly...)** So he was a prophet of God and he feared God, which means he obeyed God and kept the 10 Commandments.

Verse 4 – (...For so it was, while Jezebel...), and that is Ahab's wife, **(...massacred the prophets of the LORD...),** she had set out to destroy God's prophets during that period, **(...that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)** So here we have Obadiah was protecting other prophets of God that God had established and he had put them into two caves and he had been feeding them secretly, fifty to a cave.

And Ahab had said to Obadiah, Go into the land to all the springs of the water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and the mules alive. Because there is severe famine, they were looking to make sure that they could find food to feed the animals, **so that we will not have to kill any livestock.** Because as you know, that as severe famine hits a land, in the end, the farming community have to destroy animals, and that has happened many a time here in Australia where severe drought has hit the areas and there is no water, there is no feed, and the animals begin to starve to death and the only way then is to cull them. And often, there have been periods here in Australia where you can buy a whole lamb for a dollar because buying it for a dollar was still reasonably expensive in a way because you still had to buy the feed and the feed was so expensive, the feed was in hundreds of dollars because there wasn't any. Because of the shortage it became more and more expensive, so rather than ship the lambs around the country it was much easier just simply to shoot the lamb and have them buried in mass graves because transporting them was expensive, feeding them was expensive, and there just simply wasn't any food for the animals. Now, we've been through many of periods of that here in Australia.

Verse 6 – So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him. So here he is, he's walking in this area. Ahab has divided the land up, half each, and they're searching out looking for springs of water and looking for green grass so that they could keep the animals alive, and all of a sudden he runs into Elijah **...and he recognized him and fell on his face, and said, Is that you, my lord Elijah? And he said to him, It is I. Go, tell your master (Ahab), 'Elijah is here.'** Now, this would be exciting news for Ahab in one way because he had been searching for him for all this period.

Verse 9 – Then he said, How have I sinned...this is Obadiah saying...How have I sinned that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab to kill me? And the reason is, is that because he'd been searching for him for all this time and now Obadiah is going to turn up and say, "By the way, I know where Elijah is..." So he says, "Well, why would you – if you love me this much – why are you sending me to tell him?" Send somebody else, in other words. Don't send me, please.

Verse 10 – As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master (Ahab) has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, He is not here, he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. He made them swear an oath that he definitely was not there, that they were telling the truth. And that's what he wanted to know. So he'd search an area and say, "He's definitely not in this area." "Will you swear an oath?" And of course if they had of found him in that area there would have been consequences, so he made the nation or kingdom swear an oath that they didn't store or were not hiding Elijah.

Verse 11 – And now you say, Go, tell your master, Elijah is here! And it shall come to pass, as soon as I have gone from you that the spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab and he cannot find you he will kill me. And you can see that, that if he runs off and says, "Hey, I found Elijah!" and then Ahab comes back and Elijah has moved or God has moved him, been led by His spirit to relocate, and then Ahab gets angry with Obadiah because he says, "Well, you're lying! He's not here at all!" And of course Ahab, the character that he had, would make sure he implemented a penalty, which would be he would kill him.

Verse 13 – Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? He's saying, "Well, consider this. I have actually served God. I've actually protected God's prophets, and haven't you heard this before when you were out and about? Hasn't there been word gone out? Hasn't God informed you of this matter?"

Verse 14 – And now you say, Go, tell your master, Elijah is here. And he will kill me! Then Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today...to Ahab. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Verse 17 – Then it happened when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said to him, Is that you, O troubler of Israel? Now, of course, Ahab was blaming Elijah for all the problems with regards to the drought – that he believed that Elijah had caused it and he was the one that was troubling Israel. In other words, he was blaming Elijah for all the problems of the land.

Verse 18 – And he answered (Elijah answered), I have not troubled Israel, but you... and this is, of course, taking personal responsibility. It's because of Ahab's sin that this famine had come upon the land... and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the Commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Ba'als, the sun gods. They were worshipping false religion. Now, they had clear instructions. The kings, of course, were required to read the book of the law, and Israel, of course, were required to keep the 10 Commandments, but they had forsaken God and now they weren't taking personal responsibility for their sins.

So here is a lesson for us, brethren, that we can't blame anybody for our thoughts, words, or actions. We *choose* what we choose. People can't *make us* do things. Often people will say, "Well, 'somebody' made me do it." Or "This is what's happening in my life and the outcome is because this is 'someone

else's' fault." We choose, brethren, we choose. We choose to stay in sinful environments. We choose to sin. We choose to go against God. Personal choice. Nobody can make us do *anything*. It is a personal choice.

Verse 19 – Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table. Now, Jezebel, of course, was queen of Israel, and her name really means 'Ba'al exalts,' or 'Ba'al is husband to.' Now the goddess here that they're referring to, 'Asherah,' was really a Canaanite goddess and it can be also, 'Ashtre' (or 'Ishtar' is another one; it's the same type of thing). It's actually, as we understand, it was Ba'al's mother who was Ba'al's wife, which was of course referring to Nimrod. So this is a Canaanite goddess that Jezebel was at this point worshipping and there is an association to Ba'al worship connected to it.

Verse 20 – So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people and said, How long will you falter between two opinions? Well, this is about making up our mind. How long will you falter between two opinions, two views on something? You know, one way or the other. It's either true or false. Now, we can look at that, brethren, and say between the 57 Truths, how long will we falter between two views of it? Will we believe what God has placed into the Church or won't we? We can either believe or we don't! There are two choices.

If the LORD *be* God, follow Him; but if Ba'al, then follow him. But the people answered him not a word. So they didn't have any commitment at this point of time. They took no action. They really were in two minds. They weren't really sure because they had forsaken God's ways, but deep down, of course, they had understandings that they weren't really going to make a decision at this point in time. So now God is going to provide proof that God *is* God and He's going to do it through Elijah.

Verse 22 – Then Elijah said to the people, I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Ba'al's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty. And what he's highlighting there is that this is one against 450. **Therefore let them give up two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, but put no fire *under it*.** So there he's going to say, "Well, we're going to choose two bulls," and from the bulls the prophets of Ba'al would have one and he would have the others, and they would cut it up. They'd lay it on the wood, but they wouldn't actually light it. **Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God, and the God who answers by fire,** so it was going to require now a sign, which was fire coming down from heaven and lighting the wood to burn up the animal, the bull that had been cut up, **He is God, He is Elohim. So all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.** So everyone agreed with it. Well, this is going to be obvious sign *who God is for* because that's what they were looking for. They were looking for evidence as to whether or not God was *for* them or not. They didn't really know. They were of two minds. They were double-minded in the sense of they just couldn't work it out for themselves on the human level, "Well, where is God?" They'd been worshipping the sun god Ba'al, and of course, the prophetesses of Jezebel have been worshipping Ishtar (Ashtar), and therefore, they were confused about where God really was. Well now God is going to prove through Elijah where God is.

Now Elijah said to the prophets of Ba'al, Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*. So they took the bull which was given them and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning even till the noon, so here we have in the morning right through till noon they were calling out saying, O Ba'al, hear us! But

there was no voice; no one answered, and they leaped about the altar which they had made. So here we have now the bull has been cut up. It's laid down on the wood and they're crying out and they're jumping up and down and going around crying out to Ba'al, for Ba'al to hear them, so that the wood would catch on fire and burn *their* offering.

And so it was at noon, about 12:00 midday, that Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy... he's off somewhere else... or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened. Here we have now God's true prophet mocking the false religions of this world, because that's what it was, they were false religions of the world and here it is where a true servant of God is telling them, "Well, your gods have no power. Your gods have no strength!" And this, of course, as a definition is: Who is God for? Well we know, brethren, God is for us. And that's the purpose of this sermon, is to prove the very fact that God *is* for us, and many of times when we run into difficult situations in our physical life, we have to be careful not to be discouraged, to believe that God is no longer for us, because that is not true. That is actually human reasoning. God *is* for us and there is plenty of evidence in scripture to prove why God has called us. He has called us for a purpose, to fit into a spiritual Temple, and we are in the process of being molded and fashioned.

Verse 28 – So they cried aloud and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out of them. Isn't that incredible, the fact that they would go to that extreme believing that this type of behaviour would impress their god and that because of their actions that their god would answer them? They're trying to make it happen, so they're forcing the situation. It has nothing to do with God and God's will. This is about *them* forcing their god to listen to them – that's really what's happening.

Now, this is similar to what we had read before about the Pharisees, about being heard by their long prayers, because they just go on and on and on, that because of this human effort that they believe that God would answer their prayers. Well, here we have from a human effort, of cutting themselves, making sure there is blood coming out, that this was going to be a human effort where God would now take notice of them... where God tells us the opposite. He says to go off in a quiet place. And often many prayers of God's people are done in the mind. There *is* just simply a process of thinking. A prayer is a process of thinking. And because of this great power that we have, by the power of God's spirit, we can actually pray at any time, anytime we choose to rely on God, to call out to God for support in the sense of providing His spirit to get us through *any* situation in life because God is for us. God desires to give us His spirit – that's His ultimate desire. Because we have to have God's spirit to enter Elohim, and God is striving to have us changed, by our choice as well – not only God's choice but our choice as well – that we desire the same as God desires. God's will be done in our life and we will fit into that Temple where God sees fit, what is best for us. The most important thing is that we *choose* to be corrected. We *choose* to fight our own pride, and if we choose that, brethren, God will hear us, God is for us, and He will mold and fashion us according to *His* will.

Now, what does that really mean? Well, that means we're going to suffer in this physical life. Because we have a natural carnal mind we have to fight it, and that fight can never stop. We cannot ever be discouraged or give up. We have to be bold and confident in God's plan of salvation for us. And that's where our confidence, that's where our boldness comes, is because we know God is for us. So our confidence, our boldness sits with God. It doesn't sit with our human reasoning. It doesn't sit with our long prayer life, if we had one. The more we pray we think that God is going to mold and fashion us more. No, it's about the heart. It's about the inner man. It's about what comes out of our thinking, the

way we think. So our boldness, our confidence *is* in God. We can be bold and confident and we don't have to be discouraged believing that God has left us.

Now, if we have an unrepented sin (and we know when we sin because God's spirit convicts us that we have sinned, because of our intent or whatever we've done), if we do not want to repent, well, then we *are* cut off from God and we can't have confidence anymore because any confidence we had would be *self*-confidence. But if we repent and go to God, we can be confident. We can be bold – the fact that God has promised to forgive us our sin and that we *can* walk anew. We can walk a new man and we can begin and continue to fight the fight until that very last breath. And that's our purpose in life.

So we have a clear focus. We don't have to worry about going in and standing up on altars for hours and doing all these rituals – because that's all they are – because God wants to know our heart, what do we really desire. And I know, brethren, we desire to fit into that Temple. We *desire* to be shaped. We desire to be molded, as painful as it can be, and of course, that pain that we suffer is just simply our human nature, our human pride being chipped away at. Well, we're prepared to suffer for Christ. We're prepared to suffer for God. That's what we desire. We desire to be changed to fit into that Temple.

Now, what a great plan! What a *boldness* we should have! What a *confidence* we should have *knowing* God's plan of salvation for us *and* for all of mankind. This is an individual thing in one way, but in another way it's for all mankind. How great is God that He would take the effort to do this, to work with us with such great patience and mercy, because of what we are. But that is our boldness! *That* is our confidence! That we can be bold and confident because *we* know, *we understand*, we see on a spiritual level that God is *for us* and it's not about all the human effort of running around with rituals. It's got nothing to do with it. Just as the prophets of Ba'al were doing here, it proves nothing, and of course, they're worshipping a false god.

Verse 29 – And it was so when midday was past, that they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. So this was going on, I think it was, until well into the afternoon. **But *there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention*** ...because there is only one true God, Yahweh Elohim, and here they are worshipping something that is false, dedicating their thoughts and time to something that is not true, that is a lie.

Then Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. So the people came near to him, and he prepared the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, 'Israel shall be your name.'

Verse 32 – Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, so he lays down the wood in order to make it light, ready to prepare for a fire, **cut the bull in pieces,** so the bull had been killed and now he cut the bull up into pieces, **and laid *it* on the wood, and said, Fill four water pots with water and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, on the wood.** So here they are, they're going to make it *impossible* to catch fire. So they go and get these four pots of water and they tip it *over* the actual meat and *over* the wood, so that it basically was evidence that it would be impossible to light it. With human effort it's impossible because it's so wet.

Verse 34 – Then he said, Do *it* a second time, so they did *it* a second time; and he said, Do *it* a third time, and they did *it* a third time. So three times now they've poured water over the sacrifice and the

wood, and of course the water would have run down and gone around the altar because there was a trench there. **And so the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.** So we can visualize this. Here we have the altar and we've got the wood and we've got the meat on top of it and they've poured all this water and it's all gone into the trench. So it looks like it's totally soaked. It is wet. It is impossible to light a fire on it.

Verse 36 – And it came to pass, at *the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice*, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that **You are God in Israel... because there is only *one* true God, Yahweh Elohim, and there *is no other*. Any other god was a false god. It was a manmade concept **...and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.** This is a statement to show the people of Israel that there *was* a prophet *in* Israel and that prophet was Elijah, that he was the true prophet of God and that God was the *only* God, the God of Israel. Because if this catches alight, this is actually proof, this is evidence, to the eyes of the people of Israel.**

Now, we understand also, brethren, that physical evidence doesn't really support much in the way of a carnal mind proving much. Because if you look back at what Israel went through – Israel never had God's spirit (Moses, and there were a few others there that did), but of course they get to the Red Sea, then of course it parts (God does it, works a marvelous miracle), they all go through, the water comes down, crushes Pharaoh and all his army, and they come out the other side. Now, you would think that the natural carnal mind would go, "Wow! *That* is God! There is only one true God! We worship the one true God! *God is for us!*" You would have to come to that conclusion! Well, it doesn't take long, as we know from scripture, for the natural carnal mind to then work out or justify or get rid of God's great power in a person's life, because the natural carnal mind can't grasp spiritual things. It can witness certain things, but it simply can't grasp them to see them on a spiritual level. So it wasn't long before the natural carnal mind what? Turned against the Great God that had divided the Red Sea and that they had walked through. It's amazing what the mind can do.

Well, we know the outcome of this is the same. Here we have the natural carnal mind and they're going to witness something that is going to be from God and they'll hold onto it for a while, but without God's spirit we just don't see God *in* things for very long, because our minds can't.

Verse 37 – Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their heart back to You again. He is granting them the opportunity here to repent. And of course it's on a physical level. It's not on a spiritual level. It's on a physical level because people *can* change on a physical level, change direction. Now, people on a physical level *could* change from worshipping the sun god to worshipping God on the Sabbath, on the seventh-day Sabbath as they are commanded. They can do that on a physical level.

Now, we know there are a lot of dualities here, that this is a physical example, but of course we can see this on a spiritual level, that it relates to also the scattered Churches, that God needs to intervene to awake them out of a spiritual sleep. Well, they are asleep in the sense of worshipping a false god. God is *not* with them at this point in time. They *are* asleep and it is going to take something great – a miracle – to awaken them out of that sleep. And of course we know there are 63,000 that are soon to be given that opportunity.

Well, brethren, we understand also that it is only by God's great power that can happen. And we've had a miracle in our life! The fact that we were called is one of the greatest miracles God will ever achieve in

a human mind, because it is *so* great. The fact that you can have a mind that can be heading in one direction and then God by His great power – it's nothing seen, it's not physical, it's spiritual – that God can then place His spirit *into* the mind of a human being. No one can see it! Nobody can see it! It's not something that can be seen by the natural carnal mind. It's nothing that can be seen through the eyes. It all takes place in the mind. And of course, as that transition happens from the thinking of mankind to the thinking of God, people do begin to see things on a physical level; they see people's actions or words changing but they can't understand it because it's spiritual in nature.

Verse 38 – Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stone and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. So here we have now God revealing who His true servant was, Elijah, and it is now revealing God, because it is God that has to do this because this has totally been soaked. It is totally wet, so now this is evidence to the eyes of Israel.

Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces and they said, The LORD, the Eternal, **He *is* God!** He is Elohim! **The LORD, He *is* God!** So here they have now physical proof that God exists and that God is *for* Elijah.

Verse 40 – And Elijah said to them, Seize the prophets of Ba'al! Do not let one of them escape! So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook of Kishon and executed them there. So now that is the event that is revealing that God was *for* Elijah.

Well, we've had many events in our life, brethren, to prove that God is for us, and one of the main things that we can see that God is for us *is* the fact that God in His loving mercy has called us, but also has placed us into a loving Family, the Church of God, and has revealed us evidence, proof, that God *is* who He is and where God is working. And that is, of course, through the Truths that God has placed in the Church. And that is our evidence and that's why we need to stay close to that evidence. It is spiritual evidence. It is spiritual evidence. It is *not* physical evidence, because the natural carnal mind can read those things (read the 57 Truths) but not grasp them, not understand them, because they are spiritual in nature. And so God has provided us *evidence* of where He is. He has provided us evidence of *who He is for* at this point in time.

Verse 41 – Then Elijah said to Ahab, Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of the abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground and put his face between his knees and said to his servant, Go up now, look towards the sea. So he went up and looked, and said, *There is nothing.* And seven times he said, Go again. So here we have Elijah kneeling down and he's saying there is... the rain is coming. This famine, this drought, is going to be broken, and he sent his servant up (and he's gone seven times) and he's come back and said, "Well, there is nothing." **Then it came to pass the seventh *time*, that he said, There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, so this tiny little cloud, **rising out of the sea! And so he said, Go up, say to Ahab, Prepare *your chariot*, and go down before the rain stops you.** So he said, "Go down to Ahab, tell him to get his chariot and to head for home because soon there is going to be so much rain that your chariot is probably going to get bogged and you're not going to be able to pass because of the amount of rain, it's going to be too heavy."**

Verse 45 – Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. So here we have now God, in His power, giving Elijah the strength to run this far, to go ahead of the chariot, a horse

and chariot at a particular speed heading back to Jezreel. And of course God has now powered Elijah, given him the strength to run faster than the horse and the chariot to get ahead of Ahab.

1 Kings 19:1 – And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he, Elijah, had executed all the prophets with the sword. Now this would have been pretty distressing for Jezebel because it's an erosion of her power. The fact that she is worshipping a god and her husband is worshipping Ba'al, which is sun worship, and these prophets have been killed. So this would be quite distressing – and with the human natural mind, of course, anger would come into it because you would get angry at the fact that your authority has been challenged.

Now Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. What she's saying there is, "I'm going to kill you! If you're not like one of the ones that you've killed by tomorrow, well, let it happen to me." In other words, "I'm threatening you. If I find you, I'm going to kill you, Elijah!" Now, we've seen Elijah from this spiritual high where the proof is that God is for him. There is a boldness. There's a confidence, the fact that He would do that. He's seen the fire, he's had all this evidence, this physical evidence – and to a degree a spiritual evidence – that God is for him and God is all powerful, look what God can do, and now he's being threatened. His life, his physical life, is being threatened by Jezebel. The messenger has come, the messenger has said to Elijah, "This is what Jezebel is going to do to you." **And when he saw that,** in other words, when he perceived it, when he heard it, **he arose and ran for his life and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.** So he's now headed off. It's virtually to the southeast edge of Israel. Now he's fleeing Jezebel. So here we have this discouragement because now human reasoning has entered into the thinking. After all this boldness and confidence in God now we're seeing this discouragement taking over the thinking, "*Is God all powerful? Is God all mighty? Is God really for me?*"

Verse 4 – But he also went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down... because he'd left his servant back previously, and he came and sat down **under the broom tree** (and that's a Juniper tree). **And he prayed that he might die, and said, It is enough!** This is all too much! Now, of course, this is negative human reasoning. This is human thinking. "It's all too much! It's all too hard!" Now, why would we get into this environment, brethren, where we think it's all too much, it's all too hard? Because we have all this evidence, we have all this proof that God is for us. Because of our calling we can see God is for us. We know God's plan! He's revealed what He's doing; He's building a Temple, a spiritual Temple. We know there is a foundation. We know the foundation is the prophets and the apostles. We know the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, has already been molded and fitted into place. We know there is 144,000 that have been molded and fitted into place and we are now to continue with our journey, to be moulded and fashioned to fit into a place in the Temple when God chooses to fit us into that Temple. So we know all this, so why would we become discouraged? Why would we begin to think negatively and say, "It's all too much! It's enough. I can't take anymore!" Well, brethren, it's because we're using human reasoning – that's the reason – and we're not turning and looking at the great power of what God has done in our life and what God has done for us.

And he said, It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my father's! And he was really...what he's saying there is that, "I am ready to die and join my ancestors. It's all too much, I've done my bit. I've had enough... can't do this anymore. I just want to die. Just let me die. It's enough... join my ancestors... join my forefathers," which who have already died.

Verse 5 – Then as he layed and slept under the broom tree, under the Juniper tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, Arise *and* eat. Then he looked, and there by his head, so where he was laying, *was* a cake baked on coals and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. So he's gone back to sleep again. Then the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him and said, Arise *and* eat, because the journey *is* too great for you. So there is more. There is more to be done. So we're to prepare for more, brethren, and that's what we can learn from this. It's not a time to be discouraged because of what's around us and what's happening and what has not happened the way we thought things were going to happen. It's not a time to be discouraged. It's a time to be bold and confident. We are to prepare on a spiritual level, because what are we doing? What is our purpose in life? To prepare for the Kingdom of God on a spiritual level! God *is for us*! That's what God is achieving *in us*, and no matter what our eyes see or what we *think* we see, we have to always remember that everything is spiritual. Our calling is spiritual! Our overcoming is spiritual! People can't see what we're overcoming! It's all spiritual in nature and we shouldn't look for physical evidence of things. We should look to the spiritual evidence, and the spiritual evidence we have is our calling and the Truth that God has placed *in our thinking*. And the fact that we're part of the Body of Christ, they are things where we can take encouragement from and we can be bold and confident *in God*, in what God is doing *in us*, and not become discouraged and turn around and say, "It's all too much! It's all enough!"

Verse 8 – So he arose and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of the food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. And that was, of course, where the 10 Commandments were given. So now he's travelled for forty days and forty nights by the food that he had been given. Now this on a physical level, of course, is not physically possible. It's *God* that's in this. It is *God's* will and purpose that is being achieved, and that's something for us to always remember, that our life is about God's will and God's purpose *in our life*. This is God's true Church! This is *God's* Church and God achieves what God desires to achieve *in* and through His Church.

Verse 9 – And there he went into the cave and spent the night in the place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, What are you doing here, Elijah? So this is the first question. "Elijah, what are you doing here? You've travelled for forty days and forty nights," and now he's hidden himself in the cave at Mount Horeb where God gave the 10 Commandments, and God's asked him a question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And here is his answer, **verse 10 – And so he said, I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your Commandments and torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life.** So here it is. He's pretty discouraged. He's limited God, really, in what he's saying and he has this attitude that humans are out to kill him.

The answer is one really of self-pity. And if we go over that he says, **I have been zealous for the LORD God of hosts**, so he's giving credit to himself, saying, "Well, God, I need You to consider that I have been very zealous *for You*." Well, brethren, we are zealous for God, and that's what God requires of us. It's a choice. We have to choose to be zealous for God. We have to choose to implement things we hear into our life. We have to implement the battles against our pride in our life. Now, if we don't implement it, if we're not zealous for God, well, we can't achieve what God desires *in us*. It just simply can't be done because we have our part in it. We have a choice in this, we have to be zealous for God! So here he is, Elijah is saying, "Well, this is what I've done! I've been zealous for You!" **...for the children of Israel**, and now it's sort of a form of a justification or excuses here and bit of self-pity. **...for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant and torn down Your altars.** So that's what they've done. So in other

words, "Look at them! This is all the things they've done!" **...and they've killed Your prophets.** Well, here it is Elijah saying he's a prophet, "They're going to do the same to me! All these people out there, this is all the things *they've* done. This is all *their* sin!" **...and they've killed them with the sword,** and guess what, **I alone am left and they seek to take my life.** What he's saying is, "I alone am left!" Now, this really, brethren, is limiting God. The moment we think that it's all about *us* we've got it all wrong, because it's not all about us, it's about God. It's about what God is doing and what God is achieving in building this spiritual Temple.

Whenever we get to think, "I alone am left," that is not true, because God has a plan and God will achieve the plan. We are *never* alone because God's purpose is not to have us alone. We're not alone, brethren. We're not alone on a spiritual level, and even at times when we're alone on a *physical* level – because sometimes that happens in life where we *are* alone – we're still not alone because it is God is with us. God is *always for us*, and members of the Body are *for* each member of the Body. So we're never alone! We're not alone in the sense of being alone on a spiritual level.

Verse 11 – Then He said, Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD. And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a small still voice. Now, all of these things are physical signs, but it doesn't mean to say that God was in them, because what it is, is the fact that when we look at things on a physical level we tend to limit God because we take human reasoning to look at it all on a physical level, to try to work out what God is doing. Says here, "Well, all these physical things, you weren't necessarily seeing *Me* in them, because it's physical." But we should be able to see God on a spiritual level, and that's the most important thing, that God is all powerful. Now, if you look at what had happened here with the question, "Why are you here, Elijah?" Well, Elijah is saying, "Well, I'm here because I'm the only one left and all these people are out to destroy me." Well, God is saying, "Well, no, *I'm* in charge." These are signs of God's great power and that He is in control of *all* things. God is in control of the wind, He is in control of the earth in the sense of shaking it, and He is in control of the fire. God is in control of it! But we're not to look at it too deeply to try to find God in physical things because we can get it wrong. Because time and chance happens to all and certain things happen in life but it doesn't mean to say that God was directly involved in that, because it may not be achieving God's purpose.

An example is many of the fires that we've had here in New South Wales in Australia, not here in Victoria, but in New South Wales, were lit by eight-year-old children and it was a time and chance thing. It doesn't mean to say that God directed the two boys to go out and light a fire, eight years old, to light a fire in a bush and it'd burn. There was another example where the reserves, I think it was, they exploded a bomb and the sparks went out and lit a fire and burned thousands and thousands of hectares, a lot of land, and destroyed homes. Does that mean to say that God was *in* the fire? Time and chance happens. But God is in certain events, but not in all events; and therefore, we need to be careful about what we read into physical things because God is involved in the *spiritual*. That's what God is concerned about. It's about the spiritual.

So verse 13 – So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And suddenly a voice *came* to him and said, What are you doing here, Elijah? So this is the very same question as before. **So he said** (so here is the second answer), **I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left and they**

seek to take my life. So he gave this very same answer. And what it was, was limiting God. By his answer he's actually limiting God's power. So God had shown him by the wind and the shaking and the fire that God is all powerful, God is in control of all things where God desires to intervene and gain an outcome. And the outcome is spiritual that God designs within our life, that the outcome for all mankind, really, although mankind can't see it, is spiritual in nature.

We can take from this that we should never limit God and limit what God is doing in and through His Church. We may not understand all the events that are taking place and the timing of those events, but we should stand back and realise that it is God's Church, it is God's plan, and we can be bold and confident in what God is doing. What is God doing? God is creating Elohim. And if things seem to be taking longer than we thought it's because *God is creating Elohim*. It's about *His* people! It's about what God is doing *in and through us*.

Verse 15 – Then the LORD said to him: Go, return your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

Verse 16 – Also, you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as a prophet in your place. So here now Elijah would have heard this 'anoint Elisha as prophet *in your place*.' Now that would have triggered some thinking in the mind. Just by normal we would say, "Anoint this person in your place...?" He would have had to have some thinking there. But of course, with humility we would understand that it is God's plan and it's all about what God is doing to achieve a Family.

Verse 17 – It shall be that whatever escapes the sword of Hazael, who is the king of Syria, Jehu will kill, and he was the king of Israel, and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

Verse 18 – Yet I have reserved, so here is now God giving Elijah the truth of the matter, because we can see things the wrong way. We try to work all this out and think that "I'm alone... this is what's happening... God's Church is a small Church... What's happening? Why is it happening?" And yet here is God saying, **Yet I, God, have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all those knees have not bowed down to Ba'al, and every mouth that has not kissed him.** The reason that God is revealing this is to say, "Well, this is *My Church*. I'm in control." And Elijah should have realized that from the fact of when he was bold and confident, when God burnt the wood and the animal before the prophets of Ba'al and before Jezebel's prophets and before all Israel...and then Israel turned around and said, "Yes, we're all for God! There is one God and it's the God of Elijah!" That's the boldness and confidence, when we see God working in life. But that's physical! That's physical evidence that God is great, that God is in control.

Well, here Elijah then runs away and he becomes depressed, really. He becomes *discouraged*, self-pity, "Woe is me! Enough is enough! I can't keep going...!" Well, brethren, we have to stand back. We *can* keep going because God is for us. We *can* keep going because it is *God's plan* and *we do not know* what God has got reserved for tomorrow or for the next day or for the next six months. We simply *do not know* – and that's not important. The *most important* thing is that we stay focused and that we have boldness and confidence in God and what God is doing in and through His Church, and one day we will see the outcome of this great plan that God has. And what is happening in the Church today, we will see the outcome, and the outcome is the creation of Elohim. After 7,100 years every stone will be fitted into the Temple perfectly! Everyone will have been molded and fashioned as God has designed to fit into the Temple to complete the Family of God, Elohim. Isn't that an incredible plan!

From those scriptures, brethren, we can see the main point. The main point is that God is *for* us, individually and collective.... individually and collective. By individual, it's you, it's me, and God is working with us to shape us and mold us into a shape, and that shape is the image of God, the image of Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone. And if that is the case, if we believe that, *who* can be against us? *What* can be against us? No matter what physical event is taking place in our life God is still there. God is *for* us. God *is* for us. God is in control. We should not fear to move forward in faith with boldness and confidence *in God*. We don't have confidence in our own ability, because of ourselves we know we can't do it, but with God leading and guiding us, and with us submitting our will with zeal towards Him, God will achieve what God will achieve in and through us. We are to stay focused on what our role is. Our spiritual role is to prepare ourselves – through God's great power – for the Kingdom of God. Isn't that incredible?! If we could only just maintain that in our thinking! *Our* purpose in *life* is to prepare for the Kingdom of God, to enter Elohim. That's our goal. That's our purpose. No matter when that takes place, that's the purpose of life. And in the Millennium? The purpose of life will be people preparing themselves for the Kingdom of God, a spiritual Kingdom, to enter Elohim at some point in time.

Today, the world has not been called by God the Father to know or understand the purpose of this physical human life. God in His mercy towards *us* has called us into a relationship with Him for a spiritual purpose. That purpose is for us to enter into a spiritual battle in the mind, in our thinking. The intent of our heart is what God is interested in....that we enter one day into His spiritual Family of Elohim.

The main point is that no matter what suffering we are going through at this present time, no matter the physical environment we are in or what we see or what we face, no matter what is happening, we must always remember that God is *for* us and not against us.

If you'd like to turn to **Romans 8:14-39 – For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God.** It's God *in* us. So brethren, if we have been called and God's spirit dwells in us, we are begotten sons. God calls us His sons. We are the sons of God.

Verse 15 – For you did not receive the spirit of bondage, so we haven't got the spirit of prejudice, **again to fear...** we're not without hope, brethren. If we fear, we *are* without hope. But we don't fear. We are not without hope. We have hope, brethren! We have hope because we know, we understand, that God is actually for us and working to achieve an outcome, which is building that Temple, and we are those stones, the stones of the Temple **...but you received the spirit of adoption/sonship**, because God has purchased us through Jesus Christ. We are adopted sons. We have God's spirit, so now being adopted sons we are then *heirs*. We're heirs of a promise! Isn't that exciting? **...by which we cry, Abba, Father.** So we have this spiritual relationship with God, that we know God the Father.

Now, most people would say that's just simply arrogance, but we actually know God the Father. We know God's plan, we know God's purpose for mankind, and we know God's purpose for the Church, we know *why* God created the Church through Jesus Christ and placed Jesus Christ as Head of the Church. We know *why we were called!* We know about our human nature and what God has created *in* us and what has to be achieved in us. All these things are exciting things. We understand that God *is* all powerful, that God *is* all mighty. We understand these things...and we have a relationship with God. We understand Passover and why God provided Jesus Christ as our Passover...for the forgiveness of our sins. We understand that we *can* repent, that we *do* make mistakes, that we *do* err, that we *do* miss the mark; we sin. And we know the wages of sin, the penalty of sin, which is death. We understand these things. But we know we can repent. We know that we can turn to God and repent and seek and desire to change and that God in His mercy has promised to forgive us so our sins can be covered. Isn't that

incredible that we understand all these things, and therefore, we can walk boldly and confidently in God. We don't walk in ourselves. We *know* ourselves. We understand our human natural mind because God's spirit has revealed it to us, that we are motivated, our intent is driven by pride. We lift ourselves up, but we know that through God's great power that we can overcome that and that we can take on the very mind, the very thinking of God, and we know the outcome of that is at some point in time we have the potential to enter Elohim, to be part of that spiritual Temple.

Verse 16 – The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, so we have that unity of thinking. We are begotten sons of God, and we are begotten sons of God because we have God's spirit dwelling and living in us. And the moment we don't have God's spirit, we know there's a problem in our life, because we've cut ourselves off because of sin.

Verse 17 – And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him. Now, that's an incredible statement, really. We are children. We are children of God. We're begotten sons of God. Because of that we are then *heirs*. We have the potential to *inherit* something. Of course that is to inherit life everlasting. We are 'heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ' because Christ has already inherited. He has already inherited what we seek – life everlasting. Now, Jesus Christ *is* the Head of the Church and He works to bring us into Elohim. So He works on behalf of God the Father, really, in the sense of working towards an outcome (which is God's plan), which is to bring us into Elohim, '*IF* indeed we suffer with Him.' So we suffer because we fight against our selfish nature. So we are going to suffer; we're going to suffer physically and we're going to suffer on a spiritual level because this is a spiritual battle and we have to fight. We have to fight against ourselves, against our selfishness, and that is suffering, brethren. We suffer in this because it isn't easy, but the physical things of life everyone will suffer, but the spiritual things of life, we have undertaken to fight against **that we may be also glorified together**, so we may be changed to spirit as Christ was to enter Elohim.

So that is an incredible scripture, really, because it outlines much: the fact that God has called us, we have the potential to enter Elohim, we're going to go through all the suffering that we can be glorified together with Christ, we can be changed into Elohim, God's purpose. So we can't be discouraged. We should be *encouraged* by this. We should be bold and confident because we know God's plan. We know what God is trying to achieve *in us* and through us.

Verse 18 – For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And that is amazing, that if we look at the physical things of life they're not... how can we compare these physical sufferings, these trials that we think we're going through and that we *are* going through on a physical level, how can we compare them to something that is spiritual? Because within a physical trial there are spiritual lessons, and it's from those spiritual lessons that we can learn that we can grow from them. So we have to go through the sufferings of this present time. We have to go through them because it's from *them* that God can create Elohim, because we can learn on a spiritual level the way to conduct ourselves, the way to think like God thinks, in the trial. So we're all going to have trials. *We are all going to have trials* to different degrees, and it's what we learn on a spiritual level *from* those trials is the most important thing, and the outcome is that we can be glorified with Jesus Christ. We can be glorified. The most important thing is that we can be glorified like Christ was glorified. And it will be revealed in us when? At a resurrection. At a resurrection the glory – and the glory, really, is the glory of God because it's what God achieved *in us*. It's the glory of God that is going to be revealed *in us*, what He has developed, what He has shaped, and what He has molded *in us*. And during our life while we are *in* the Body of Christ, *God is for us*, and He is for us by developing Elohim. That's His *desire*! That's His *main focus*! We are God's focus because He's desiring to place *His*

thinking, *His spirit in us*. God is *for us*; He is not against us. And that is our confidence, that is our boldness, and there is no reason to be discouraged about *anything* in life. If we understand it on a spiritual level, there is no need to be discouraged about *anything* physical in this life because there is a spiritual outcome that God is developing within us.

Verse 19 – For the earnest expectation of the creation, mankind, eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. And we know that is the 144,000 that will be revealed on the Day of Pentecost when Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

Verse 20 – For the creation, mankind, was subjected to futility. It's the way we were made, **not willingly...** it wasn't done for a wrong purpose. We were made selfish *by design*, for a purpose, and that purpose is to change by the power of God's spirit, to be moulded and fashioned as a stone, as a pillar in the Temple. That's what it's about **...but because of Him who subjected it in hope.** So the purpose is we know what is going to happen. We know the hope; the hope is the plan of salvation of God's creation. We know God's plan for mankind.

Verse 21 – because the creation itself, mankind, also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, this decay, this corruption that is in our minds because we were subject to futility and we are in a process of decay. The natural carnal mind is in a process of decay. It doesn't get better. It just gets worse and worse and worse. But God has called us for a purpose, to be delivered from this, and we're delivered from this by the power of God's spirit, and that we are changed and fashioned **into the glorious liberty of the children of God.** So we're going to be set free from this selfish thinking, from this bondage of the corruption of our minds. We can be set free from it.

Verse 22 – For we know, we see spiritually, **that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.** So the only hope we have and the only hope for mankind is that God intervene into this world. And the more that we have God's spirit, the more we see the suffering of this world, and the more we see the *need* for the return of Jesus Christ. And that while we wait for Christ's return, it *is* difficult, brethren, to look out on our own families, to look out on mankind, to look out on other nations and see the suffering from the choices to rebel against God. Because mankind chooses, by his natural carnal mind, to go against God. And we see it and the *suffering* is just terrible to watch sometimes. Sometimes it gets to the point where I actually have to turn programs off because I just can't watch them anymore because I just see where it's going to go, because we see the suffering that could be avoided on a physical level in lots of ways. If mankind was to choose just simply to keep the 10 Commandments on a physical level, the suffering would be avoided, but mankind rejects God's ways, and therefore, mankind suffers. And the consequence of that is, of course, mankind through all the different generations suffers and continues to suffer. And we wait for the freedom. We wait for the release from that suffering, from the *bondage* that Satan is holding this world in and the deception. We look for the day for that to be removed. And we do cry out for the return of Jesus Christ, we really do, because that is the *only* solution! It's the *only* solution to *all* of mankind's problems... and mankind's problems just get worse and worse and worse.

Verse 23 – But not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves eagerly waiting for the adoption, which is the sonship. We want to be adopted, to be sons of God, adopted out of this current state, **the redemption of our body,** our resurrection. Brethren, we yearn...we yearn for release from the bondage of our own thinking because God has revealed it to us and we don't want it. We reject it. We want to be released from the suffering of this present age.

Verse 24 – For we were saved in this hope, in the confidence, **but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?** Because we haven't been changed yet, but we can have a confidence, which is the hope, because we're waiting for something, brethren. But once that has been fulfilled, we don't have that hope anymore, because it's been revealed. When Jesus Christ returns that hope will change. Then a person's hope that lives in the Millennium will be different. They won't be hoping for the return of Jesus Christ, or having the confidence in the return of Jesus Christ. They'll be having a different hope, a different confidence, because they'll be looking forward to something else, and that something else we're all looking forward to is to be shaped and molded to enter Elohim, to enter the Family of God.

Verse 25 – But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Now, this is about enduring to the end. This is about *not* giving up in the battle, but fighting to the very end, enduring to the end. We have to persevere, brethren. No matter how long we have been in God's Church, we still have to continue to endure to the end. Whether we've been in God's Church six months or sixty years, God requires us to continue to hope, to have the confidence in Him that He will fulfill His plan in His timing, and we will persevere to the very end. We've got to continue the battle. No matter what that battle is within our minds, we are to continue it until our last breath.

Verse 26 – Likewise the spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, because sometimes, brethren, we get caught up in things and sometimes we're just not really sure what we should cry out for because of our weaknesses, because of our physical carnal mind, and sometimes we don't know what to cry out for. But we can always cry out to God in life. We don't always see what God is *doing* in our life – and that's the most important thing to remember – *we do not always see what God is doing in our life on a spiritual level*, and that's why we don't know what we should cry out for sometimes, **but the spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered**, in our thinking. Now we, brethren, know there is one thing that we can cry out to God for and that is more of His spirit, that we desire to think like God about all situations. So we can cry out for greater faith. We can cry out for greater love, to have God's spirit living and dwelling in us. And there are scriptures, of course, that say we're not to ask amiss. We're not to try to ask amiss by asking for things from God to consume it on our own desires for pride, but we are to ask God for *His* way of thinking because we desire humility. We don't desire to lift ourselves up. We desire to humble ourselves before God and to be instruments of God and to be changed. We desire God to change our thinking.

Verse 27 – Now He who searches the hearts, the inner thinking, **knows what the mind of the spirit is**, so God knows our intent. He knows our inner thinking, **because He, Christ, makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.** So when we pray we always pray... at the end we always say, "In the name of Jesus Christ." So we ask God the Father for things, but we do it through the name of Jesus Christ because He has been appointed to that role.

Verse 28 – For we know, we see spiritually, **that all things work together for good,** on a spiritual level, **to those who love God,** and to love God, of course, we have God's spirit dwelling in us, **to those who are called according to His purpose.** Now, this is an incredible spiritual statement! We know that 'All things' – so no matter what is happening in our life, brethren – 'work together for good.' It is for our *spiritual good*. So no matter what trial we may be going through on a physical level, no matter what is happening to us on a physical level, in reality – if we only could see it – God is for us and God is working for *our good* on a *spiritual* level because of *His* plan, what He is trying to shape and mold in us to fit into

the Temple of God. So all these physical things, we should look at them on a spiritual level. It's God working *with* us! We are to allow God to work with us, to work *in* us.

Now, often, physical things happen in our life because of our choices. God is not actually involved in the physical things because we make stupid decisions or wrong choices in our life. So all these physical things happen and physical things with regards to health happen to us. On a genetic level people have dispositions towards various things. It's because of the foods we've eaten or choices that we've made (or any other illness for that matter), therefore, God will use that environment, that situation for our good, to teach us something on a spiritual level. So all the sufferings on a physical level we shouldn't just read into it, "Oh, what is God doing to me!" Well, it's not God doing anything. It's choices that we've made and it's the world and the society around us, but God is working towards a good in us on a spiritual level. So we know. We can have this confidence, this boldness, that all things on a physical level are working to a good, for the good on a spiritual level 'to those who love God,' brethren, those that are called, that have God's spirit living and dwelling in them, those that are *in* the Body of Christ, 'to those who are called according to His/God's purpose.'

So God and Christ are for us. God has a purpose for each and every one of us *in* the Body of Christ. God called us to be part of His Church now *for a reason*, for a purpose! It's not just a casual thing. It's actually for a great spiritual purpose. God called us *to succeed*, because God is for us! To love God is to obey God in spirit and truth. And if we read back that and just meditate on that very verse it says a lot.

Verse 29 – For whom He/God foreknew, which was the Church, **He also predestined**. He predetermined what would happen with those in the Church, **to be conformed to the image of His Son**. So that's the purpose of life, that's why we are *in* the Body of Christ, that's why we are in the Church of God, to be conformed, 'to be transformed to the *image* of His Son,' God's Son, Jesus Christ. We are to be like Christ *in spirit*, in our thinking **that He**, Christ, **might be the firstborn among many brethren**. Christ was the firstborn into Elohim so He's the firstborn of *many* brethren – us! We are to follow! We have been called to follow Christ into Elohim. Isn't that an amazing scripture? How much that scripture reveals about God's plan for us? Now, this is where our boldness and confidence comes from, because of this very statement, that we are to be 'conformed to the image,' which is to be transformed into the image – of His Son. And that's our purpose. That's why we have boldness and confidence in God. That's why in any physical trial, any physical battle that we may be in, we know this is about entering Elohim. We are to take on the very *mind* of God, the mind of Jesus Christ.

Verse 30 – Moreover whom He predestined, He predetermined, **these**, talking about us, brethren, **He also called**, so He invited us, **whom He called He also justified**, and we're justified through Christ and faith, **and whom He justified He also glorified**. So God has glorified us with His spirit. We have God's thinking, so we can now be changed at a resurrection, and that's the purpose of life. Our sins have been forgiven – it's a given, it's a promise, and this promise cannot be broken.

What can go wrong, brethren? What can go wrong is *our* choices and our choice not to repent. That's what can go wrong. But God has 'pre-set out,' has predetermined, and it's not like a predestination where it's all planned and mapped out and it's all going to be *exact* in the sense that you can't fail. No, we can fail, brethren, by our choices, but it has been predetermined that God would call a group of people and invite them in to be part of the 144,000, and then He's also going to call and invite another group in to be part of the Millennium, and then He's going to call and invite another group in to enter into Elohim at the end of 7,100 years – and that's what's been predetermined. God has predetermined a *Family*. There is going to be a Family and it's going to be according to God's will, and why mankind was

made was to enter Elohim. And that's why we can be bold and confident in everything that we do in the sense we are bold and confident in God.

Verse 31 – What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? And that's a question. So what could we say? Knowing all this, brethren, what is it that we could actually say? If we know what God's plan is, if we know God is actually *for us* on a spiritual level to develop Elohim, *who* could be *against* us? Well, nobody and nothing. We understand that Satan is actually the one who is against us. Satan and His demons are actually against us, but God is greater. God is all powerful, God is all mighty, and God is for us, and if God is for us God's will will be done. Lucifer and his demons can only achieve what God desires them to achieve, and what God is using them for is to create Elohim. So who is for us? God is for us. So who's against us? 'If God is for us, who can be against us?!

So brethren, here we need to correct our spiritual perspective on reality. The reality is that God is for us. So let's correct that negative thinking that we may have. Let's correct *any discouragement* or any letdown that we may have and stay very focused and be bold and confident in what God has planned. And we don't know the timing of what God has planned, we simply don't, but when God reveals it to us through the Church we will know. But until that time we're to stay spiritually focused. We're to stay spiritually *determined* to move forward in boldness and confidence in God, in God's Church, and what God has placed *in* the Church.

Verse 32 – He who did not spare His own Son, so God, who did not spare His own Son, Jesus Christ, **but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him/Christ also freely give us all things?** God wants to give us all things. He has given all things to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ and God the Father's plan is to give us all things in the sense of entering Elohim to be spirit beings. And we have no idea really what God plans for us for eternity – none whatsoever. We've got a really dark outline, but it's very dark.

Verse 33 – Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It's a question: 'Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?' **It is God who justifies.** So we shouldn't look out and judge and condemn anybody within the Body of Christ. It is God who justifies us. We're all sinners and it's God that sets us free, and we're justified *by* God through faith.

Verse 34 – Who is he who condemns? Who is he that looks down on any one of God's people? Who looks down with condemnation? **It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.** Now, Jesus Christ is our High Priest. He has a role, He is the Head of the Church, and He is working to develop Elohim. And that's the purpose of the Church! And if we stay focused on that, if we understand *why* we are part of the Body of Christ and stay focused on it and realize what God is achieving *in* each and every one of us, we'll be worried about ourselves. We won't be looking out and judging and condemning other because we'll be more worried about our *own pride*. We'll be worried about our *own* level of humility.

Verse 35 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Well, who, brethren? *What* can separate us from the love of Christ? You know, God's love for us, who can separate us from that? Well, only us, only by our stupid choices, really. **Shall tribulation** – no – **shall distress** – no – **shall persecution** from anybody, from our families or from anyone else in society, from bosses? Can any of that separate us from the love of Christ? **...will famine...** can any physical things separate us from it? **...or nakedness,** so being without, **or in peril, or sword?** Can any of those things separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing can, brethren, because God has set His love *on us* and *in us*. Christ has set His love *in us* and *for us*.

Verse 36 – As it is written: For Your/God's sake we, we, brethren, the called out ones, are killed all day long. In other words, we sacrifice ourselves all day long. That's what we do. We kill ourselves in the sense we fight against our natural carnal mind. **We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.** We are hated by others because of our faithfulness to God. And that's true. Other's do hate us, brethren. They don't know they hate us. They say they love us – words are cheap – and they can say those things, the others, but deep down because of Satan's system we are hated, brethren, because of our faithfulness to God. We suffer for righteousness sake. Because of our obedience to God, because of our *choice* to obey God and by the power of God's spirit we obey the 10 Commandments, because of *His* righteousness *in* us, we are going to suffer. We are going to suffer *in this world* because this world is focused on the physical and we're focused on the spiritual. We willingly fight against ourselves. We kill our own selfish nature by the power of God's spirit and we do it every day *all day long*, and that's what that scripture refers to: 'We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'

Verse 37 – Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors, to overcome this selfishness in us, **through Him/God who loved us.** So God has loved us and God is *for* us! **I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** So there is nothing, brethren, that can separate us from the love of God. And even though we are persecuted, it doesn't matter, and even though we have an angelic realm, an evil angelic realm that is actually against us, it doesn't matter. They cannot separate us from the love of God; God has set His love *on us*.

If you'd like to turn to **Hebrews 13:5-6 – Let your conduct be without covetousness,** and that is desiring something that is unlawful – selfishness is covetousness – **be content with such things as you have.** So those things that we have and that God has allowed us to have access to, we should be content with those things. We shouldn't desire things that we can consume for our own selfish desires. We should desire to have more of God living and dwelling in us, but the physical things we shouldn't stay focused on. We should stay focused on the spiritual things, on God's plan and purpose *for us*. **For He Himself has said,** this is a promise from God, **I will never leave you nor forsake you.** So this is a promise from God for those that He has called into a relationship with Him, that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Verse 6 – So we may boldly say: The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me? Well, the answer is, nothing, unless it is God's will and purpose.

So brethren, one of the main points to take out of this sermon is that no matter what is happening to us on a physical level we should *always* remember that we should be focused on the spiritual. What is it that we can learn on a spiritual level from this particular trial?

So with that, brethren, we'll finish the sermon for today.

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