

Good afternoon, brethren, on this Sabbath day. Over here in Victoria, Australia, we're having a summer, a reasonably hot summer again in the season of heat.

The title of this sermon is *Stay Focused – Part 3*. In Part 1 and 2 we looked at the need to set or to establish God first in our life, to have God as our highest priority. God's way *is* our first priority in life. Christ stated that we were not to worry, not to focus on the physical but on the spiritual as our priority, as a way of thinking. So Christ is really saying that we shouldn't be *anxious* or *overly worried*, and the reason is, of course, is because God said and has promised that He will provide the physical things that we need to live our life, because our life is focused on the spiritual.

If we focus on the spiritual, God states that the other necessities of life will be added to us all for our spiritual good. And we've been through that scripture which highlights the fact that well, yes, we should have physical desires and we should have physical plans all within God's law, all within God's word, but within that we should also have spiritual focus, the spiritual focus of *how* we are to live our life. Our thoughts, our words and actions need to be in tune with God's way of thinking. And if we have that focus, God says He will add all these other necessities of life that we need to live our life, according to a spiritual outcome, what is best for us on a spiritual level. Now, we always don't see that physical things have a spiritual outcome. We plan our life on a physical level, but often we actually don't see and we can't see until much later what the actual spiritual development is happening in our life at that time. We just can't see it.

The truth is we must plan the physical *around* the spiritual. So the spiritual is our main focus. We focus on the spiritual first, and that spiritual focus is, of course, how to worship God, which is outlined in the first four Commandments and then how to love our neighbor, and that is our focus in life. The way we act towards others, the way we think towards others, and how we treat others is our focus. So they are all spiritual things we focus on. And then from that we can then plan our physical life in accordance with that spiritual focus. We must stay focused on placing God first in our life at all times.

Let's look at **Psalm 147:1-20 – Praise the LORD!** And that is “Give glory to God!” That word “LORD” there is “Yahh” (Yaw). **For it is good to sing praises to our God, to Elohim, for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.** Praise is fitting. That scripture really is highlighting the fact that God *should* be glorified, He *should* be praised, and it is fitting because He is God. He is Almighty God.

Now it goes on and we can look at this next lot of scriptures and view it on a spiritual level. **Verse 2 – The LORD builds up Jerusalem.** And of course, we know that Jerusalem points to peace. It's the way to peace, and we can also refer this to the Church, which is a way to peace. The Church *is* a body, the Body of Christ, called out ones, and they are on a journey to peace. **He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.** And you can look at that and say, well, that actually has happened to many, that I, as a member of the Body of Christ, previously was cast out of Israel. I was cast out, from the point of the Apostasy happening, God spewed me out of His mouth and I was an outcast of Israel, an outcast from the Church of God. And this can also refer to those that are called, because we *are* virtually outcasts of Israel. We're not connected to Israel when we are in the world, when we have not been called. So this can refer to those that have been awakened and also those that are called into a relationship with God.

Verse 3 – He heals the broken hearted, so He makes us healthy spiritually. Now, He is healing us. That is the purpose of our calling, is that God is healing our minds. Because apart from God, if we have a natural carnal mind, our mind needs healing, and “the broken hearted,” which is the inner thinking that is being repaired, and it's being repaired by God's spirit. So He heals the broken hearted, and when we have no relationship with God, when we cut ourselves off because of unrepented sin – so God does heal *IF* we repent. He heals the broken hearted, and therefore, we need to be in a state of repentance so that God can heal us. **He binds up their wounds.** And that word “wounds” there is “the pain and the hurt.” Well, that is because there *is* hurt and pain because of sin. God says that He will heal our thinking, heal our minds, and He will bind up our wounds, our sins will be covered, because God is healing our mind based on our choice to repent. And we're given the gift of repentance and we *choose* to repent – God says He will heal us.

To know and understand this truth (the truth of repentance and about being healed spiritually) brings great peace to our thinking. So this is a way of peace, because once we understand what God is doing in our life, it actually brings peace to us. We now see ourselves as we really are, the natural carnal mind, and therefore, we understand what God is doing. He grants us repentance and He brings peace to our thinking, and therefore, we are on this path of peace because we are *in* the Church of God, we are part of the Body of Christ, and we are walking to Jerusalem, which is the spiritual Kingdom of God, of course, which is true peace. Peace is being *in* the Kingdom of God as a spirit being. That's when *true* peace has been achieved. But we're on this path of peace. We're on our way *to* Jerusalem. Even though we are in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, where peace *does* exist because of God's holy spirit, we are on this journey.

God is patiently working with us to heal us on a spiritual level. Healing is in the thinking, our *inner* being. So it's all about our minds. We can thank God for His mercy to us at this time. And I've often reflected back to the time when I went to sleep and how joyous I was when I was awakened. And I remember the very day that I actually took the step to take action, on a physical level, but also on a spiritual level, to leave a previous association, to phone up and to say that I was no longer associated with that particular Church, which was completely asleep. And I look back now at that time and what a great blessing, what a joy it was when we realized what had happened to us because we didn't have a clue what was actually happening to us during that period after the Apostasy. We thought we were right in our own eyes, of course, as all did, until God actually awakened us and brought us back into a relationship with Him so that He could begin to continue the process of healing our minds. And I look back at that with *great joy* because of the understanding that God gave us at that time, to actually *know* what had happened, that “time *had* run out,” time had run out for me on a personal level, and that I was actually dead asleep and that I wasn't aware of what had taken place. And all of those years that I was asleep God was moving His Church forward. The Church continued to grow. God's true Church continued to grow while I continued to sleep. And then the awakening that took place, and basically the final outcome of that awakening was in December of 2005, when I actually made the choice because God led me to that point, to make a choice, with my wife, to actually associate again back with God's true Church. And I look at that with great fondness and great rejoicing and with great humility, because I fully understand what was happening to me now during that period of ten years when I was asleep.

Verse 4 – He counts, and that is “sets or assigns,” **the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.** Now, we can look at this in two ways – the physical refers to the stars and the planets. So God has counted them. He has numbered them all. He knows the number of the stars. Now, man hasn't really got a real idea. They've got a rough idea and they've made estimates, but they actually do not really know because they've never gone to the ends far enough to see how much more there is. Mankind can

give an estimate only, and they really...it's a guess. It's man's reasoning and guessing, really. But God actually knows every number of the physical planets and He calls them all by name. So He knows them because He created them. So how great is God's mind?

But we can look at this on a spiritual level also, which is a reference of course to "stars," which is the angelic realm. He numbers them all. God knows the exact number of the spirit beings that He has created, and He calls them all by name! Well, He created them as individuals and they were created for a role and a purpose, and that purpose was, of course, to serve, to be servants, and they eventually found out that they were to be servants their life, and the main part of their service was to service and support the role of God's purpose, which is the creation of Elohim. And we understand that *that* was one of the biggest issues that Lucifer ran into, that when he fully comprehended what God was doing that then his thinking began to change.

So God does count and He has counted and He knows the full number of the stars, both physical and spiritual, and He calls them all by name. Now, *this* is a great and wonderful thing! To understand God's purpose in the creation, and also the creation of a spirit realm and a physical realm, is a great blessing, and therefore, we can glorify God because of His greatness. How great is God that He can number them and He can name them all?

Now, I often, when I meet people, after seeing someone after five or six years I know them by facial recognition – and this often happens even within the Church, because you meet so many people over so many years of a lifetime, and I see a face and I know them, and I know roughly the background or the connection I have with them, but their name fully escapes me. And therefore, sometimes it's difficult because *they* often come up and mention my name and say, "Hi, Wayne! How are you going?" And I'm struggling in my mind thinking, "What's their name?" I know who they are associated to. I know them from somewhere along the way. After 30 years in God's Church, sometimes you run into people and you think, "Well, are they part of the Church or are they part of where I used to work a long time ago in all the different roles and employment that I've had?" And therefore, you struggle with the name. Well, God doesn't forget. God does not forget. He knows *all* things. He remembers *all* things, and He established this. So how great is God compared to the human mind? There is no comparison.

And that's one of the problems with mankind, is that we have a tendency to bring God *down* to a *human level*; hence, God warns us about idolatry. He warns us about placing other things before Him because that's the human tendency. We want to and we desire within our minds to bring God into something that we can manage within our minds, so we actually *humanize* God. That's what we tend to do. We humanize God or something that we can comprehend. We know that we're created in His image in the sense of a shape and appearance and that God has eyes, and God has a mind that thinks, but *we* tend to bring Him down to bring Him into a human form, and we do that by limiting God. God *is* all powerful. He is all mighty, and He doesn't forget, whereas we're not. We're pathetic, we're weak, and we forget. We are decaying. That is what has been appointed to us. We are in a state of decay. And it's not until you get much older, and then you look back and you realize what's happened in life, and you look forward and you realize that everything is temporary. Everything is temporary and time is going to run out for us as humans. That's been the process of man for 6,000 years; people live and people die.

Verse 5 – Great *is* our LORD, and mighty in power, and that is strength *and* authority. **His understanding *is* infinite.** God's mind cannot be reasoned on a physical level. We try to reason out what God, about God, but we can't. God *is* all powerful! His understanding, His *intellect* is infinite; it cannot be counted or measured. It's immeasurable, not able to be fully comprehended by the human mind. It's not

possible! The only reason that we have an aspect of understanding of who God is and what God is, is because God has revealed Himself to us. So how foolish is it to limit God? How foolish? Well, that's our tendency. We do that.

Another scripture, it says this in another way. It says, "The Almighty has sway or control over *everything*, because He *is* almighty in power and authority." God is in control of His creation, spiritually and physically. Isn't that incredible to understand that? *We* understand that. Mankind, because they haven't had access to God or haven't had the opportunity to know God to the degree we do, and we know God in a limited way, brethren. We know God in a limited way. God has existed for eternity and we can't grasp that. The human mind hasn't been given that potential, that opportunity, to understand what it is to be Almighty, to understand what it is to be Eternal. We are not able to comprehend it.

Verse 6 – The LORD lifts up, and that is “surrounds and restores on a spiritual level,” **the humble**, those that are lowly *in thinking*. **He casts down the wicked to the ground**, but He will cast down, He will *humble* sinners. Now, we can look at this two ways. We understand that through the gift of humility that if we choose to remain humble that God will lift us up on a spiritual level. We will grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom because of humility, and that's what God requires of us. God looks for humility in our thinking, but first of all, of course, we have to be called and have God's spirit to understand what humility is, and we understand that we come to the decision, we come to the *knowledge* that of ourselves (on a physical level, this human mind), we can do nothing spiritually! Now, if we understand that and we grasp it and we admit it and we live it, we then know that all good works come from God through us out to the benefit of others, and it's *not us*. It's *not us*, from our natural carnal mind. It's only by the power of God's holy spirit that good works can happen.

Now, we understand that God will lift us up because He lives in us. We are glorified because we carry God's mind, we carry God's spirit, and therefore, if we understand it, we can be lowly in our thinking, knowing that it's not us, that no good comes from us. The natural carnal mind doesn't have “good.” But it says here also that “He casts down to the ground the wicked.” So the sinner, the unrepentant sinner, is cast down because of their pride. God cannot work with pride, but God says that He will humble sinners. He will bring them down to the ground. Well, this can be two-fold, that they will be humbled at a time when they are called – mankind is soon to be humbled – but when they are called they are humbled and come to see their true self. But in the end, the unrepentant sinner will be brought down to the ground, to ashes. And you know, there is a scripture that says, “Dust to dust...” Well, it's ground to ground, ashes to ashes, because the end result of an unrepentant sinner is to be turned to ashes. So God is going to cast the wicked down and destroy them in (by the way of) a second death. So they're going to be cast down. They are going to be humbled because they are going to cease to exist.

Verse 7 – Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praises on a harp to our God. Well, this attitude that we should have of thanksgiving is an attitude that we can choose. So when we look at our lives, or we can look at any subject, we should look at it from two angles. We can look at it from a positive way or we can look on a negative way. So the pity-party happens when we look at it on a negative way, which is, "Woe is me! What is happening?" Rather than the understanding that we should have about being thankful for *every* situation we are in no matter what it is, because there *is* a spiritual opportunity within *every* physical situation. There *is* a spiritual opportunity for us, brethren, no matter the physical situation.

Now, often we make physical decisions, and that's what life is about, making physical decisions, and we understand that God will always be and *is* with us as long as we are in the truth, in unity with God, that

He will be with us in that decision. It doesn't mean to say that God *made* the decision for us, because what would be the point of God making every decision for us? We'd become robots. No, we have to make physical decisions, which we do. We make physical choices knowing that we've prayed about it, asked God for guidance, and remembering that often when we pray about this guidance, it's often guidance on a physical level. We want to make right decisions on a physical level. Well, we can make right decisions on a physical level based on God's spirit and the conviction and the knowledge we have of His way of life, whether it's right or wrong.

So, is the decision we make right or wrong? Well, it's only right and wrong in the real terms *if* it is involving sin. Well, if there is sin involved in the decision, it's a wrong decision. If there is no sin involved, well, it *could* be good or it *could* be bad. We just don't know. I know from personal experiences where I have sold one house and moved to another because I wanted peace and quiet and we've researched and done all these things, but it's a physical decision. There is no sin involved in moving from one house to another one, rental to another. There is no sin involved. It's just a choice. I know from experience that you can research all you like and you can do all the wonderful things that you want to do on a physical level, ask God to guide the decision, and then only to find out that the house next door, that every Saturday there was a drummer and he had a band that turned up in the morning and they played for 5-6 hours in a rock band. Was God involved in that decision or was it just something that I made? God worked with me during that decision because I learned a lot of lessons about my own anger, my own selfishness, and the way that I handled it, and how things went wrong and all the things that I did that I learned from it because of a physical decision. Now, God, I'm sure, didn't make me move into that house so that I would suffer that. It was a decision that I made, but I knew, but God was still there. He was working with me. He wasn't dwelling *in* me, but God was working *with me* to achieve an outcome where He would awaken me in December of 2005.

So we can make these decisions in life, physical ones, and is God in it? Well, God is *with* us and God is *in* us, and that's the most important thing – is that we turn to God and rely on Him so that we don't sin. Because it is all about whether we sin or whether we don't. So *we* can sing to God with thanksgiving! We can take a positive approach and thank God for all situations because we are viewing it on a *spiritual level*. We're "to sing praises on a harp to our God." So we are to rejoice. We're to rejoice before God, and we've got *so much* to rejoice about, brethren! We have so much to rejoice about! The fact I know, I rejoice that I was actually awakened, and every time I talk about it, it brings a level of humility in me, thinking in me of how blessed and how fortunate that my wife and myself are out of all the thousands of people that we have known while in God's Church and being associated with God's Church and God's people, that *we* were chosen to be awakened. Now, *how great is God? How great is God* that He did that for me and He didn't do it for someone else at this point in time? How humbling is *that*? And I can rejoice in that! I rejoice in the fact that I *am* associated with God's true Church, that God is still with me being patient and merciful, working with me with all my human mistakes, my human error and my human reasoning. Just so blessed! So blessed!

So I can rejoice in God. I rejoice *to* God. I sing praises to His name because I have a thankful attitude for what has happened to me – from my calling to going to sleep to being awakened, and now being part of the Body of Christ and all the truth that has been revealed to me. It's such a wonderful blessing! There is so much to be thankful for on a spiritual level. We can be thankful also on a physical level if we understand that there is a spiritual component to our life, that every physical thing happening to us there is a spiritual outcome and it is for our good. It's something to learn from. It's something to grow from on a spiritual level.

Verse 8 – continuing on about God... **Who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares the rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains.** So God does all this. It's all part of God's creation and God is in control of His creation and it's all for a purpose.

Verse 9 – **He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry. He does not delight in the strength of the horse,** and it's referring here, saying that God is not dependant on, He doesn't *rely* on the strength of a horse, on something physical. God is not dependant. He is not controlled or reliant on the strength of something on a human level. **He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.** God is not reliant on *man's* strength. God is all powerful, all mighty. He doesn't need *man* to gain any strength from. So when it comes to wars and things, God doesn't need mankind. He doesn't need a big army to fight another army. He doesn't need someone to give Him power and strength. God is all mighty. God is all powerful, so He doesn't need mankind to do anything in the sense of making God more powerful. God *is* already all powerful, all mighty, and man adds no value to God on a physical level as far as strength or offering power or nuclear weapons. None of that is adding anything to God because God is all mighty!

God does not have pleasure in us when we become self-reliant (strength of a horse or strength of a man, the legs, our legs, how fast we can run or whatever)—so, if we become self-reliant or rely on anything other than Him. So God doesn't take any pleasure in our focusing on what *we think we have*, our *own* ability, because God give us all abilities anyway. All abilities are gifts from God. He allows it. God says He takes no pleasure in us taking our own strength, our own reliance, you know, becoming self-reliant, thinking *we* are something.

God has revealed to us that He is all mighty, so why would we look to or trust *anything* other than God? Well, this goes back to that saying, "Of myself I can do nothing," because we understand that we can *only* rely on God for all things. Now, we rely on God to provide us the physical needs of life, but more importantly, brethren, *we rely, totally rely* that *God* will provide us *His* spirit so that we can have a spiritual life in the future called Elohim.

Verse 11 – **The LORD takes pleasure in...** So what does God take pleasure in? It says previously that He doesn't take pleasure in the strength of a horse or the legs of a man, how fast somebody can run, or man's own perceived power. **The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.** So God takes pleasure in *us*, brethren! God takes pleasure in us, in the choices that we make to not sin, to repent. *That's* what God takes pleasure in! So to fear God is to hate sin. Now, we've covered this Proverb previously in previous sermons, about fearing God: "The fear of God is to hate evil." Well, how can we hate evil? Only when God's spirit lives and dwells in us, then we begin to see sin, we understand it through the 10 Commandments. But we see it in ourselves and we learn to hate it. We are disgusted by our thoughts, our words, and our actions, what we do. We cry out to God to get rid of this mind, this way we think. So God says He takes pleasure in us when we hate sin, when we fear Him, when we respect Him, when we become *obedient* to *His word*. And it says, **in those who hope in His mercy.** We hope in God's mercy. *We know* God's mercy. The fact that we are part of the Body of Christ reveals God's mercy. The fact that we can see sin reveals God's mercy. God is all merciful. He is forgiving. God is all powerful and merciful! What a wonderful combination!

So, God is for us, brethren. God is for us, and His mercy endures forever. Because that is what God is; God is merciful. He looks to be forgiving. God looks to forgive upon repentance and He gives us the gift of repentance. We fear Him, we respect His power, we respect His authority, we respect His word, we become obedient to His word, and then we hope. We rely on His mercy. Because without God's mercy,

what have we got? Nothing! We have nothing without God's mercy. We praise God for His mercy, how each time we go before Him in a state of repentance that God has promised – God has promised – that if we are genuinely, sincerely, faithfully repenting He will forgive us, because He is all merciful. God is mercy. So we hope in that. That's our trust. That's our hope that God will continue to offer His mercy. And His word says He will continue to offer His mercy *if* we continue to stay in a state of humility by choice – by the power of God's spirit and our choice – that we would humble ourselves and we stay in a state of repentance. Always repenting before God, God says He will always be merciful.

How merciful is God that He has either called us into the Body of Christ or awakened us? How merciful is God? Now, to experience an awakening we see God's mercy at work. And anybody that has been awakened and stays in the faith, stays in unity with God's word, *understands God's mercy*, because we look back and see what we were and what had happened to us. And we realize how asleep we were. We'd been cut off from God's holy spirit and how merciful was God to then awaken us! Out of all the thousands of people, God awakened us! How incredible! How merciful is God! How *powerful* is God!

Verse 12 – Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! And this can refer to the Church. **Praise your God, O Zion!** Well, we know that symbolically Zion can point to the Kingdom of God. So the angelic realm that exists there, that have remained obedient to God, rejoice and praise their God because they know God is all powerful and all merciful.

Verse 13 – For He has strengthened the bars of your gates. In other words, He's provided protection spiritually by the truth that is in us. So the “bars of your gates,” which are, you know, if you look at a house, it has bars at the windows which are there for protection. Well, “bars at a gate,” if you have a big gate and you have big bars in front of it, metal bars, it's there for protection. So God says that He has provided us protection, “For He has strengthened” us. In other words, it is a spiritual matter, that God is for us and He is strengthening us. He is the one who defends us, and He defends us because we remain faithful and we fear Him.

He has blessed your children within you. We, brethren, *are* His children. We are children of God. And “within,” it says here, it's referring to Zion or the Church. If you look back at verse 12, it says, “O Jerusalem,” or the Church. God has strengthened us because we are in the Church. He protects us because we are in the Church, and He has blessed children of Jerusalem, those in the Body of Christ, the Church of God. And He says He has strengthened us and He has blessed us. Well, He has! We are children of God while we remain *in the truth*, in the Church, and that is the most important thing that we must come to understand, brethren, that we must stay connected to the vine. And that is a choice. We have to stay in unity with God. We have to remain in the faith and we are blessed by God if we are remaining in the faith.

Verse 14 – He makes peace *in* your borders. In other words, that's the peace of mind that is given to us because we know – we know why – we know why we exist. We know why we were called. So He makes peace within our borders. And there *can* be peace in our life, brethren, because of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us.

He fills you with the finest wheat. So God provides for us. And this is always referring back to verse 12, of course, which is about the Church, Jerusalem, “O Zion.” And we can praise God because of these very things, because He's strengthening us, because He brings peace through the power of His holy spirit into our mind, “And He fills us with the finest wheat.” Well, this is talking about what He provides on a spiritual level, spiritual food. The truth sets us free from the bondage of this world's thinking, and that is

the finest wheat. We have been provided the truth. We *understand* God's thinking (to a degree). We understand what God is doing at this end-time, how He is working and developing a Family called "Elohim." And He has a purpose for all mankind, and at this particular time within the Body of Christ, the Church of God, He is working out *His* purpose, and that is a *spiritual purpose*. So we have been provided with the finest wheat, spiritual food, which is the truth.

He sends out His command, His word, *to the earth*; His word runs very swiftly. So when God desires or plans an outcome in something, it will happen exactly as it was planned. Exactly! So we don't have to fret or worry or be concerned or be anxious about life, because God's will, will be achieved.

In the prayer that was outlined in Matthew, it says, "Your will be done." Well, that's exactly what is happening now. And people often look at the Church now and say, "Well, what's happening within the Church of God in the condition of where we find our end-time apostle? What is happening?" What is actually happening is God's will is being achieved. God's will is being achieved on a *spiritual level* within *all* of His people. God is working with us for an outcome, and that outcome is *spiritual*, and therefore, we stay focused on the spiritual and not on the physical. We can have physical plans, yes, but always, the spiritual comes first.

Verse 16 – He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; He casts out His hail like morsels; Who can stand before His cold? Well, we understand that's a question. Nothing! Because God is in control of all things. God's will, will be done. His will, will be achieved *in us*, which is a spiritual outcome.

He sends out His word and melts them, so what God plans, what God says, will happen. **He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow. He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgements to Israel,** Church of God. God declares His word. God tells us what is happening and God's will, will be achieved within His Church, and it is all about focusing on a spiritual level.

He has not dealt thus with any nation, so God isn't dealing with the world the same way. It's not with any other group of people that call themselves, "the Church of God," and it's not any nation of the world. **And As His judgements, they...** talking about the nations and the scattered Churches... **they have not known them.** But, brethren, we know them. We *know* them.

And it finishes off there, says, **Praise the LORD!** Yes, we can praise. We can give glory. We can be thankful to God that He has chosen us as a chosen generation, a chosen nation, talking about on a spiritual level, chosen in the sense of being placed into the Church of God—PKG. And there is no other group where God is working and He has given us His judgements and the world doesn't know them and the scattered Churches don't *know* them. Brethren, what a great glory and an honor it is. What humility it should create in us that we understand the truth, that we should focus on staying close to God and to God's way of life. And that can only be done through decisions that we make. We have to choose, brethren. God will empower it, but there has to be this inner thinking, this inner desire, to want God to live and dwell in us. We have to desire it! We have a choice about what we will do every day. We have a choice over a 24 hour period, what we will do in that 24 hour period. It is a choice.

Do we want to neglect and turn away from God? Or do we want to draw closer to God? And when we get into environments where we may sin, where we may say something wrong or think something wrong, in a given day, we have that opportunity to repent, to just acknowledge we're pathetic, we're weak, our natural carnal mind is hostile against God. Let's be open and honest about it. That's the way

we are! We don't go a whole day thinking clearly and accurately all the time towards everybody; it's not possible unless God's spirit dwells in us to the full degree. And we know we have an aspect of God's spirit, and therefore, put in the right environment, guess what we will do? We will sin. It's a *guarantee*! It's a *given*! It *will* happen! That is the history of mankind.

Remember when Paul turned around and said, "After twenty five years, O wretched man that I am!" No matter how long we're in God's Church, "O wretched man or woman that I am," because we have a natural carnal mind and it doesn't always have God's spirit working in, out to the benefit of others, because we made choices in life and we don't always think correctly and we always don't *stop* the evil thought, that negative ill will thought towards others. We have a choice sometimes to choose it, but there is a temporary pleasure in sin, and therefore, we don't always stop and cut it off.

Psalm 149:1-9. No one can know God or His way of life unless God reveals it *to* them. So, we have been called and we know God's way of life. And this is why we are to stay focused on the spiritual aspects of our life rather than dwelling overly on the physical.

Psalm 149:1 – Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the assembly of the saints, the faithful ones, those called out of the world *into* the Church of God. We praise God by giving all glory, all honor, and all credit to Him for all good. So all good that comes from us, any spiritual good that comes from us, we give God the praise for it. We give God the honor for it because we know that it was Him. So we, as “the assembly of the saints,” which we are, we praise God because of His great power. We sing to God a new song, a song of praise, of being positive and rejoicing in the truth.

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker. Well, who made us, brethren? Israel, spiritual Israel today, the Church of God, *who* made it? Well, God! We are *God's* Church; God made the Church through Jesus Christ. **Let the children of Zion be joyful in their KING.** Well we know we can rejoice. God the Father is KING, and Jesus Christ has been appointed as King of kings, yet to be fulfilled because He is a King and He is coming back as King of kings, and there will be those, the 144,000, that are resurrected at His return, that will be kings and rulers on this earth. But they will be kings and Christ will be the King *of* kings. So we can rejoice in this, brethren. We rejoice *in our Maker*! We rejoice in Yahweh Elohim.

Verse 3 – Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and the harp. For the LORD takes pleasure, He takes delight, **in His people.** That's *us*, brethren. God is focused *on us*! And the continuation there, there is a promise. **He will beautify the humble with salvation.** Now this scripture, I found really quite encouraging, because if we just look at this – because we can get caught up in the aspects of life and the pity-parties that we all have at different times and how we desire other things that would be a better way for ourselves and for others. We look at things often on a physical level without understanding that God is working with a person on a spiritual level. So we can look at physical situations in people's lives and often we desire that they weren't going through some of those physical trials, yet it's *in* that physical trial that God is working, because God is creating Elohim.

So God takes *pleasure* in His people. God *loves* us, brethren. He takes pleasure in us because He is working with us for an outcome. And if we could *only grasp* (which our mind can't), if our mind could only grasp the beauty of what God is really doing in creating Elohim. Here we are. We are nothing. We are just weak, pathetic human beings that have a natural carnal mind motivated by selfishness. We look after ourselves. We do everything to please ourselves. We lift ourselves up in our own thinking, in our pride – we have all this. And yet, God then in His great mercy calls us and brings us into a relationship

with Him and He takes pleasure in us because He works with us, because He sees the end result. But we don't! We often *don't* see the end result! We can't even comprehend the end result, really. We talk about many of these things, about entering Elohim and spirit – do we fully grasp what it's really like? Well, we can't. We can't, because the human mind can't fully grasp it all. We have this hope we have, but we know that God takes pleasure in us because *He*, in His great mercy, has decided to take this clay, this *physical thing* that didn't exist before, and to create it, put a spirit in man and then place His holy spirit in it, to live in it, to live out to the benefit of other bits of clay, to benefit it for the purpose of giving it, glorifying it, or giving it *life everlasting!* How great is God? How merciful is God that He would do *that* for us? Isn't that amazing? We're *nothing*, and yet He chooses to do that for us! Well, how great is God!

And He takes pleasure in us, in the Church of God. We are His delight. We are His focus. And He promises He “will beautify the humble with salvation.” Well, a person can only be humble if they have God's spirit. That's the only way we can be humble because it's God's gift to us, the gift of humility because humility is a spiritual matter, it's a way of thinking, and it is powered by God's holy spirit. So to understand that of ourselves we can do nothing spiritually good, *that* is the beginning of humility. That is the beginning of humility, because we understand that it's *God* that does the works *in and through* us. We have our part through choice, that when we're confronted with various situations we have a choice what to do, but if we yield to, if we yield to God's spirit working in us, we will be beautified with *salvation*, life everlasting. So we are in the process of being saved. We can rejoice in that, brethren. How merciful is God that at this time He has glorified us with His holy spirit living in us, that we can think like God, all for the purpose of *saving us*, giving us salvation, saving us from our natural carnal mind, our physical state into a spiritual state. So we are in the process. If we are in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, and we're connected to God, we have God's spirit, we are *in* the process of being saved.

Now, we're *not* in the process of being saved if we are cut off from God because of unrepentant sin. We become *dormant*. The flow of God's spirit will cease because of an unrepentant sin. So it is important that we remain repentant. And when we go through those battles in our mind and when we say something wrong or think something wrong or act out in a role of something that we shouldn't, we should, brethren, repent quickly. The secret to life: repent quickly. Because we are in the process of being saved. So God says as a promise He will beautify the humble, those that have God's spirit, with salvation. We're going to be changed into spirit. We're going to be changed into Elohim at some point in time.

We are being beautified by God through the power of His holy spirit dwelling in us. So we are being beautified now. We have aspects of God's spirit in us; therefore, God says we are beautiful. We are beautiful on a spiritual level. God's spirit beautifies us. We know God's plan of salvation. How glorious is that? How great is God's mercy! How great is God's mercy. That's why God is all mighty. God is all mighty because He has going to achieve His plan of salvation for us.

Verse 5 – Let the saints be joyful in glory, and now this is talking about now as a physical, but also when we are changed to spirit. So, **Let the saints be joyful in glory**. So we can now be joyful to God because of the glory that dwells in us, the fact that we have been called, and we have God's spirit dwelling in us, but also, in the future when changed to spirit beings we'll be able to glorify God, give all the glory and the credit to God. Now, you can imagine as a spirit being that you *would* glorify God for the rest of your life in your thinking, because you would know what you were. We were physical created beings that are now granted the gift of life everlasting. You would *always glorify God*, because *God did it all!* God did it all! And to *know and understand* it and to know and understand it forever in our minds, to think like

God, you would always give glory and credit to God and Jesus Christ for what He has achieved, what God has achieved in and through Jesus Christ.

Let them sing aloud on their beds. So here we are, brethren, we have this opportunity now to rejoice before God for what He is doing, to truly in genuine and sincere humility glorify and praise God for His plan for us *and* for all mankind.

Verse 6 – Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand. Well, that is talking about the Word of God, God's very thinking because God's Word *is* as a two-edged sword because it cuts going in, it cuts going out, it can change the natural carnal mind – God's Word, God's spirit. And it says, let it be “in their hand.” Why? **To execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples,** because God is going to do it. **To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written, the recorded, judgement,** and that is the justice of God, because God is just and His judgements are righteous and just, because that *is* the way God is. God does nothing that is not right or just because God is righteous and His judgements are righteous. They are fair. They are *honest*.

This honor, this glory, have all His saints. Isn't that incredible? We are going to execute what is written as judgements of God on the nations, because it says here, “This honour,” this glory, “have all His saints.” So those that are changed into Elohim are going to have the opportunity to judge the nations as kings. And we know that is from the point of a resurrection of 144,000.

So this is an honor that is going to be given to all the saints, to be able to use God's Word to help and support other human beings during the Millennium and during The Hundred Years. And they will execute judgements on the nations and there will be punishments that will come from Jesus Christ and the 144,000. And it says here, “This honour,” this honor of representing God, of being Elohim, “have all of His saints.” It's something that is going to be granted to us.

Praise the LORD! So why should we praise God? Because of His great power! Now, it's an honor, because it's an honor to do the will of God. That's what the honor is. To be able to do God's will, to act in righteousness, to act in fairness, to act with God's thinking *is* a great honour. Human beings just simply don't understand what God is really like, His great, merciful, loving judgements that are to come.

I remember back on a particular TV program a long time ago there was a professor, he was a scientist. And he used to do experiments in front of the camera for, basically, younger children and students, and he used to ask the question, which is, “Why is it so?” And then he'd say, “Why is it so?” and he'd add two chemicals together, and therefore, there would be a reaction, and he would show you why it was so. It was because of the combination of various chemicals. And he always used to say, “Well, why is it so?” I remember him well in my mind.

On a spiritual level, why is God's Church the size that it is? In other words, why is it so? We can ask that question on a spiritual level. Why is it so? Well, the first point is that the size of the Church is *exactly* as God planned it. This is *exactly* as God planned it. God adds to the Body as *He* sees fit because it's His Church, and the Head of the Church is Jesus Christ. So why are things the way they are? Well, because it's the way God has planned it. It's *God* that is in charge of the Church. It's God that's in charge of the universe.

Now, we can learn a lot from a letter that Paul wrote to Titus, and this is outlining why it is that we need to stay focused. **Titus 1:1-4 – Paul, a bondservant of God**, he's a servant of God, **and an apostle of Jesus Christ**, an apostle is one sent forth representing Jesus Christ and God, **according to the faith of God's elect**, those that are chosen, **and the acknowledgment of the truth**, so the precise and correct *knowledge* of God's way, **which accords with Godliness**, so it's according to Godliness. Now, this is saying Paul, who was an apostle of God, he'd been called by God, and he's an apostle of Jesus Christ, because he'd had an interaction with Jesus Christ – you remember that, on the road to Damascus – and he is according to the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth. So we have this knowledge of the truth, this precise and correct knowledge that God has placed into us, the knowledge of the truth, “the present truth” that we have, the present understanding that we have of those truths. And it is according to Godliness, into God's way of thinking.

Verse 2 – And this is the reason we are to stay focused, **in hope**, and that is the faith and expectation, because that's what hope is. Hope is having faith and an expectation of something, something to come that we haven't seen yet, but we hope for it. We desire it. **In the hope of** – what? – **and of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time**. So this everlasting life as a spirit being in Elohim is what God has promised, and God can't lie, so this is why we are to stay focused because the outcome is to enter Elohim. We desire to be with God.

I often think about...I crave for, I desire the day that I don't sin, the day that I don't think stupid things, the day that I don't *say* stupid things, the day that I don't raise up in my own pride and say things or do things in pride. I *yearn* for that day! I really look forward to it! Deep down I look forward to it because I'm actually tired of sin. I'm tired of myself, and I yearn. And I know, brethren, there are a lot of people that have been in God's Church a long time, that in the end, we become tired. And the reason we become tired is because we've become *tired of ourselves*. We are tired! It's not tired of the battle – we're never to become tired of the battle – but we're tired because we continue the same sin for so long. You know, we repent of it, we discussed it with ourselves and we don't want to be that way. We don't want to have this ill will. We don't want to say something stupid, and we repent of it and we move forward with confidence and with *eagerness* not to do it and only to find that we did the same thing again! Different environment, but did the same thing! Well, we yearn for eternal life. We yearn to be out of this body, to put it off. We want to be changed. We desire to have the mind of God that *cannot* sin... the mind of God that cannot sin.

So this is the *hope* that is in us, the hope of eternal life, which God (who cannot lie) promised before time. This is something that God has planned and it will be achieved. We have to go through that process and we're never to become tired of the battle, but we can become tired of ourselves, and we can then say with a sincere and genuine heart, "O wretched man/woman that I am! Who can save me from this body of death?" That's right! That's what we can say. Well, we know who can. It's through God's mercy and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Verse 3 – **but has in due time**, and that's according to God's timing, **manifested His word through preaching**. It's how God speaks to His people, through the ministry by the power of His holy spirit, **which was committed to me according to the Commandment of God our Saviour**. So this is about being delivered. God is our Saviour and it's done through Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is our Saviour because God appointed Him to that role.

To Titus, and Titus was a gentile and he had travelled and he was a companion with Paul on his journeys. **To Titus, a true son in our common faith**. So they had the same belief, they believed the same

thing, they had the same spirit (God's spirit), they were in unity, they were of a "common faith." **Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour**, the Deliverer. So this virtually outlines what our life is about. This is why we stay focused because we have this hope in God, who cannot lie. And that's our hope. That's why we are determined to stay focused.

I want to quickly look at Truth #42:

42 (21) God the Father is Yahweh Elohim and He alone has eternally existed.

Now, this is an incredible truth, because previously in God's Church this was a truth that had been lost, and as God was bringing truth back into the Church, and during the period of Mr. Armstrong, this was not understood. But God has revealed this in 2005 about this great truth. Now, if you had the understanding previously of the belief and the understanding that we had that Jesus Christ had previously existed, much of the credit and glory that belonged to God was actually given to Jesus Christ. Well, we understand from this truth that God has placed into the Church that *God* is the Almighty God and that *He* is *alone* as Yahweh Elohim. He is the one true God that has eternally existed. He has life inherent *in Himself*.

Continuing on in Truth #42:

The teaching that Jesus Christ had always existed is a holdover from the Protestant teaching of the Trinity. There is only one Almighty God who has eternal existence.

Isaiah 45:5. Now, I remember hearing this particular truth. It had been placed in the truth in 2005, during the Feast of 2005. My awakening came to its conclusion in December of 2005. So in the first stages of being awakened, my wife and myself, I had actually read *The Prophesied End-Time* and I was quite shocked about what was in that book, and I realized that I *had* been asleep and that I was not in the truth, that I was not part of the true Church of God at that time. And so by the time we got to December of 2005, it was actually early December *before* I had actually come to hear this particular truth. This Truth 42 about "God the Father *is* Yahweh Elohim and He alone has eternally existed," was not in my thinking up until early December of 2005. It had been placed in the Church, but my wife and myself hadn't heard it or been granted the gift of understanding at that time, so we were on the process of coming out of the previous church, "The United Church of God," and coming into the truth. And from that, we hadn't heard this truth. We'd heard lots of other things and we were quite shocked about what we had lacked in our understanding. We thought we knew things, but we knew nothing, really.

So when we heard this, it was a great joy, and we had various battles (and I did in particular), about various scriptures that had been placed in my mind before to *prove* that Jesus Christ had existed before. And those scriptures, every time I would hear a particular sermon about this, about God the Father being the only true God, scriptures would just pop out in my mind and I would go to those particular scriptures in my mind (even in the middle of a sermon) because I needed answers to the particular scriptures. And those scriptures over time, during that Feast period, Mr. Weinland covered them. God provided answers to *all* of those scriptures. All of those scriptures were answered. So it was about being patient from the first sermon all the way through to Day 8 about Melchizedek. And to come to that understanding through the power of God's spirit working with me, it was a great relief. It was a great joy to know that there *was* one true God, Yahweh Elohim. And this is a belief (a doctrine) that God has placed in the Church and it is so beautiful. This is one of the most beautiful truths that any human can

come to understand, that there is only one true God that is all mighty, all loving and from that we can understand so much more.

So all the credit and all the glory *now* could be pointed to where it belonged – to the Great God of the universe!

Isaiah 45:5 – I am the LORD, Yahweh, the Self-Existing One, **and there is no other; There is no God**, no Elohim, **besides**, except, only, **Me. I gird you**, I provide for you, **though you have not known Me**. So we didn't know God at that particular time and here it is talking about Israel, but they didn't really *know* the one true God. And we know God to a degree now, brethren, but we really don't fully *know* God. We know what He has revealed of Himself *to us*, but do we really know God? Well, we know God to the degree that God has granted us the gift of knowing, of understanding, of His mind, of who He really is.

2005 was the beginning of God revealing who He really was. Now, this truth separated God's true Church from all the scattered Churches, because all the scattered Churches never had this truth. They didn't have this understanding. God reserved this understanding for a particular time to reveal His true Church. This one doctrine, this one understanding, this present truth has separated us from all the scattered Churches. This was an identifying sign that *this is God's true Church* because God placed it *into* the Church to separate His people from those that are asleep and that are scattered.

Verse 6 – That they, referring to Israel, **may know from the rising of the sun to its setting**, now this, of course, can be spiritual Israel as well, **That there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other**. Now the point is, and the fact is, there is nothing without God. I want to repeat that because sometimes we have statements that are made that virtually we don't dwell on and we don't meditate on as much as we should. But the point is, and the fact is, there *is nothing without God*. Because God created everything! God created a spirit realm and He created spirit beings to be placed in it. God created a physical realm and He created physical things and mankind to be *in* it. But apart from God, separate from God, there was nothing, and there will be nothing unless God sustains it all.

We have been made aware of three dimensions by truth that has been placed in the Church during another Feast season. The truth is there is God and a God realm, then there is a spirit realm, and then there is a physical realm. And that's what we understand at this point in time.

Verse 7 – I, God, Yahweh Elohim, form, and that is “fashion,” **the light and create darkness**, so light and darkness have been *created*! They have been created. **I make**, that is “produce,” **peace**. That word “peace” really is “soundness in thinking” because we have read before God is peace, and that's the path we are on. We are on this path of peace because we're on the path to Elohim. We're on a path to becoming *God* in the sense of Elohim, to have an aspect of God, because God is going to live and dwell in us for eternity or for life everlasting from that point forward, once we are changed. **I make peace and create calamity**, which is “evil,” by creating choice. That's how it is created. **I, the LORD, do all these things**. So it's God that does it all!

God created all things seen and unseen, on a spiritual level and on a physical level. God *is* peace. It's the way God is. It's the way He *thinks* and He is creating peace *in* us! And that's why we are part of the Body of Christ. That's why we are part of the Church. That's why we are called “children,” “begotten sons” of God, because we're on this journey to peace, to Jerusalem – spiritual Jerusalem – Zion, Mount Zion, the Kingdom of God. Because this is the journey we're on and God is the one who provides peace to us by

the power of His holy spirit. So peace can live in us. We can be at peace *if* we are in unity and oneness with God. In other words, we have God's thinking *in* us.

To create peace in us God had to create evil. He had to give us choice. We had to be created with this natural carnal mind that is hostile to God that is the opposite to peace. It's actually *hostile*. It's not peace at all. It's evil. It's sin. Well, God creates peace in us by the power of His holy spirit and that is the process of our conversion. God is *transforming* the mind, transforming the thinking. Now *this* is the reason we have to stay focused on the spiritual, because we understand God's purpose and plan *for* us. He is creating peace *in us* and if we can grasp that and remember it and stay focused on this matter, we will survive what is ahead of us, brethren, because we're always focusing on the spiritual. Physical things are going to happen to us, and that may involve death, that may involve death *before* the return of Jesus Christ. That may involve that. Well, that doesn't matter, because our journey to peace can end at any time. It could end this afternoon. It could end going home. If that is what is best for us on a spiritual level, that God determines life and death, that if we have run our course and God decides that enough is enough for us, "Now I know you," well, that's it. That's the course. We have succeeded in the sense of our focus of staying focused on God and God's Church. Stay focused on giving God the credit, God the glory, rejoicing before God because of what God has done for us – whether it's a calling or whether it's an awakening. That is staying focused.

If we remember back on our calling, meditate what we were before our calling, and now think about, meditate, on what we are now, how much we have changed, how much more we are like God. When we dwell on the truth that we *have* this knowledge, this understanding of the truth, we will stay focused. Now, when we're not focused, we are *not* going to be remembering our calling. We're just simply not. We're not going to remember what we *were*. We're going to be going back to what we were. So if we're not focused on the spiritual, we focus on the physical. It doesn't take long, brethren, because we're going to leave God out of our decisions, out of our choices. Because they *are* all choices. Now, we can make choices in life, we can ask God to intervene and help and guide us in those choices, and there are times when God does because He has an outcome or a purpose of what He's doing. There are other choices where God doesn't. He allows us to make a free moral agency choice, but God will always be with us and God is in us, because whatever choice it was on a physical level – it could be good on a physical level, it could be bad— but we know that it is good on a spiritual level because God is with us and He is working with us because He is creating peace *in us*.

Evil was created so God could have a family. Choice has been created so mankind could choose to reject evil. Now, this understanding, brethren, is a great blessing. And if we can just look at that on an everyday basis, that the choices that we make are important to us and they are important to God, because our choices need to be motivated by love, by having no ill will. We need to plan and choose things based on two things. Firstly, does this show and reveal love to God? Will it affect my relationship with God, this choice that I am making? And will it affect my choice to love my neighbour as myself? Well, if we look at that and when we make our physical choices, a choice is a choice as long as it's based on not sinning. Because the reality is a choice is about whether a sin is involved or whether it's not. So is a choice a good choice or a bad choice? Well, the reality is, it's a bad choice if there is sin involved or it's drawing us closer to sin and it *is* a good choice if sin is not involved. If there is no sin involved in the choice, it's a choice.

The human mind of reasoning limits God by bringing God down to human levels and that is our problem. And that's what happened before. We limited God. By giving all the credit to Jesus Christ as a being that

pre-existed, we actually were not giving the true glory and the honor and the power and the wonderful beauty that belongs to God's name, who God really is.

Hold your place there in Isaiah 45.

Isaiah 55:8 – For My thoughts, my thinking, (this is God speaking), **For My thoughts**, my thinking, **are not your thoughts**. So they're not even measurable! There is no comparison; God is love, we're not. We're selfish. God's not selfish, we are. They can't even be joined together. They're “poles apart,” as the word's saying, “they're poles apart.” They can't even be associated, really, because there is no comparison! There is *no* comparison at all to God's thoughts to a human thoughts. **Nor are your ways**, our own human reasoning ways, **My ways**, God's ways. They cannot be compared together ...**says the Eternal. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways**, God's ways, **higher than your ways**, this natural carnal mind, **and My thoughts**, God's thoughts, **than your thoughts**. So, really, when you look at this and it says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth,” well, it can't be measured. It cannot be measured because they're poles apart. In actual fact, to try to even compare them is a difficult thing because we can't. There is *no comparison*, none, whatsoever, because God is all mighty, all powerful, and righteous. God is love, and we're not. We're weak, pathetic, and we don't love, we hate. We are so selfish and self-centered because that's the way we were created.

And that's the purpose of life. Isn't that a wonderful thing to know and to understand?

We'll go back to **Isaiah 45:8 – Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness**. Now, none of this, of course, can be done without God's power. He alone can pour out His holy spirit, which *is* righteousness. So this pouring out of righteousness. It's a gift from God. **Let the earth open, let them**, talking about the earth, **bring forth salvation**. God alone can give salvation to somebody, and it is a gift. *It is* a gift. It's something we can't earn. It doesn't matter about whether we strive and do all these things on a physical level, it can't be earned. It has to be from God, therefore, it is a gift. So a calling is a great gift from God that we should never underestimate or never forget. Because the moment we forget it, we become *unthankful* for what God has done. No one can *earn* salvation!

So it's not through human effort that we can *earn* salvation. This way to peace is something that God gives us. It's a *gift* from God.

And let righteousness spring up together. I, the LORD, have created it. So it all comes from God and it is about God's plan for mankind.

Verse 9 – Woe to him who strives, and that is “debates,” **with his Maker!** Now, when we look at this, how stupid it is to argue and work against God and God's purpose for us! Isn't that...? Like it's insane to even think about it, really, but that's what we do. That is our potential. We can strive against God! We can! And we can do that by raising up ourselves in our thinking, thinking this is the way that *I* would do it.

Now, this comes into another subject, which we're going to cover in the near future, God willing, about this aspect, about raising ourselves up against God, to think that we know more than God. But we do that. We have that potential and there are many gone before us, brethren, that have done it, that are no longer part of God's true Church. They are no longer in fellowship with God or His people because of this very thing. They have decided to strive or debate *with their Maker!* Now that, when you think about it

on a spiritual level, it's insane! After all the scriptures we've just been through about the One True God, Yahweh Elohim, how great God is, how merciful He is, and what He has done for us in calling us or awakening us, His great love for us, His desire for us, and yet we in our pride would raise ourselves up against our Maker? Well, we have that potential! We have that potential! And we need to be on guard against that thinking.

Let the potsherd strive against the potsherds. Well, that's a clay vessel, and we are, of course, human, so it's speaking really of a physical matter, referring to these "potsherds," but it's really a clay vessel and it's really talking about humans. What this is saying is, "Let humans argue and work against each other. Let them do that." So, **Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds.** Let the humans argue with the humans. Let's argue against each other, but you shouldn't be arguing against God. You shouldn't be striving or debating against your Maker. "Yes, the humans will do it." This is what God is saying, "Let them do it."

Shall the clay, the humans, say to Him, God, who forms it, it's talking now on a physical level. There is a potter there and he's moving the potter wheel and he's got the clay and he's starting to form it, and now the clay raises up and says, **What are you making?** In other words, it disagrees with its maker. Well, we know God is referring to us. "Shall the clay," shall we as humans, "say to God," God, who's forming us, who's shaping us, who's molding us, who's transforming our thinking, "What are you doing God? What are you making?" **Or shall the handiwork say, He has no hands?** You know, "What are you doing, God? You know, you're doing it all wrong! You've called me into this Church and I don't believe what You're putting into the Church. I don't believe that the judgements and the decisions made by God's Church are right! I actually think something different!" So it's about a human attitude of working against God's purpose in our life.

There *is* no way on the way of peace other than via God's true Church. There is no other way.

There is another scripture that says, "Doom to anyone who fights and resists their Maker. If we do so, we are at odds with God. Does clay talk back to the potter? Or challenge the way it is being created?" Does the vase turn around and say, "Well, hang on a minute, you're doing it all wrong! I don't like the way that you're doing this!" Well, no, you don't. It'd be stupidity, really, to argue with the Creator. And why would it be stupidity to argue with the Creator? Because the Creator can *unmake* us. The Creator can unmake us. He can shatter us. He can take the vase and say, "Well, it's a vessel for dishonor," and cast it to the ground and shatter it! So why would we want to argue with God? But that's our potential, brethren, that's the natural carnal mind. And so when we strive with God, when we argue with God, we bring woe to ourselves. We bring problems to ourselves because of our *pride*, our *arrogance*, because we've lost this focus on God and God's great glory and God's great power. We've lost the spiritual focus on *who we really are!* We've *forgotten* what we are and what we have come from.

Verse 10 – Woe to him who says to his father, What are you begetting? Or to the woman, What have you brought forth? In other words, we're questioning God's purpose for us. Now, no son goes to his father and says, "What have you done? You've made me! You've created me!" Or to the woman, "Look what you've done! You've brought forth, me! *What* have you done?" In other words, you're arguing with God about what has happened. So we're never to question God's purpose for us.

We don't fully comprehend God's purpose for us, and that's our problem. That's our human reasoning problem. Our purpose, God's purpose for us, is for us to enter Elohim. God wants to *give us salvation!* Isn't that incredible? God wants to *give us salvation!* So who are we, and *why* would we argue and

disagree with God or disagree with the present truth? Why would we do that? Well, the answer is pride. We do it because of pride. We lack humility. We are not willing to lower ourselves and submit *our* thoughts to God, to God, what God is doing. God is working things out in His Church *for a great* spiritual purpose, and that spiritual purpose is creating a Family! So why would we resist it? Why would we argue against anything that God is doing? Well, we know the answer. Pride.

Verse 11 – Thus says the Lord, The Holy One of Israel, and His Maker, Israel's Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; and concerning the work of My hands, you commanded Me. "Do you question who and what I'm making? Or, are you telling Me what I can and cannot do?" That's really what the question is, is saying: "Are you asking Me what I'm doing and why I'm doing it? Are you trying to tell me what to do and how to do it?" Well, we know that's just stupidity and pride, really, to do that.

I have made the earth, that's God talking. **I have made the earth, and created man on it. I—My hands —stretched out the heavens, and all the host I have commanded.** So who was it? It was God that did it all! It's God's doing and it's God's purpose. He's doing it! So why would anybody raise up against God and challenge God and what He's doing?

God continuing there... **I have raised him up in righteousness**, and this is referring back to king Cyrus, and it's also an aspect of God's Church, God's spiritual Israel, the Church of God. God is making us righteous. So God is saying here, when He's referring to king Cyrus here, but we can look at it on a spiritual level saying, God has raised us up and God is making us righteous. He has raised us up in righteousness because He's called us. He has awakened us, and it's God's spirit in us that makes us righteous.

Going on in **verse 13... And I will direct all his ways**, and of course, it *is* about king Cyrus, but here is God, He is the one who directs our ways. He leads the Church, His Church, through Jesus Christ. **He shall build up My city and let My exiles go free, not for the price or reward, says the LORD of hosts.** So we can look at this on a spiritual plane as Christ is the one who is now building up God's Church, God's City, the Kingdom of God, and "He will let My (God's) exiles go free." Well, that's what happened to us, brethren. We were called out of spiritual bondage and we are being *made free* because we're walking on this road to peace. Because it is through the power of God's spirit living and dwelling in us that we have peace, we have correct thinking.

Isaiah 45:17 – But Israel shall be saved, preserved, by the Eternal with an everlasting salvation. Well, that everlasting salvation is we will be changed to spirit. **You shall not be ashamed nor disgraced forever and ever. Thus says the LORD of host, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who is Elohim, He is the Almighty God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain**, it wasn't created in confusion, **Who formed it to be inhabited.** So now God is revealing the purpose, the purpose of why He made the earth and placed man on it, and it was to create Elohim, to create a Family. And this is what happens when we lose our focus about God's plan for us, we begin to focus on the physical things, set them as a higher priority, and don't place God as first in our decision making, first as our priority in life; therefore, we lose our way, we become unbalanced in our thinking, and we become the opposite to what peace is. We become filled with ill will and confusion.

I am the LORD, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, "Seek Me in vain." So God hasn't called us and awakened us to turn around, to say, "Well, just seek Me in vain. It's all just going to be a vanity. It's all just a waste of time, this focusing on God first and focusing on the spiritual and focusing on the truth." It's not all just an empty waste of

time! **I, the LORD, speak righteousness**, it's God that speaks truth, **I declare things that are right**. So God is the one that is right and we are wrong.

Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, you who have escaped the nations. Well, we've escaped the nations, the world out there, we've been called out of the world. We've escaped it through our calling and through being awakened. **They**, those in the world, the uncalled, **have no knowledge, who carry the wood of their carved image, and pray to a god that cannot save.** Well, we're not like that, brethren, we've been called out of that. When you look at all the idols of the world, whether they're carved images, whether it's the stock market and the money, or whether it's the wealth they think that they have, or all of those things, God didn't call us to that. We're not worshipping God in confusion. We've actually escaped all of that. God has called us out! Isn't that a great miracle, just to focus on that? And that's why often we need to go back and just remember our calling. You know, go back and meditate on it, how marvelous it was that God called us out of that! And when we go through that meditation and think about that calling, we soon see that we made mistakes. Because of the excitement of the truth – yes, I would say the vast majority of us – all were so excited that we had to tell somebody else. We had to tell somebody else! Well, that's just normal because of the excitement of *seeing the truth* in the mind's eye. It's incredible! It is a *freedom*! It brings peace! The truth brings us peace because we're on this road of salvation. And as God grants us more and more understanding it brings more and more joy. And just knowing this truth that I'm covering now *is* a great blessing! It is a wonderful blessing to a mind that is closed.

Now, people that could listen to this can't understand the excitement and the joy of knowing that there is one true God, Yahweh Elohim. He has called us on a path to salvation to give us life everlasting, an everlasting salvation! That is just so beautiful and it is so humbling to know it that we rejoice in it. We give praises to Yahweh Elohim, the one true God, the Almighty God. We rejoice before Him because of it. All done is humility because we know we are the clay, that we're not worthy of anything, but that God in His mercy is molding and fashioning us into His Family.

Just finishing off **verse 20** there, **who carried the wood of their carved image and pray to a God that cannot save.** It's all just a vanity. It's God the Father that can save us, and He does that through Jesus Christ.

Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Let's consider the matter. **Who has declared this from ancient times?** Who it is... who could you give credit to who spoke all of these things? Who has revealed all this? God spoke of what He would achieve well before it happened! Now, we've got a lot of proof in scripture about this very fact that God has done these things and that God has promised things and they've happened. For example, the Apostasy. If you look at the Apostasy, where God wrote it well before it happened, it was God that did it. He did it in ancient times. Now, we know that when that was written it was after Christ's death, that it was written, and Paul wrote it, and it was for our time. What happened in December of 1994, written well in advance, it was written and declared before ancient times. It was done. It was declared. So who had done that? Who can do it? Who has told us of it? God wrote it and God *revealed* it to us. And I remember reading those scriptures well before the Apostasy and not really fully understanding them, thinking I had a rough understanding of what they were, looking forward to something – didn't know what it was – but it wasn't until I saw it, and I saw it in 2005 is when I saw it, because God revealed it. I understood it and I could see it and it was so clear! Well, it's still not clear to those that God is not working with. They don't understand it.

And God goes on here and says, **Have not I, the LORD?** He's declared all these things, **and there is no other God besides Me**, apart from Me, **a just God and a Saviour; There is none besides Me**. Well, we have proof that this is God's true Church because God has revealed truth to us. We understand scripture that no one else can understand. That is the power of God's spirit in His Church. That is the power of our calling. That is the power of our awakening.

Verse 22 – Look, or turn, to Me, and be saved, so this is what we're doing, brethren. We are turning to God as our focus. We are looking to God to keep us in the truth, to provide us His holy spirit so that we *can* remain in the truth, so that we *can* be at one with Him, in unity with Him. **All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.**

Verse 23 – I, God, have sworn, He's made an oath, **by Myself**. God cannot lie. So whatever God states or says, it's like an oath. It's guaranteed. It's a promise and it's sworn by Him because of His character, because of His nature, and He cannot lie; therefore, it's a given. So whatever God has sworn or promised or spoken – because what God *speaks* is the same as a *promise* – because God is truth, God cannot lie; therefore, everything He says is true. It will happen because He's promised it. **The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness**, because it is God's character, **and shall not return**, and this is saying it will happen. It won't be turned back. It can't be changed. **That to Me every knee shall bow. Every tongue**, every language, **shall take an oath.**

And what will they say? What will they actually say when they take this oath? In other words, what will they say in their thinking? **Verse 24 – He shall say, Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.** We can have righteousness and spiritual strength if God is *in* us and we in Him. So this word that they're saying is, "Surely in the Eternal, in Yahweh Elohim, I have righteousness *and* strength." Well, we know, brethren, that we can only have righteousness because of God's holy spirit, because it's a gift, God's gift *to* us. God's spirit is a gift to us. Righteousness in us is a gift to us. It's God living and dwelling in us. And our strength, our spiritual strength, is from God. It is God living and dwelling in us.

Continuing on, **verse 24 – To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed**, every one of them will be disappointed when they come before God, **who are incensed against Him**, who are angry against God. Everyone will be ashamed and disappointed that they *ever* resisted God, that they rebelled against God by sinning.

Well, brethren, we know that we should never fight against God, that we should never resist God in our thinking. So as truth comes into the Church we should *not* raise ourselves up to resist the truth.

Verse 25 – In the LORD all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, which is "made righteous," **and shall glory**. And that word, "shall glory" is "to shine." So *in* God "all the descendants of Israel," which is descendants from God's Church, really, they have to have God's spirit, "shall be justified," because we're justified by God through faith, "and shall glory." Yes, the end result is that we have two glories. The first glory is to have God's character. God's spirit living and dwelling in us is a glory that we carry. We carry that around today with us. And of course, there is yet a future glory to come.

Matthew 13:43 – Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has an ear, let him hear! So this is a promise from God, is that everybody that God is working with, that God grants the gift of life to, everlasting life, will "shine forth as the sun *in* the Kingdom of God." Isn't that an incredible promise to have?

So in winding this sermon series up, brethren, about being focused or staying focused, we must learn to plan the physical around the spiritual. The spiritual has to be our highest priority. We have seen that when we make physical decisions the reality is we do not always know the outcome on a physical level. And we covered that story which is relating to the farmer and his son that sometimes things can look good but we just don't know what tomorrow brings. We *do* know that God has promised to be with us in all situations for our spiritual good because all things work to the good, the spiritual good, of those that are called according to God's purpose. So it's God's will in our life. So we need to live our life making physical decisions, but all driven by the spiritual principle that it is going to work to our good no matter what, because God is with us and God is *for* us, so who can be against us? Nobody! Nothing! Because God loves us and God has built His Church through Jesus Christ and He will achieve His will. We've just been through those scriptures. God will achieve His will and His purpose.

We have also seen that we should never raise ourselves up against God. We should never raise ourselves up against God by thinking that we know better than God. Now, we have that potential. That is something we need to fight against. And the answer is to have humility. And the way we have humility is to always remember on a spiritual level that of and by ourselves we can do nothing spiritually good. It's *God* that lives and dwells in us. It's *God* that does the works in us. Our part, our role, is to choose to continue to focus on God, to put God first in our life, to focus on the spiritual aspects of our life. And whether that's the prayer, or our study, or our meditation, remembering our calling, remembering our awakening, remembering God's 10 Commandments and meditating on them, thinking on them as David did, going through them, that is what is required about staying focused. To remember to keep the Sabbath holy! It's holy time, as has just been covered in previous sermons. It's *holy* time. We should make sure it *is* holy, that we treat it with the respect that God has established in that day.

And then, of course, we know we're coming up to Passover soon that we can start to think about Passover and the meaning of Passover. And think about all the Holy Days and the meaning of the Holy Days, what Unleavened Bread pictures, what Pentecost pictures. All of these things are about staying focused on God, giving the credit and glory to God, not arguing with God about what God is doing *in* His people *in* His Church.

Physical events in our life can be perceived to be good when they are not necessarily good, because we just don't know. The most important thing about making decisions is that we involve God and that we trust God is still with us. So we just make decisions and we make sure there is no sin involved in the decision, and therefore, it just becomes a personal choice based on experience. One person can choose one way, another person can choose another way; there is no right or wrong in the decision as long as there is no sin involved. There is no right and wrong because *all* things will work to the good, to the spiritual good, because God loves us and God is going to create a Family and He *is* creating a Family in and through His Church.

So with that, brethren, we'll close this sermon series. □