

Welcome, everybody, to this seventh-day Sabbath.

There are only two ways of life, or two ways, or two directions in life a person can walk. One way is of God and the other is against God. So we're either *for* God or we're against God. One way leads to life and the other way leads to destruction.

So the question is begged: What *is* the path that we are on? What is the way or the direction we are heading in? There is a way of life which God has established in His word for those that He has called out of this world (the called out ones), and they are called to live a particular way of life. We once walked on a broad path. We have been called to walk on a narrow path. That way (God's way, the narrow path) has always been attacked by Satan and he (Satan) has always tried to destroy it, to destroy God's people, the people who walk or choose to walk on this path, and they walk on this path by living it.

The title of this sermon is *The Narrow Way* and this will be *Part 1*. The purpose of this sermon series is to look at how we can walk on the narrow path of God's way of thinking. To walk on a narrow path or the narrow way requires the gift of God's holy spirit. We are walking on the narrow path or we're either walking on the wide path. And the question is, well, which path are we actually on?

We have been called to walk on this straight or narrow path, this narrow way of life. We have been called to *choose* between which way we're going to live. What is the way we are going to live? Are we going to live God's way or we're going to live our own way, the natural carnal mind?

So we'll start this sermon series by looking at Matthew 7, which is the premise of this sermon series. **Matthew 7:13—Enter, and that is "strive to come in," by the narrow gate, a "gate" is "an entrance," and it can be "a way" as well. We can strive to enter this narrow way, for, the reason we should be striving to enter on to this narrow gate, this narrow way of life, because (for) wide is the gate and broad, which is "spacious," is the way that leads to destruction. And there are many who go in by it.** Because most of mankind lives by the natural carnal mind, and the only ones that don't are those that God has called out of living the natural carnal mind, which is those that are members of the Body of Christ, the Church of God.

Verse 14—Because narrow is the gate, so we've had this contrast now about this "broad way," this "wide, spacious way," which is just the natural way of living, which is the natural carnal mind, and now we're going to look at this "narrow way," or this "narrow gate." **Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way,** now, it's difficult because once called we then face tribulation (tests and trials) to see how we will respond, how we will choose, what will we choose, **which leads to life,** and it's talking about eternal life, life-everlasting or life that doesn't end, **and therefore, there are few who find it.** Now, there's only a few that find it because there's a few that have been called over the history of 6,000

years, a few that have been called, and there's only been a few that have been chosen by God to make up the 144,000.

Now, this "walking on this narrow way" is all about working on self. Now, this "working on self" is the narrow gate and not working on self is the wide gate: self-control, powered by God's spirit, or no self-control, which is just using the natural carnal mind. So we, before we were called, brethren, we walked on the broad way, the broad path, because we didn't discipline ourselves because we were just natural. It's natural to be selfish. We looked after ourselves.

Well, we've been called to walk on this narrow path through this narrow gate, and it will lead to life, life-everlasting with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And there are few who find it, because it's difficult. There are times of tribulation (tests and trials) in this world now because it's about the development of character, how we live our life.

Verse 15; Christ now highlights the two ways of life. **Verse 15—Beware of false prophets...** Now, this is about deceptive teachers, someone who states they have been inspired by God or have the inspiration of God. What will they do? ...**who come to you in sheep's clothing.** They look like God's people, look righteous. They look like they have been wearing righteousness or right clothing (because it's about "wearing" something, it's about putting something on), because here we have they look like they are wearing "sheep's clothing." Well, "sheep's clothing," really, is looking righteous, having righteousness. Because that's what we have to wear. We are sheep; we follow God as Christ outlines in scripture, and this "wearing of the clothing" is about wearing righteousness, which is righteousness and humility. ...**but inwardly**, so these people look like they are of God and they are inspired teachers of God, **but inwardly**, which is this inner man, this inner thinking, **they are ravenous wolves**, pointing to their motive and intent. Their motive and intent is to destroy and to get a following. So they're going to destroy members of the Body of Christ and take them away from following God to follow them. They are "to take." Their motive is greed.

Now, how will we know whether a person is a true prophet of God, someone that is inspired by God? How will we discern a false teacher who is there based on greed? **Verse 16—You**, talking about us, brethren, **will know them by their fruits**, what they yield in the way of spiritual fruits, which is outlined in Galatians 5:22-23. And we won't turn there today. But it *is* that we can tell a prophet of God by their fruits. We have been able to tell if someone is of God because they are living the truth. Now, a true prophet of God would be in unity of God, in unity of the spirit of God, the unity of the spirit *with* God. They will be living love to all. They will be faithful to God in all things. Because when you look at Galatians 5:22 it bears fruit. Now, when we look at fruit and consider fruit, we need to consider a tree. We look at a tree, and it grows. Well, all trees bear some type of fruit. Now, other's where, bear berries, and apples, and all different types of fruits. Well, you can tell the type of tree by its fruit. You can tell it's a pear tree by it bearing pears. You can tell an apple tree by the fact that it bears apples. You can tell a lemon tree by the fact it bears lemons.

We actually have a particular tree within our garden, and looking at the tree you can't actually tell what its fruit was going to be, because it's been crossed. It bears fruit and it's got a particular name where they have crossed over the two fruits, so it comes out with a different type of fruit. Now, you can't tell that tree, what it actually is, until you see its fruit. Well, this is exactly the same as what Jesus Christ is outlining here. It's by their fruits you'll be able to tell what type of tree it is. So "by their fruits you will know them," is about what they bear.

Continuing in **verse 16... Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes, well, the answer is no, or figs from thistles?** The answer is no. **Even so, every good tree...** Now, what's a good tree? Someone with God's holy spirit, someone with God's spirit inspiring them, **bears good fruit**, which is righteousness or righteous character. So even so, "Every good tree bears good fruit," because it's inspired by God's holy spirit. It's *God* that is doing the fruit. It's God that's bearing the fruit in the person. **...but a bad tree**, someone without God's holy spirit, the natural carnal mind, **bears bad fruit**. They use the natural carnal mind, the natural selfishness, and selfishness bears selfishness. The self bears selfishness. So we can tell between the two. One way is going to be bearing righteousness, which will be obedience to God's law, living in unity, living love, being faithful to God's word. And the other one will be selfish; all its thoughts, words, and actions will be based on self, acquiring for self.

Verse 18—A good tree (God is in the person and yielding fruit by His spirit) **cannot bear bad fruit**, because God is righteous, God is good, because it's *God* doing the good works. So "a good tree cannot bear bad fruit." If God is in a person living out to the benefit of others, it is righteousness coming out from the person, from God. **...nor can a bad tree**, someone who has not been called and does not have God's holy spirit, someone carnal and selfish, **bear good fruit**. So it's someone selfish and carnal cannot bear righteousness because God is the one that produces righteousness in a person. They cannot live righteousness.

So there are the two clear ways here, this narrow path or the broad path, or the narrow way or the broad way, and "a good tree will bear good fruit," because it can't bear bad fruit, because it's all powered by God's holy spirit. "Nor can a bad tree," which is someone that is carnal, "bear good fruit." Because God is not in that person to bear the good fruit.

Verse 19—Every tree, which is every person once called and required to transform their thinking, **that does not bear good fruit**, they do not yield to God's spirit and reject God's way of thinking, **is cut down and thrown into the fire**. Now, this principle is pointing to a second death. Because everybody that is called, every tree (which is every person) that is called to bear good fruit, and they do not bear good fruit because they rejected God, they reject Jesus Christ living and dwelling in them, they have to be cut down and they have to be thrown into a fire. They have to be destroyed. Because there's two ways, one that leads to life and one that leads to destruction.

The main principle is **verse 20...Therefore, by their fruits**, which is what they yield in their life, the way they live, the truth, **and if they live in obedience to God, you will know them**. So "by their fruits," what they yield, whether they are living the truth, the way they live their life in obedience to God,

"you will know them." Therefore, from this we can see, therefore, a true prophet of God will always give credit to God. All the glory and credit will be given to God because of this bearing fruit, because they will acknowledge it's God that does the work. They take no credit to self. It has to be God that is given the credit for all things. Because they've come to see that of and by themselves they can do nothing. They will not take anything to self...they'll take nothing to self. They will not be motivated by greed or what they can get from others. Their motive and intent will be to build up others spiritually in the ways of God, because that is the sign of a true prophet, somebody that is pointing somebody to following God, following God's way of life, not following the individual but motivated and driven to follow God.

And it says in scripture, "The sheep hear My voice and follow." Well, this is what a true prophet will do. Their motive and intent would be to build others up to the point of following God no matter what. Their motive is to give and not get. They're not there for themselves; they are there to give of themselves as servants of God, and not to get something back, not to get praise or honor, because they've already directed all the praise and honor to God, because this is God's Church. They will be obedient to Leviticus 23.

They will be part of the Body of Christ. Now, this is the key point, that to be a true or false prophet means we're either part of the Body of Christ or we're not. So a true prophet is somebody that is part of the Body of Christ; they're in unity with God and Christ. Now, a false prophet is somebody that is *not* part of the Body of Christ because they're cut off, they don't have God's holy spirit flowing, living, and dwelling in them, therefore, they're *not* part of the Body. They might give the impression they are, but they're not, because they've been cut off. And it requires God's holy spirit to be a true prophet of God, and somebody that doesn't have God's spirit is a false prophet because they're only acting out a role and they're saying they're from God, but they're not.

They will be faithful to God and Jesus Christ (talking about this true prophet, by their fruits). They'll be faithful. They'll be faithful to God in all things and Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. They will teach the way of the narrow gate that leads to life. They will practice love.

So what they're doing in the sense of the way they live their life, they're teaching others to follow through the narrow gate, through the narrow way, because it leads to life, it leads to life in Elohim. And they will be practicing love. They will have this outgoing concern for the welfare of others. And the greatest desire for anybody is that a person repents. It's not a feeling. It's not an emotion. It's not words just spoken, but this desire that a person repents and follows God, that a person repents and walks on the narrow path or the narrow way.

Now, Christ continues with this distinction, **Matthew 7:21—Not everyone who says to Me** (to Jesus Christ), **'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.** So words by themselves are not going to be enough. Words without overcoming the self is useless. So we can have these words and say all the right things and repeat truth and all those things, but without this battle in the mind, without this overcoming of the self, this not walking on the narrow

way, it's all useless. We have to be walking on this narrow path through this narrow way. Talking the talk but not living the truth is pointless. We must be doers. We must be doers of the word. We must be obedient to God's way. We have to follow God's word.

A false prophet or a false teacher might say the right things but they will not be able to do the will of God because it requires God's spirit to live by the very spirit of the law. So it requires God's spirit to live the law in spirit and truth. An outward appearance means *nothing* to God. So a person might act righteous and look righteous in the eyes of man, but that means nothing to God. God looks at the heart.

Hold your place there in Matthew 7 and we'll turn to Romans 2. **Romans 2:13**, cutting into a thought here—**For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified...** So we are justified by faith, which is living what we believe. So it's not just the hearers, those that hear, that can sit and hear the law, the spirit of the law, the intent of the law. Well, they're not justified in the sight of God just because we hear. We actually have to be doing something with it. We have to be in this process of transforming the mind. "But the doers of the law will be justified" because they've taken what they've heard on board and they're now setting out to live it.

James 1:22—But be doers of the Word, and that is "Logos." We have to become a performer of God's thinking, the truth. His Word is truth. So we have to be a doer, or a performer of the Word, of the truth. We have to be doing something. **...not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.** So we can deceive ourselves, brethren, by coming to a Sabbath service, by going and keeping the Holy Days, and just listening, be a "hearer of the Word," (of the Logos), God's Word being described to us, but we have to become a "performer of the truth." We have to start to take it on board and do it. We have to become a doer. So this requires mental choice and it requires action. Because if we just hear, we are deceiving ourselves. We're not part of the Body of Christ by just being hearer's only. We are part of the Body of Christ when we become a doer of the Word.

Verse 23—For if someone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like... So it's going to give an example now of what a person is like. Here's someone that hears and doesn't go away and implement it into their life. **...he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror**, so when he stands and looks in the mirror and sees what he's like, **for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.** Because it's very difficult to remember a facial expression or the way we really look. It's like somebody saying, "Sit down and draw yourself." Well, it's a lot more difficult than a person might think because we actually forget what we're really like. Well, we can look at this on a spiritual level as well. "Somebody who looks in the mirror," God's word, "and observes himself," he sees himself, "and goes away and he immediately forgets what kind of man he was," which is carnal. So we can look into the word of God, so we can see what we're like, because God's spirit enlightens us to "see" what we're like. We observe ourselves and go away immediately and forget (we don't do anything, we're hearer's only) and we forget to implement it; we're not doers and we forget what kind of person we really were, which is carnal.

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty, the law is freedom from selfishness *IF* implemented into our thinking, **and continues in it**, now, this is the most important thing, that we look into the mirror, we look into this "perfect law of liberty," God's word, "and continues in it." Now, that's the key; we have to be a doer. ...**and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work**. Now, what kind of work is it? The work, the work of obedience, and living in agreement with God's law. That's the work we have to do. We have to work within our minds. ...**this one will be blessed in what he does** because it's the work within the mind that's the most important thing.

So we have to be hearers of the word and then doers. And if we're just hearers only we're deceiving ourselves and we will not be living life, not living life because God's life will not be in us. Because we might hear things but unless we're willing to implement it and make the changes within our thinking, well, we're deceiving ourselves by thinking that we are part of the Body of Christ.

Verse 26—If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue, so this "bridling of the tongue" is about self-control or control of self, **but deceives his own heart**, so we don't control our tongue and we continue just to flap the tongue, speaking what we think from our natural carnal mind, we deceive our own mind—self-deception by human reasoning, our inner thinking is deceived—**this one's religion is useless** (it's vain, it's empty, or it's worthless). So if we're not willing to control our tongue, control our self, well, we better be very careful, because our religion, what we're trying to live, is just a vanity. It's all a waste of time.

If we do not work on controlling our thinking, fighting the fight in our mind, we will use words that come out from us which are based on human reasoning. They will be carnal. They *will* be carnal.

Verse 27—Pure and undefiled religion, now, that is "pure and undefiled worshipping of God," because religion is worshipping God. So this "pure and undefiled religion" is worshipping of God, **before God and the Father is this...** So this is how we can tell whether or not we are living a life of righteousness, whether we're on the narrow way. This pure and undefiled worshipping of God is **to visit**, now, this is "to look out for the needs of," **orphans and widows in their trouble**. Now, this is within the Body of Christ, the Church of God. So we are to first of all, to look out for the needs of those that are orphans, those that don't have support, and widows in their trouble. So we'll be living love. We'll be a doer of the word. So we are to comfort those who need comfort. Because this is talking about looking out for the needs of those that are in their trouble, if they're having difficulty.

And the next point is, **and to keep oneself unspotted from the world**. So there's two parts here. One is "comfort those that need comfort"—live love to all but in particular have a look out for, have a look out for the needs of those that are disadvantaged, and if they're running into difficulty, well, we are to comfort them. We're to make sure we're available, and therefore, support. And the other part "is to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Keep our minds away from sin and the world's way of thinking. This is to be "unspotted from the world."

So it's important that we're working on ourselves and that we're walking on this narrow way, this narrow path.

Back to **Matthew 7:22—Many will say to Me in that day...** Now, what "day" is that? Because it's saying, "Many will say to Me (Jesus Christ) in that day," well, it's actually the period of 100-years when they'll be resurrected back to a physical life, because this is the only time that they can say it "in that day." It's following a resurrection because they've lived the life and they've lived a particular way of life, now they've been resurrected and they're now talking to Jesus Christ, so they're resurrected back to a physical life. **Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name?** "Have we not been out there preaching your name, preaching Your way of life in your name?" Now, "in Your name," is saying, "Well, did we not prophecy with the authority from You? We did it all for You. And what did we do?" We **cast out demons in Your name**, which had to be during the first 6,000 years of man's self rule, because we understand that Satan is bound up after the end of 6,000 years and then you have the next 1,100 years. So they're talking about a time when Satan and his demons were on the earth. And here they are, they're saying, "Well, we cast out demons in Your name," **and done many wonders in Your name?** In other words, they took on the authority that wasn't really given to them. They assumed something. It wasn't actually given to them, so they were false prophets. They were false. So during their life they say they were doing spiritual works with the authority from God and Christ. "We did it *in Your name*. We represented *You!*" Well, in actual fact they were acting presumptuously because they took to themselves an authority they did not have.

Verse 23—And then I will declare to them, I never knew you: "You were not called by God to have a relationship with Me. You did not represent Me." That's what Christ is really saying. "I will declare to them," all those that were resurrected and said that they were representing Jesus Christ, "I never knew you," because they were never called. **...depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!** So now it's telling us the answer to whether or not somebody *is* of God or not; it's whether or not they practice lawlessness or practice righteousness. There's a choice here. They're either on the narrow way or you're on the broad way. So this is the choice we have, brethren. It's saying here: "You who say you are of God, (represent God, but do not live God's way of life) but practice as a way of life disobedience to the law," well, that's what they're actually saying. They're saying that they *were* of God, but they weren't. They were practicing disobedience to God's law. "You, in fact, are a false prophet, you weren't inspired of God," as stated in verse 15.

We are warned to be on guard spiritually. We are not to listen or to follow anyone that preaches another way of life, which is against God's way of thinking, against God's spiritual law. Obedience *is* required in spirit and truth. And that's the key point to come out of this. Someone who says they are a prophet of God, we can actually prove it by what Jesus Christ has said. Because in fact, a false prophet may say certain things but the reality is they're not living a life of obedience, which is required to God's law, which is required in spirit (which is talking about inward thinking powered by God's holy spirit) and truth. It has to be exactly according to God's word.

Now, the two ways of life are outlined here for us. **Verse 24—Therefore, whoever hears,** and that word is "considers or listens to or attends to" **these sayings of Mine** (of Jesus Christ, that He's just said, which is God's word)... What are those sayings that He's referring to? "A good tree can't bear bad fruit." Anyone who says certain things and is not in obedience to God, well, they're a liar. So it's saying, **Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock.** So now He's talking about this narrow way (is being described). He's talking about this person who is now obedience to God's way of life and *does* the law (is obedient), **I liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock,** which is on this solid foundation. We understand that our foundation is Christ and the truth.

Verse 25—and the rain descended, and floods came, which are floods, which, we understand, are symbolic of false doctrine, **and the winds blew,** which is the wind of false doctrine, which often has blown. And I've heard those winds of false doctrine. I've actually felt them in the sense of blowing against me when I was in Worldwide Church of God during that period. We were aware of some of the false doctrines that were being preached, and then afterwards more false doctrine continued. Well, we can become spiritually aware of those false doctrines if we have God's holy spirit. So this person here has God's holy spirit, have built their foundations on Jesus Christ, and now the wind of false doctrine has come and blows on it, **and beat at that house,** which is the House of God, on God's Church, the household of God, so on us as individuals. Great spiritual tests and trials, great spiritual tribulation has come, **and it,** the House of God, **did not fall.** Why didn't it fall? **For it was built** (founded) **on the rock.** It was founded on Jesus Christ. We stand in the truth. We are members of the Body of Christ, the Church of God. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. So that is that narrow way. The narrow way is having our foundation, which is built on Jesus Christ.

Now the broad way is described: **Verse 26—But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine,** so they're hearers (the word of God, they hear it) **and does not do them, will be like a foolish man,** someone not yielding to God's thinking, not walking the narrow path (the narrow way), but on the broad path (the broad way), **who built his house on the sand.** So it's referring to spiritual condition, because we trust in ourselves and we do not obey God. So this is someone who hears but doesn't implement them.

Verse 27—and the rain descends, so this rain and flood of false doctrine comes, **and the flood comes, and the winds blew and beat on the house,** so it beats on what they are as individuals, **and it fell. And great was its fall.** So this can be somebody who hears God's word but does not do it, is not obedient to it, doesn't implement the change into their life. So when times of stress, and tests, and trials come, this flood of false doctrine comes, deception comes, well, they will fall. "And great was its fall," because it's a terrible thing to have the word of God, to have God's holy spirit at some point in time, then to neglect it. It's a terrible thing because it will bring our downfall. We cut ourselves off from God because of this unrepented sin. We're not willing to implement change and to fight the battle within the self.

Jeremiah 17:5—Thus says the LORD: Cursed, and that word really means, "they will pay a penalty for disobedience, they will suffer." So this person will suffer. **Cursed is the man**, so this person will suffer, **who trusts in man**, has confidence in human nature. So we are going to pay a penalty if we trust in ourselves. **...and makes flesh his strength**, which in other words, relies on the physical—may be the strength of others or the strength of self, relies on physical. **Whose heart** (inner thinking) **departs**, "turns aside" or **departs from the LORD**. If we turn away from the truth, we turn to human reasoning. We will suffer spiritually.

Verse 6—Why?—For he, someone who is disobedient, **shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes**; it can't be helped. **But shall inherit the parched places of the wilderness** (in the wilderness), **In a salt land which is not inhabited**. So they will be cut off from God's spirit, therefore, they cannot grow. Because if we have a bush near water, which is given life because of the water (which is symbolic of God's holy spirit) it will bear much fruit. But if it grows up in this parched area where God's spirit doesn't flow and it's in a salt land (in other words, it can't grow because it can't absorb salt water), well, it's cut off from God's spirit and it cannot grow.

Verse 7—Blessed (praised) **is the man who trusts**, and that is "to have confidence," **in the LORD, and whose hope is in the LORD**. They believe God, they believe the truth, they are obedient to God's word, therefore, they are blessed. They will be looked after by God because God has set up laws for obedience and disobedience. The laws that are in place are like "sow and reap" or the "blessings and cursing's." Because this blessing, which means it'll bring something of a benefit to a person, and the cursing's mean there'll be a penalty to be paid because of this disobedience to God's word. So we're either walking on this narrow path or on the broad path. And if we walk on the narrow path, there is blessings. And if we walk on the broad path (the broad way), there are cursing's, which are penalties to be paid.

Verse 8—Why?—For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which is access to God's holy spirit, **which spreads out its roots by the river and will not fear when the heat comes**, when tribulation comes, because they have a strong foundation. **But its leaves will be green**, because they have the flow of God's holy spirit, which gives life. So this flow of God's spirit coming into a person will give life, and when tribulation comes, when tests and trials come, well, they're going to be strong, **and will not be anxious**, they won't be fearful, they won't be concerned, **in the year of drought**, in a time of lack, **nor cease from yielding fruit**. We will continue to walk on the narrow path and allow God's spirit to live in us, transforming our thinking. Because this is what this is about. This is about spiritual fruit, whether or not we're going to be yielding fruit or whether or not we're going to wither up and die on a spiritual level.

Verse 9—The heart, which is this natural mind, this inner thinking without God's spirit, **is deceitful**, and that is "crooked or polluted," **above all**, it does not see it's real intent or motives, **and desperately wicked**. It's actually spiritually sick. **Who can know it? Who can work out a person's intent? Well**, nobody can work out a person's intent. No one can "see" the heart of an individual—only God.

Verse 10—I, the LORD, search the heart, so it's God that searches the inner thinking and knows our motive and intent. **I test** ("I prove or examine") **the mind, even to give every man according to his ways,** the way he chooses to live, **according to the fruit of his doings.** So this is that "sow and reap." This is the "blessings and cursing's."

Now, when it comes to the word "testing," I need to correct some statements I made in a sermon series, and it was in *Understanding the Proverbs in Part 2*. And it was in relation to Matthew 4 where I used the term "enticed to sin" and I misimplied it in this particular scripture. The first point is God cannot be tempted with sin. God can't be enticed to sin. The word that I should have used would be "to prove." So that word there was "to prove" or "to get a reaction from God."

So we're going to go back over Matthew 4:1 and so we can look at this, so that I can correct this word that I used. Matthew 4:1. This was when Jesus Christ was led by the spirit to go up into the wilderness. **Matthew 4:1—Then Jesus was led up by the spirit,** so it was placed into His thinking, **into the wilderness to be tempted,** now, that word is actually "proved" or "examined," **by the devil.** Now, this "proving" or this "testing" becomes relevant in the future when we get into other verses, about what it's actually saying.

Verse 2—And when He (Christ) had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

Verse 3—Now when the tempter... Now, Satan *is* the one who tempts. He is the one who tries to "prove" or "examine" to get a reaction. Now, I had used the word "enticed to sin." Now, Satan does "entice," but it's not this way with God, with Jesus Christ. This is about "one who proves or examines to get a reaction." So he says things to Christ to get a reaction, to see what reaction he will get. "He came to Him," came to Christ "and said," so he's saying this to get a reaction, **If You are the Son of God, command these stones become bread. But He answered and said, It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'** So it's not about a physical focus, but a spiritual one. Now, we understand that Christ set us an example here, also, of how we can stand against this tempting or this examining so that we give the right reaction, which is using the word of God. So we can live by the very word of God, by *every* word of God and not by our own word, and not by the word that proceeds out of our own mouth, what we think, human reasoning. We are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, which is all of God's word.

So we can understand that when we are "tempted" or when we are "tested," we should go back and use God's word, to look and see what God says about a matter before we give any type of response.

Verse 5—Then the devil took Him (Christ) up to the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He (God) shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In *their* hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'

Verse 7—Jesus said to him, It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’ Now, this word here is "to prove, to test thoroughly, to put to proof God's character and power." Now, this is referred to in Deuteronomy 6, which is actually saying, "The children of Israel were pushing at God to get a reaction from God." And we'll go into this in a little more detail with a statement.

Verse 8—Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

Verse 9—And he said to Him, so Satan now has said to Christ, All these things I will give You if You fall down and worship me. Which is saying, "If you were to worship me, I will give all these things to you." Well, this means that Satan had some authority over these things to be able to offer them to Christ. **Then Christ answered and said to him, Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’** Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

The main point is that God cannot be "enticed to sin," because it's impossible for God to sin. This was Satan pushing at Christ to see how He would react. It was testing Him (Christ) to see how He would react.

Now, in Deuteronomy 6, where it says, "not to tempt God like the children of Israel did when they were murmuring and complaining in the wilderness that they were thirsty," God was angry but never "tempted to sin." And that's where I made the mistake by using the word "enticed to sin." God was actually angry at them because of their pushing. Their murmuring and their complaining was pushing at God to get a reaction. It was like tempting a reaction out of Him similar to when a child tests his parents.

Don't demand that God prove something to us. Like the children of Israel wanted Him to prove that He didn't just bring them out into the wilderness to die, so they pushed Him with their complaining. If we look at this verse from the point of view that Satan was saying, "Let's see what God will do." He said that, "the angels will protect you. Throw Yourself down. Let's see! Let's see what God will do!" That would be "tempting" a reaction out of Him.

So I hope that clears that up, because of the use of the word "enticing to sin."

Proverbs 14:12. Man, by nature, follows the way that seems best to him. **Proverbs 14:12—There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.** By our choices in life we're either choosing life or death. By our choices in life, the way we choose to live, we will either be blessed or cursed because we live a natural carnal mind, which is what seems right to us. We make decisions based on what we see is right and wrong, but this natural carnal mind leads to one thing; it leads to destruction. It leads to death.

God has established blessings for obedience and punishment for disobedience to His way of life.

Deuteronomy 28:1. It's known as the "Blessings and Cursing's Chapter." **Now it shall come to pass, if**

you diligently obey the voice, now, this word "diligently," if you "listen." Now it will come to pass if you listen, obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, so the outcome for obedience is, that the LORD your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth. So there are a physical component here and there is a spiritual component.

Now, the physical component was that *if* they were to be obedient, God would set them up as a nation high above all the other nations of the earth. In other words, they would be protected and they would have prosperity for this obedience to God's word. And if they were carefully to listen and then to follow all the commandments, all the instructions given, that God would bless them. God would lift them up above all the other nations of the earth. Now, they had a lot of laws with regards to the health laws, and other physical laws they could keep, in the sense of what they should do as far as right and wrong, but also, all the instructions that God gave. For example, to keep the Sabbath holy, to keep the annual Sabbaths, also to keep the seven-year cycle of the land Sabbaths; those types of things. They would be blessed above all the other nations; they would have prosperity.

Well, on a spiritual level God will provide His holy spirit, which would set us apart from everybody else. So if we are to listen on a spiritual level and to obey the voice of God (which comes through God's Church), and observe carefully all the instructions given, God says that He will lift us up on high above all the other nations of the earth. It doesn't mean to say it's going to happen now, it's in a time order, this time to come when God would raise up His Church above all the other nations of the earth so much so that people will be drawn into the Church, the Body of Christ, in time. So it's God's spirit that sets us up as apart from everybody else.

Verse 2—And all these blessings, these gifts or benefits from God, shall come upon you and overtake you—why?—because you obey, you listen to, the voice of the LORD your God. This is the outcome. If we are to yield to God's holy spirit (we are to listen to the voice of God), we would then be lifted up above and we'll have spiritual blessings, so much so that they would overtake us because of our obedience and willing to listen, willing to yield to God. Well, that's true today, brethren, that these things can overtake us because of the amount of truth that has been given to us.

Verse 3—Blessed you shall be in the city, and blessed *shall you be* in the country. So this on a physical level, wherever they were, that God would bless them because of their obedience. In other words, they were listening to God, and therefore, God would lift them up and make sure they prospered. Well, we are the same today. God is with us. We can have peace of mind and spiritual safety. We can have these things. So no matter where we are, we can have God's holy spirit, we can be prosperous, and we can be of God based on wherever we are. Doesn't make any difference where we are, we can have God's holy spirit at any time and we can have spiritual safety all the time because God will bless us. He will guard and protect us.

Verse 4—Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, which is talking about, physically, children, and the produce (the fruit) of your ground and the increase of your herds, an increase of your cattle and

the offspring of your flocks. Livestock will prosper. They would also have a strong agricultural nation. So they will have increase because God is there providing it. So what is the "fruit of *our* body," brethren? If we yield to God's holy spirit we will produce spiritual fruit (as Jesus Christ outlined), the fruit of the spirit. That's what we will yield. With God's spirit living and dwelling in us we can bear much fruit. We can be prosperous as a nation for listening and obeying God, for hearing God's voice.

John 15. (Hold your place there.) **John 15:1**—This is Christ speaking: **I am the vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

Verse 2—Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, in other words, does not listen to God (because that's what we were going through), anyone who does not listen to God, **He takes away;** God the Father, "the vinedresser," will take away the person who is not willing to listen. **...and every branch that bears fruit He prunes,** so if we are connected to the vine God the Father says He will "prune us" because we are to bear more fruit, **that it may bear more fruit.** So if we're part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, and we are overcoming, we will have tests and trials and we will be pruned. We will be corrected so that we can bear more fruit.

Verse 3—You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. So this washing of the word that comes over us, it's God's word in our mind that cleans our minds, that keeps our mind clean. So we "are clean already because of the word which I (which Christ) had spoken to the disciples." **Abide in Me, dwell in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.** So we have to abide (dwell in) Jesus Christ, which is His word. We have to be connected.

Verse 5—I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides (dwells) in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. So it requires spiritual fruit to be borne if we are connected to Jesus Christ. And without Christ, we can do nothing. Remember when Jesus Christ says, "I, of Myself, can do nothing." Well, we're the same, brethren. We can do no spiritual righteousness, no spiritual good without God the Father and Jesus Christ living and dwelling in us, because it's God that is righteous.

Verse 6—If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. Because we talked about this way of life; we're either on the narrow path or on the broad path. And the narrow path leads to life and the broad path leads to destruction. Same point here. If we do not abide in Christ we *will* be cast out, we'll be on the natural broad path, and it will lead to our death. And they, brethren, anyone that is disobedient and won't listen, will be thrown into a fire and is burned.

Verse 7—If you abide in Me, in Jesus Christ, and My words abide in you, which is powered by God's holy spirit, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. Talking about spiritual things. **By this My Father is glorified—how?—that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.** So we can glorify God by bearing much fruit, because it's God doing the works in us. It's God living out through us to the benefit of others. Then we can be His disciples.

Verse 9—As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

Verse 10—If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* My joy may be full.

Verse 12—This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. This is about sacrificing love.

Back to Deuteronomy 28:5—Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl. Now, this is talking about something on a physical level where they would be blessed for listening to God. Obedience will bring increased spiritual knowledge and understanding, spiritual food from God, because if we're willing to listen to God and obey, implement it into our life, we will grow spiritually in knowledge and understanding. We'll be fed spiritually by the flow of God's holy spirit.

Blessed *shall you be* when you come in, and blessed you shall *be* when you go out. So this is about obedience will bring spiritual protection. No matter where we are, we will be blessed because God will be with us. God will look out for our welfare. Obedience means we can come into God's presence in prayer at any time. Because when we come into God, no matter where we are, we can pray. So it doesn't matter where we are as far as location, when we come into God we will be blessed, and when we go out about our day's work after having a relationship with God that is ongoing (it's always there), God says He will provide us protection, as long as we listen to God.

Verse 7—The LORD will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before your face, talking about physical nations here, they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. In other words, God would fight their battles. Well, the same for us, brethren. God will fight our battles for us. We have to learn to trust in God. So this defeating of our enemies is all possible because our enemy is Satan and the demons, and he can be defeated. And God gives many instructions of how we should set out to fight against Satan, and then Satan will flee from us *if* we do certain things.

1 John 4. (Hold your place there.) 1 John 4:4—You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He that is in you (God the Father) is greater than he who is in the world (greater than Satan and his demons). So we, brethren, have God at all times no matter where we are. We can learn to put our trust in God. That's what we have to learn. We have to learn to trust in God. Now, we also understand that if we draw near to God and we fast and we put our trust in God, that God says that Satan will flee from us.

2 Samuel 22:28—This is David praising God. You (God) will save, which is "to rescue or deliver," the humble people, someone who's humble is poor in spirit, not proud or lifted up with self-importance, the lowly. They know they're true spiritual condition. So to know our true spiritual condition requires God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us, because we won't be able to "see" ourselves as we are without God's holy spirit. Now, the natural carnal mind, that's the issue, it can't "see" itself. So any humility it might put on (which is "put on") is one of a perversion. It's a perversion. Hence, people walk around with a particular look and walk a particular way as a demonstration of their humility, when in actual fact it's actually a demonstration of severe pride...severe pride! Because without God's holy

spirit a person cannot be humble, they can't "see" themselves on a spiritual level. Now, God will humble people to bring them low so that they can come to "see" the fact that they're not very strong at all, they're nothing, and that they *need* God. They have to come to "see" that they need God in their life, and that's why they'll be humbled. But it doesn't mean to say they'll have God's holy spirit, they'll just be brought low so that then God can work with them because they will be willing to listen. ...**but Your eyes are on the haughty**, that is "to be proud, to be exalted in one's own opinion, lifted up and proud," **that You may bring them down**, which is to humble them, bring them low. How? By bringing them to "see" themselves compared to God.

So mankind is going to be humbled. Man is temporary and mortal. God is the Eternal and an immortal spirit, where man isn't. So this pride that mankind has will be brought low. And God is saying that He watches out for those that are proud, and He, in His love and mercy, will bring them down all for the purpose of keeping them humble, to bring them down so that God can work with them, so that they can turn their eyes towards God rather than seeing the trust in themselves, or living the trust in themselves, or trusting in themselves. So that they can be brought down low for the purpose of coming to "see" themselves compared to God, which means that they're going to have to be brought down so that they don't think they're that important. So all the things they trust in will have to be removed from them. Because people trust in what they have, and all the things that they have make them who they are. Well, when it's all taken away from them then they realize, "Ah, I'm not as important as I thought. I'm not as good as I thought." And when they're in that state of mind then God can work with them, then God can open their mind to "see" themselves on a true spiritual level.

Verse 29—For You (God) are my lamp, so it's God that provides the light and direction so that we can see spiritually, **O LORD. The LORD shall enlighten my darkness**. Our minds by themselves are in spiritual darkness. They are in darkness. God is light. God's word is light. The truth is what God's word is, is the light. We need God's mind to have light and to walk in the light. If we are in darkness we are in sin. **For you are my light**, so God and His instructions and His commandments are the lamp.

Verse 29, just referring back to that. "For You are my lamp." Now, the lamp is God's light which He gives, which is in the commandments. So the "lamp of the feet," the way to walk is on this narrow way or this narrow path through the narrow gate, is based on obedience to God's commandments.

Verse 30—For by You, which is "By God," **I can run against a troop; by my God I can leap over a wall**. So this is that ability to live life, this ability to be able to manage life based on the strength of God living and dwelling in a person.

Verse 31—As for God ("As for El") His way is perfect. Now, that word "perfect" is "without blemish, complete." **The word of the LORD is proven**; it is "tried and tested" to be true. It is "trustworthy." So whatever God says in His word, it's already been tested and proven to be accurate! 100% accurate. So things like "a soft answer turns away wrath," we understand, brethren, it's true and it's been proven. **He is a shield ("He is a defense") to all who trust in Him**, to all who seek protection, all who believe God. So God (El), His way, His way of life written through the 10 Commandments, through His word, through all of the Bible, is perfect. It's without blemish. There is no imperfections in it. It is complete.

So every word of God that has been lived has proven to be right. So when God talks about "give My tithes and offerings; bring them into the storehouse," that has already been proven by many that have gone before us. It's a matter or not, of whether or not we want to test or prove God, put it to the test. God says, "Just do it!" Because He is not a liar, it is true.

Verse 32—For who is God ("Who is El") except the LORD ("except Yahweh")? So there is only one Lord God. There is only one Yahweh Elohim. There is one El, one Yahweh. **And who is a rock, except our God? Elohim.** So there is only one Yahweh Elohim.

Isaiah 45. Hold your place there. **Isaiah 45:5—I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God (no Elohim) beside Me,** which is "except for Me." **I will gird you, though you have not known Me.**

Verse 6—That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. So there is only one Yahweh Elohim, and He is our Rock. He is what we have as our foundation, and it's all done through Jesus Christ because of God the Father's love for mankind, that He provided Jesus Christ.

Back to **2 Samuel 22:33—God (El) is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect,** "He makes my way without blemish." And how is that achieved? By God living and dwelling in us, because it's God that does the works. It's God that does the works in us.

Back to **Deuteronomy 28:8—The LORD will command the blessings on you,** which is done by God's great power because it's only God that can provide blessings, **in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He (God) will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.** Because this is a promise about when they entered into the promised land, that everything they did, because of their listening to God, because of their obedience to God, that God would make them prosperous and give them prosperity. We have been given a calling. We have already been called into the promised land.

Now, there are two parts to this. Because we have been called we have been called into the promised land. So the Church is a "type" of the promised land. It's "a land of milk and honey." It's a land of prosperity. And if we are to listen and obey the instructions given by Jesus Christ to the Church, we will have a life of plenty on a spiritual level. And of course, the other part of this is we've been given a calling to enter a spiritual promised land, which is to enter Elohim. That's the point of our calling, to be given life *in* the Family of God.

We are blessed at this time to be part of the Body of Christ! So we're part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God now, so we are already blessed. And God is giving us Elohim. That's what He wants to do. He wants to give us Elohim. But, of course, it depends on whether or not we're willing to listen and obey the commandments. This is about that fighting in the mind that we have to do every day of our life.

Verse 9—The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself... Now it is talking about physical Israel here, that they would be a people set aside by God, **just as He (God) has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and if we walk in His ways.** So this is when we

become set aside for holy use and purpose, a holy people to God *IF* you keep His commandments and walk in His ways, if we walk on this narrow path through this narrow gate.

1 Peter 2:1—Therefore, laying aside, which is "to put off," because this is the natural way of thinking. We're going to have to "put this off," which is what our life is about, **all malice**. Well, that malice is "ill will," which is a way of thinking. So this ill will, this hurt to others or harm to others is actually in our minds, it's the way we think. So we're to put this aside, "to lay it aside" or "put it off," so get rid of it out of the natural carnal mind. ...**all deceit**, which is "craftiness or guile," so this deceptive living or this deceptive way of thinking, which is not being genuine. So when somebody is deceitful, they're not being genuine, it's a "craft," it's a guile, because we're deceiving others, because we're presenting a false image. So we're to put that aside as well and be genuine. ...**hypocrisy**, which is "acting out a role." So we're looking like we're doing one thing but we're doing another. So we're to get rid of that as well, to lay it aside. ...**envy, and all evil speaking**, anything to do with the lack of control of the tongue, which we've looked at, this "evil speaking," this pulling down of others.

Now, what is it that we have to do as far as walking on this narrow path? ...**as newborn babes**, so as a newborn baby is born, **desiring the milk of the word**, because a newborn baby desires the milk from its mother. Well, we are "newborn babes" into the Body of Christ. We're to desire the "pure milk of the word," the word of God. We're to try to consume it. We're to seek it, **that you may grow thereby**. So the only way a baby grows is through milk, consuming food. We're no different. We can only grow through spiritual food. Now, the only way we can grow is by listening and obeying the voice of God, which is the commandments of God.

Verse 3...if indeed you have tasted, which is "lived or practiced," **that the Lord is gracious** ("that the Lord is merciful"). Well, we have, brethren. We've lived it. We've tasted it. We've tasted God's word and we have implemented it into our lives and we see now, more than ever, how merciful God has been in calling us and giving us a calling, by placing us into the Body of Christ.

Verse 4—Now talking about this narrow way of walking. Coming to Him (coming to God the Father) a **living stone**. Now, it's talking about us, brethren. So we are to "come to God the Father as a living stone." We are living because God and Jesus Christ is living and dwelling in us. So God's holy spirit makes us *alive*. We are alive because of God living and dwelling in us - because that was the purpose of our calling. We have been, **rejected indeed by men**, we've been rejected by this world. We look like we're goofy. ...**but chosen by God and precious**. How blessed are we, brethren, that we have been chosen by God, called out of this world? Because we know that God the Father is the one who does the calling, and we are precious before God. Now, *why* are we precious before God? Because we have that potential to enter into His family, enter into Elohim. We're precious because of our potential.

Verse 5—you then, as living stones, because of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us, **are being built up a spiritual house**—now that's why we are part of the Body of Christ, because we're "being built up a spiritual house." What house are we? We're the temple of God. What house are we? We're a family. We are part of the Family of God now, begotten sons. We haven't been manifest yet in Elohim, but we are being built up into a spiritual house, which is into Elohim, a **holy** (separate) **priesthood**, because

we're servants of God, **to offer up spiritual sacrifices**. So what are these "spiritual sacrifices" we've been called to do? Well, a spiritual sacrifice is prayer. So every time we pray we're offering up a spiritual sacrifice. Every time we deny ourselves, we deny our pride and fight our selfishness, that is a spiritual sacrifice. We have to give spiritual sacrifices to God, which is all about sacrificing the self. ...**acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**. That was all done and made possible because of Passover, through Jesus Christ.

Verse 6—Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture, Behold, I (God) lay in Zion, which is a "type" of the Church, **a chief cornerstone**, which was Jesus Christ, **elect, precious, and he who believes on Him**, who believes in Him, **will by no means be put to shame**. Because we are listening to God, listening to Jesus Christ, therefore, we believe Him, we believe Jesus Christ. And in believing Jesus Christ we believe God, and therefore, we "will by no means put to shame." We'll be "no means put to death."

Verse 7—Therefore, to you who believe, which is us, brethren. We believe the word of God. We believe we have to be hearers of the word and doers also. **He is precious** (Jesus Christ is precious), **to those who are disobedient**, those who are lawless, those who don't believe, **'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,'** and, **'A stone of stumbling, a rock of offense,'** because it's about Jesus Christ and the truth. **They stumble**, they stumble at Christ, they stumble at the truth, they stumble at the word of God, **being disobedient to the word**, they're disobedient to God's way of life, **to which they were appointed**. **But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him**. Now, how do we "proclaim the praises of Him," God the Father? By the way we live, by walking on this narrow path, by entering through the narrow gate and not go by the natural carnal mind on the broad path. So we can "proclaim the praises of Him," by the way we live, by living obedience, **who called you out of darkness**, out of sin, **into His (God the Father's) marvelous light**. So we've been called into the truth, and therefore, it's our choice whether or not we want to be obedient or disobedient, whether we want to be blessed or cursed, whether we want to have blessings from God or we want to pay the penalty that goes with disobedience.

Verse 10—who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy, because of a calling. So we were "once not a people." We weren't the Church of God; we were members of the world. We were part of the world; we walked in disobedience to God. But now, "we are the people of God." We've been called out of this world to become a member of the Body of Christ, and we have now obtained mercy, whereas before we didn't. We didn't have mercy applied to us. But now we have been called by the mercy of God so that we can now have mercy and forgiveness once we repent.

Verse 11—Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, because we are just passing through. We are just sojourners. It's here for a temporary time. And we're pilgrims. We're living God's way of life. We're ambassadors for Christ; we represent Christ in everything we do, the way we live our life, the way we talk, the words we use, whether we're obedient or disobedient. ...**abstain from fleshly lusts**, these selfish desires, because if we give into these fleshly desires we're going to be living a life of

disobedience. So, **abstain from these fleshly lusts**, these selfish desires, **which war against the life**, because they war against us in our minds. There's a battle going on.

Verse 12—having your conduct honorable among the gentiles, so it's the way we live our life, **that they may speak against you as evildoers**, because we're members of the Body, they see us as odd and different, and therefore, because we don't conform to their way of life they see us as odd, they'll speak against us, **they may, by your good works**, which is God living and dwelling in us, **which they observe**, they see these things, they see that we're not speaking evil of others, they see by our conduct, they see by the way we live that we are considered "nice people" (seen as nice people), we're not the same as them, but we're genuine, we're sincere, we're open, we're honest, we don't run our mouths off, we don't speak evil of others, we've laid aside all malice, we've laid aside all deceit, we're not hypocrites, we've laid aside envy, we're not one of evil speaking of others. They will, because they see this, **glorify God in the day of visitation**. Now, their day of visitation is when they are called to "see." So they will know at some point that we were sojourners and that we were in this battle, and that's what made us different. They saw us as odd, but they could see we were different, and then they will turn around and glorify *God* because it's God that does the works. They won't turn around and glorify *us*. They will glorify God for *His* calling and *His* intervention into our lives.

Back to **Deuteronomy 28:10**—Still going through the blessings part of Deuteronomy 28. **Then all the people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you**. Now, this particular point was talking about a nation of Israel, that they would be seen as being called by the name of God, and that all the people would be afraid of them because God was going to fight their battles for them, therefore, people would fear them. Well, brethren, the day will come when people will "see" that we are "called by the name of God." We are the Church of God, and that at some point of time, they will fear God. They won't fear us; they will fear God, because they will see what work God did. We are the people of God, and therefore, people will come to see and understand (as we read in that last scripture), that people will understand and they will fear God because of it, because they will also be called by the name of God at some point in time when they're given that opportunity.

Verse 11—And the LORD (Yahweh Elohim) will grant you plenty of goods, which is this prosperity, **in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you**. We, brethren, have been given plenty. We've been granted plenty on a spiritual level. And also, "the fruit of your body." What is the body we are part of? It's the Body of Christ. We are members of the Body of Christ, the Church of God. So what we can do as our part within the Body is to share, to give, to support other parts of the Body, because we all need each other. And "the increase of the livestock and the produce of the ground, the land which the LORD God swore to your fathers to give you," we've been given the Church, and therefore, we have prosperity because we are connected to the Church. We have the opportunity consume spiritual food.

Verse 12—The LORD will open to you His good treasure, what's that good treasure we've received, brethren? It's the truth. We have been given spiritual knowledge, understanding, and the truth. We see the truth. So we have this "good treasure." **...the heavens, to give the rain, which is the truth, to your**

land in its season, so we've been given truth according to the will of God "in its due season," **and to bless all the works of your hand**, or "all the work of your hand," which is God's spirit in us that does the works. **You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.** In other words, we will be provided for. We do not need to acquire things from others because God is providing everything for us. So we don't have to borrow anything from anyone. We don't have to borrow anything from the world because all truth comes from God and it's placed in the Church. There is no other truth anywhere else but in the Church.

Verse 13—The LORD will make you the head and not the tail; in other words, we will be given positions of authority over others, because we will be the head. Because being part of the Body of Christ we are already "the head," only the world does not know that it's the tail at this time. But there comes a time when the Church will be the head and everything else will be behind it. So it's either, we're in the Church or we're not. ...**you shall be above only, and not beneath.** So we are going to be above all. Now, this applies to the 144,000, but it also can apply to any member of the Body of Christ. We're not beneath. We're not beneath anything because Satan's system is beneath. Well, God's Church is above all and not beneath, **if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God**, which is what the Church does, which is what the Church teaches, which is what we do. If we are willing to put God first, if we're willing to listen to the commandments of God, God says that we will be the head and we will not be the tail. We won't be last because God is the head of all and we're going to be part of His Family, therefore, we will be the head. ...**which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.** Now, this is the key. We have to be careful to observe them in spirit and truth.

Verse 14—So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them. So it all comes down to a priority. We are not to turn aside from this calling that we have been given, and we're not to turn aside to any other words, anything said outside of God's Church. Now, there are many false doctrines, there's many other rubbish written out there, there's many other books, and we have to be careful not to turn aside to them, to give our priority to or give our attention to them because we have to focus on what God has commanded us this day. And we're not "to turn to the right or to the left." We're to stay on this narrow way (this narrow path). And we're not "to go after other gods to serve them." Because the moment we go after anything else other than "seeking first the Kingdom of God," and walking on this narrow path, we go out and serve others, we give our priority to something else. Well, that's when we serve other gods.

Now, the biggest god that we have is selfishness. We serve ourselves. That's our biggest danger.

Psalms 95:1—Oh come, let us sing to the LORD ("to the Eternal")! **Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.** And that "Rock" is our strength, Yahweh Elohim, because it is God our Savior, firstly, because we are saved *through* Jesus Christ, but God the Father (Yahweh Elohim) *is* "the Rock of our salvation," because the way that we have to walk is the way that God has outlined, and if we don't walk this way we cannot be saved.

Verse 2—Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving. Now, we can do that at any time, brethren, in prayer. We can do it when we're in a car, we can do it when we're walking, because this is about a spirit, the spirit in us where we can turn our spirit to God, where we can rejoice before God and we can come before Him in His presence, before His presence, in thanksgiving or *with* thanksgiving. We can do this on Sabbaths. So we can be thankful for our calling, the fact that we have been called out of a way of walking, a way of walking on a broad path to a way of walking on a narrow path, this narrow gate, because we, brethren, have been called to salvation. That is the purpose of our calling; we have been called to salvation. So we can come before God at any time and give Him thanks for this very calling.

Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. So these are "songs of thanksgiving." To give God the praise for what He has done for us, the fact that we've been called (or for me personally, have been awakened out of a sleep that I was in), is a great joy. It is a time to be thankful to God for the fact that He's called us into the truth at this time. Because there are many that have been left asleep, there are many that haven't been called to this relationship with God at this particular time.

Verse 3—So why are we to give the thanks? Why are we to "shout joyfully to God?" Why? (Verse 3) For the LORD (Yahweh) is the Great God, He is the Great El, and the great King above all elohims, above all gods. So Yahweh Elohim is above all. There is only one Yahweh Elohim (which we have read before), and He *is* the Great King, and He is above all other families, or other elohims, which is above all other gods that man may make. Because the reality is there is only one true God, Yahweh Elohim, there are not other families. Although man has set up other families, other elohims which they worship, but there is only one true God.

Verse 4—In His hand are the deep places of the earth. See, He has power and control over the earth. **The heights of the hills are His also.**

Verse 5—The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry ground. So God sustains all things. He created all things for a purpose, and that purpose, we understand, is for the creation of a spiritual family, a family of Elohim where we can enter into Elohim. So man was created for that purpose. Now, we have this understanding, we have this knowledge of this, where the world hasn't been granted it yet. So we've been called to walk on this way of life (the way that God has outlined) so that we can at this time start this journey on this path for the purpose of entering Elohim.

Verse 6—Oh come, let us worship and bow down, let us humble ourselves before God. Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker, our creator. For He is our God, He is our Elohim. He is the one true God. And that's why we should worship Him because He created us. Now, without God we have nothing. Without God we are nothing.

And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Now, God uses this analogy of sheep because we are God's "flock," and we are people of "His pasture." So to be "consuming pasture," to be consuming spiritual food, we have to be part of His pasture, we have to be part of His true

Church. And as "sheep," which God uses symbolically, points to us, brethren, that we are members of the Body of Christ. We have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us so we are the people of God, we are God's people, and we are in His hand. He has control over what goes on in our life in the sense of providing His holy spirit to us. And God will guide and protect us and look after us as long as we yield to walk on the right path.

Today, if you will hear His voice: "Today, if you will listen and obey," because those two things go together. Because Israel was commanded to listen, which was if they listened they should have done it, because we can't be just hearers of the word, we have to be doers also. So, "Today, if you will hear," if we will listen and obey His voice, His instructions, His commandments (that is the main point of why we are walking on this path, which is if we're walking on this path we will be listening and then we will be doing it, we'll be implementing it into our life).

Do not harden your hearts, do not harden your inner thinking, **as in the rebellion,** as in the contention or the strife, **as in the day of trial in the wilderness,** and that is the "day of proving or testing," which we have covered briefly in Matthew 4.

Verse 9—When your fathers tested Me. They set out to "prove" God to get this reaction. **They proved Me,** they tried Me, **though they saw My works.** So even though they had seen all these incredible miracles that God had done, they still did not believe God. They still went out and murmured and complained. We have already seen all His works. We have seen what we were (by the power of God's holy spirit). We have seen where we have come from. We've seen His great works *in ourselves*. We know we are different. We know our minds are being transformed and we also see God's great works within the Church, how He works within the Church.

Now, when we read scripture we can "see" the truth. We "see" things differently. Well, that's all because God allows us to "see" it. So although we have seen God's work we have to be very, very careful about what we do with the knowledge and understanding that we have.

Verse 10—For forty years I was grieved (loathed) with that generation (with that people). Now, I remember during the period of the Apostasy where the Church had gone to sleep (and I individually had gone to sleep as well), because they were no longer living love. They were no longer the yielding to God, relying on God, but pride had entered the Church and "each man did what was right in his own eyes." And that's what was actually happening within the Church during the period of the Apostasy. People were "leaning on their own understanding," relying on self rather than relying and trusting in God. **And said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts,'** so in their minds they are disobedient, they wander out of the way. And that was the problem within the thinking; the Church had gone to sleep. It had wandered out of the way. The "people had gone astray in their hearts." In their inner thinking (in their minds) they were no longer obedient to the word of God. They were actually *disobedient* because they were relying on self and relying on the thinking of mankind, their own thoughts, trusting in self, and had moved away from God. **'And they do not know My ways,'** the way to walk in love; they had lost it. During that period, the Church went to sleep. They had lost the way of

the way to walk. They were no longer walking in love because God's spirit was no longer there. So the only way we can walk in love, to walk in God's ways, is by the power of God's holy spirit.

Verse 11—So I (God) swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ Now, this is referring to something on a physical level where God had said to Israel, because of their disobedience, because of their rebellion, because they wouldn't believe God and they continued on a path of wandering out of the way, of walking under their *own* reasoning, their *own* way and not listening to God, not obeying God, that they would not enter His rest, which was the physical promised land.

Now, for us, brethren, this principle applies today, that we need to be careful not to wander off in disobedience, to wander off and fall asleep or to leave the path, the right path that God has entered us on to, because we will *not* enter His rest on a spiritual level, which is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God, entering Elohim, *is* a final rest, a spiritual rest.

Well, we can have rest today if we stay part of the Body of Christ, because there is a spiritual rest in that because we can continue to consume food, we can continue to walk in the way of love, we can continue to listen and obey the law of God, the commandments of God. And therefore, in a way we are in a state of rest, which is coming to God on a Sabbath. We rest on a Sabbath. Well, we are resting in a way, in a "type," but the end result is that we desire to enter into this final rest, and that final rest is the Kingdom of God.

So we'll leave *Part 1* here and we'll pick up *Part 2* next week. □