

Today in this full sermon being given after nearly three years - and actually it's the first sermon I'll be giving before a full congregation in about 3½ years time at least - I'm going to begin this sermon today by quoting a scripture Mr. Armstrong often used. It's (you can just jot this down), **Proverbs 29:18—Where there is no vision, the people perish.** Kind of an interesting word, how it's used in scripture in the Old Testament. We generally think of vision, the future, and so forth. It is about that very much so, but it really has a lot more to do with it than just that. It comes from a word that means "to see, to perceive." It's a matter of understanding. It's a matter of your ability to perceive and understand what God is giving, the ability to "see" what He's showing to you. And, of course, He has to do that by the power of His spirit, otherwise a person can't "see," they can't have that kind of vision, that kind of perception. And this usage literally means here "to have vision in the night." It's how it's used. "To have vision in the night." If you look at it in the physical way, for us, obviously, spiritual, that's where we are. We're very much in the "night" as far as this world is. This world is so *blind!* It is in such darkness and God is letting them have a full grasp of that, even, especially, in government right now, in other areas, economics and so forth. People are going to have their fill of these things before everything comes to a head, truly. To see what mankind has done to himself at an age, at a time when mankind would otherwise believe (because of his haughty spirit) what he can accomplish and what he can change. And he's not going to be able to change what he's gotten himself into.

This word also means, has a great deal of meaning when it comes to "vision as in prophecy. The ability to communicate prophecy." That's how it's used in the Old Testament, "the ability to communicate prophecy." It's many scriptures, like this one here, there's one that speaks in this manner. It says, "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos." Now, it's not speaking of specifically something that was given to him, it's what God gave to him, an ability to perceive, to know and see certain things that he was able to communicate then to others of things that would come to pass. And truly, that's an awesome thing to understand when we have the ability to speak about prophetic things, when we can talk about the things that are going to be happening in this end-time. And I have so much to say about those things and there's so much more in the book written about those things that it's going to take some time to explain all of that.

Brethren, God has been sharpening our vision, and this third book that we have begun putting on the post should help to sharpen your vision far, far, far more. There's much more to come. Much of what it means to have a sharpened vision is to understand that we must clearly grasp, clearly see where we have been, why, and where we're going, because it all fits together, especially as we're going to be talking about here today in large part, over the period beginning about 2008 forward. The ability to understand what we experienced, where we've been, why, why we went through it, and where we're going. It's really quite incredible!

All of what I've just mentioned has everything to do with the title of this sermon today, *A Sharpened Vision*.

Last Sabbath I had the opportunity to be in fellowship here, as I mentioned early on, with those who comprise this Cincinnati congregation, and then to sit in on the sermon with them. I wrote something at the top of my notes that I want to read to you, which was motivated by the fact that I had just sat down after speaking a few minutes to the group here before we began listening to the sermon for that day. What I wrote down is something I wanted to be certain to say at the beginning of this sermon today to pass along to all of you here in the Cincinnati congregation, and frankly, to everyone in the Church, because it applies to everyone, not just to you. Here is what I wrote: "As I look out here," thought I had this whipped. It's what I was feeling last Sabbath, what I wanted to write down and give to you today. "As I look out here at this congregation I see *faithful* brethren." That means a lot. That means a lot to the Great God, the Great God who worked with you, molded and fashioned you, and has given you the ability to live by the kind of faith you're living by right now. He blessed you in it. You don't work it up. It's something that's there and it doesn't come easy. It comes through hard trials. It comes through testing and trials.

So, again, I see faithful brethren here. And this is what else I wrote, "and I truly feel blessed and honored..." "I truly feel blessed and honored to be in the presence of God's people." And I hope all of you feel that way. A lot of times we can come together in fellowship, we can come together Sabbath after Sabbath wherever we're meeting, and after a time familiarity can begin to breed contempt if we're not careful. But if we truly grasp to the depth of our being what it means that God has called us, that God is molding and fashioning our mind as we yield to Him, as we repent and strive to overcome and conquer, and if we truly have that feeling, that belief, that understanding that *we are family*, and you cherish that.... See, I've been in a place where I cherish that a whole lot more than I ever have in my life. And the opportunity to be together with God's people is an awesome, awesome blessing, that if we're not careful we can begin to take for granted.

And the Church took that for granted in a very big way after Mr. Armstrong died, and it became Laodicean. And people did not appreciate one another, "and the love of many," as it says, "began to wax cold." And there wasn't that feeling of family any longer. And then we had the Apostasy. And that's why. God wasn't in the picture as He should have been. God wasn't in our lives within the Body as He should have been. What an awesome thing that He can be in our lives in a very powerful way. And the way it is right now, you've gone through a lot to get to this point. I know you have. I've heard the stories of different things you've gone through. Hear them on a regular basis. It's not supposed to be easy. And I wouldn't trade a bit of it for anything. I wouldn't trade what I've been through for anything on this earth that you could give me otherwise, because of what it has given to the Church! Because of what it has done for the Church and what it's done for me. Because I know that God is molding and fashioning certain things within me as well, still, as He is in every one of you. And it doesn't come easy!

And when you grasp that in a deeper way you can begin to do exactly what it talks about in times here when it says that they *REJOICE in tribulation*. And there's a reason for that! Because they understand what it's going to produce! Doesn't mean it's easy! The trials aren't easy! The hardships aren't easy! But the change that God can work with in you as a human being is *awesome*! It's *incredible* what He produces if we yield to the process. And sadly, as it's going to bring out even more fully in the book, as you continue on, it is that very process whereby we can change and grow. And there is no other way. There is no other way that God can change us as human beings except we go through things of that nature, especially in this age. Yes, it's going to become somewhat easier for people through the Millennium, but overcoming human nature is really not easy. But as far as the world around them, the opportunities and the things that pull people away, that's going to be reduced many times over, obviously. But human nature is human nature and there will be those, believe it or not, throughout the Millennium who *still will not choose God*! That's awesome to understand! If you understand what happened to the angelic realm; if you understand what took place with all those angelic beings living in a paradise, as it were, spiritually, of Eden, having those opportunities on a spiritual plane - third rebelled. And there will be people in the future who just will not choose, will not want God's way. That blows my mind! But I understand it. I've seen people that I believe with all my being, I've been with people over the last three years that I believe they have gone so far, just like in the days of Noah, that they will not choose God no matter what. Their minds are set. Their minds are set. No everyone, thankfully, because there's another batch I look forward to so much so, when their eyes are opened up and they begin to see what they *can* live and what they *can* do and what they *can* change. Be there to help them. The others who don't want it, they can't be helped.

Anyway, I'm getting sidetracked on some of this, but I said I have a lot to give. Three years!

Anyway. I wanted to mention here that when I mentioned that I feel blessed and honored to be in the presence of God's people I thought of some different introductions that are used by some of the apostles in some of the books of the Bible, and I thought it'd be good to go through some of those and talk about a few of those things and see ourselves in the sight of that light, if you would.

Let's turn over to 2 Corinthians 1 and just look at these for what's being said. There's a lot here any way you look at it. Everywhere you look in scripture there is so much there. 2 Corinthians 1. And you have no "cheat notes" because this hasn't been put on PDF yet so I apologize for that. It's just the way it's going to have to be now. 1 Corinthians.... I'm sorry, little farther, 2 Corinthians. Sure glad I caught that.

2 Corinthians 1:1—Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Nobody chooses it! I've thought a lot in recent time, "*Who on earth* - if they *really* understood what was going to come to pass and what you're going to go through and what you're going to experience - would choose to do this?" "Oh, I'd *love* to go over there to Indiana and spend some time!" Who would choose to? Who would choose to teach things that are so diametrically opposite to where you knew that everybody around you is going to hate you, and the farther you go into it the *more* they're going to hate you, as

a whole, except for those who are going to repent and begin to change. Others are going to hate you so much *they want you to cease living*. *That's* what would make them happy. You see, that's the history of God's Church through time. That's what made some happy, is when the other people were put to death or when they died. And *many* died.

So that's what would make some happy. They're not going to like.... We do not grasp the depth of the hatred that's going to come. You think you've experienced hatred? You've simply been prepared for hatred! You haven't experienced it yet, let me tell you. There's a lot more coming in the world around you! That's why it's a matter of relying on God, that *God* is your protector. He is your shield, your High Tower. He is your fortress! He is the one who.... *He is your Petra!* You know, people in the past couldn't wait to get to Petra. Sorry, nobody's going to Petra in Jordon. It's about God Almighty! It's about an understanding that He is the one who is our protector. He is our strength. He is your refuge. And you're going to rely on Him in ways you have not begun to yet. But you have been going through a process of preparing for that in experiences you've had in family, on the job, and wherever around you, in the community and so forth. And I know that I've been prepared, and my wife has been prepared for those things as well. There's a lot of hatred out there. Sad. And by those who claim to be living a different way of life, and yet they're filled with hatred. Too bad. I feel for them. I feel sorry for them. They don't know what they've done to themselves in their lives.

Anyway, we've been prepared for it, brethren. We've gone through things to prepare us for things that are coming. And we don't grasp the scale yet of what's coming but we'll be able to deal with it when it comes and you'll be able to if you put those things to practice then, that trust, that reliance that God is the one that is going to have to protect you. By all means, you aren't going to be able to. You can only do so much, just as in preparation for foods and so forth, which I hope everyone's still doing, because one day you're going to need it. Okay? And water. Some of those basic things. You're still going to need it. Okay? So you can do a certain amount of physical preparation, but you cannot, from what is yet to come, it's going to be a reliance on God in a way that He has prepared us for and we'll be able to do.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in Achaia, Grace be to you and peace from God. Favor to you. Grace. The things that come from God. The blessings that we receive from God. And peace that comes from God because of living His way of life. And the more you live it the more peace you have. The more peace. What a blessing we have. The world doesn't have peace. **Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, that's who it's from, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies. I tell you, by the time you get to the end of that book I hope we have a new perspective, or a greater perspective than ever before of an incredible mercy of God. ...and the God of all comfort. Interesting word. It's about encouragement. God is the one who encourages us. God is the one who will strengthen you and lift you up. Because we're physical human beings and we can get down. We can go through things and we have those emotions and those feelings when we go through it. And when you're going through**

those things you go to God and ask Him for help, "Help me to be of strong and good courage," and God will help you. God will help you. I do that regularly. I hope you do it regularly. "God, I need *Your* encouragement. I need courage from You, encouragement." And then all of a sudden, wham! What an awesome thing! It just like the peace you have. Because peace goes with it.

Who comforts, again, that word "encourages," **us in all our tribulation**. It's not going to be easy, but He'll comfort you. He'll give you, He'll encourage you through it. He'll encourage you through it. No matter how bad it is He'll give you the ability to see that this is going to turn out to be a good thing, the fruit of it. May not feel good when you're going through it, but what it produces, that's what you have your focus upon. **Who comforts (encourages) us in all our tribulations that we may be able to comfort (encourage) those who are in any trouble**. So we learn things, and by that we actually learn how to better help others, how to encourage others when they're going through things as well. **...by the comfort**, "by the encouragement," **where with we ourselves are comforted (encouraged) of God**.

For all the sufferings of Christ abound in us. So Paul is making it very clear here. Look what he's going through. Look what Paul went through. I remind myself - I have through time - oftentimes about Paul, especially, because of what he went through. If you ever think that you're having a difficult time at the airport think about Paul. If just because of a long line or things are delayed or something messes up, and I think about that. I think, "I really got it... I can't tell Paul what I'm feeling here. He's going to have a lot of empathy for me. Sure." Here he was bobbing up and down in the sea more than once, shipwrecked. Wasn't all that comfortable the kind of travel they had back then. And we have things of comfort. We are blessed so much more than other ages of people, truly, and things that they had to go through, things that others in the Church have gone through before us. **For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation**, and so because Paul being an apostle, he was going to receive, in large part, the brunt end of a lot of things, as the others did as well. That's just the way it works. Because they're the ones that are primarily the main ones being seen by others. But we all suffer in different ways for some of those things as well. And we'll suffer individually in our own lives because of what we experience in family, in community, at work, or whatever. And this word, it says here, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation," same Greek word translated as "comfort, encouragement." **...so our encouragement also abounds by Christ**. So there's a purpose in what we go through. There's a purpose in why we go through the things we do, that God can work with us then and mold and fashion and change things that are inside this mind, the spirit that's in us that *cannot* be changed *any other way*.

And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation, "your encouragement." So I have heard people write, they've written, some of you have written things and talked about how this, my experience, has affected you, how our experience, my wife and myself, things that she's gone through and had to do as well alone for this period of time. "It is for *your* encouragement." And so you can relate to some of those things as some of you have when you've gone through different things, and you can realize just as I said toward Paul, about Paul, "I have nothing to complain about. I

have nothing to feel bad about. On the contrary, I can learn from it. I can grow from it. I can experience things I otherwise wouldn't have been able to experience from it." And so can you. You think you're going through something? We have other things to look at in scripture, don't we?

...which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: and whether we be comforted (encouraged), it is for your encouragement and salvation. I wouldn't trade the past three years for anything, because of what it's given to the Church. Primarily, for the ministry, starting first, because of the opportunities that many of you have had within the ministry. Also, then, with the women in the ministry with whom God is working, to make it very clear what His focus is and what He wants the Church to grasp and understand. That things are changing after 6,000 years. And to bless that by being put on front stage, "This is how I'm working. Get used to it! Support it! Understand it. Embrace it." It's awesome. It really is. It wouldn't have happened in the same way if these things hadn't happened. And many of the things I could go into I really don't want to take time for today.

So, again here, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation (encouragement) also abounds in Christ. And whether we be afflicted is for your consolation (your encouragement) and salvation which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. And whether we be comforted (encouraged) it is for your (again) encouragement and salvation." **And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you also be of the encouragement.** So we suffer. We all suffer. We all have hardships. No surprise.

Ephesians 1:1—Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God; it's just what God does. There's a way that God works. **...to the saints who are in Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.** Those who were there. Those who continued plodding forward. Those who continued to support. Those who continued to learn. Those who continued to go through their trials. Those who were still in Ephesus, just as those who are still here today. Because we know a whole lot of people that just aren't here today! They didn't remain faithful! They didn't remain faithful to God, genuine to God. I love the 3½ years we just went through. I love them. The measuring of the temple and the refining process that we have gone through, we've been made stronger and better as a result of it. I have always loved it when God has gone through the body and made it a stronger Body, when God has gone through and gotten rid of, (candidly, speaking plainly), those who aren't participating genuinely, truthfully, honestly before God in spirit and in truth. They don't belong. We don't play games with God. We don't *lie* to God. We don't lie to one another. It isn't the way it's to be, in order to be a family.

Grace be to you, and peace, from God, it comes from God, our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us. Sometimes it's just good to think about your blessings. You think you're going through something difficult? Stop! Think about the purpose. Think about what God is doing. Think about your blessings. Think about what you do have, not what you don't have.

I want to back up a bit while I'm thinking about it. When I talked about earlier about that desire or that feeling of truly feeling blessed and honored to be in the presence of God's people, you know what happens when you have that kind of a feeling? Everything that's petty looks very petty. Everything that comes out as an obstacle between brethren, or between anyone in a family, or whatever it is, looks very, very petty. It's not important. It shouldn't be that way. We should get rid of it quickly and immediately. There is no room for bad feelings. There is no room for arguments. There is no room for dissent. There is no room for any bad feelings that one should have to another, one to another, or say anything derogatory or hurtful to anyone! That's so petty! And it's so childish, spiritually! We are far beyond that, and yet sometimes those things pop up. But they really *never should!* They never should! It shouldn't be a part of our being.

There have been times I've thought about that place over there. That'd be a good training for some because you learn very quickly, if you haven't, to keep your mouth shut and not to say anything derogatory to anyone and to learn to show respect. Because if you don't, things aren't going to go well for you. And a lot of people over there never learn the lesson and they're still not learning it. Sad. I caught on quite quickly. I knew where I was. I know human nature. But I thought what a great training it'd be for some to be thrown in that environment for a time so they could learn never to show disrespect to another human being. Never! No matter who it is, why do that? Why allow yourself to get caught up in things in this world, in that spirit that's out there? Anyway, another sermon.

Verse 4, (I don't know if that's where I left. I think it is.) **According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world**, God has a plan and had it before anything was ever begun, **that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love**, in His love. Because that's the only way we can live the right way of life. That's the only way we can be right toward one another. Because it's about how you live toward one another that counts. That's what counts. It's how you live towards one another. It's how you *think* towards one another that counts. God knows how you think towards everyone. He knows! He knows every thought in your mind! *EVERY THOUGHT in your mind!* And He desires to change it, to make it better. Awesome! And He can if we yield to it. But we have to repent as we're going along. He knows what you're going to do before you do it. He is all-mighty. He is far more almighty than we can conceive or really grasp and understand. But we're learning more and more how almighty He really is.

According as, again, as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestined us, predestinated us or predetermined. In other words, as a part of His plan if we will yield to it in the time of our calling, **us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.** So it's through Jesus Christ, through the blessing of Passover and forgiveness of sin. And if we'll just keep fighting and keep repenting - that's what it's all about. Every time you repent, you know you're growing in character? You're growing in character every time you repent. And the more you do it consistently and quickly the more you're growing in character, because you're acknowledging, "I am

wrong and God is right and I want to change. I don't want to be like that!" That's what you're acknowledging. "God is right and I want what He has." If you don't repent you're just holding on to your own pride and your own selfish ways.

Colossians 1. Going through some of these I can't help but think a lot of times we begin reading in some of these chapters, and so forth, and we generally skim right over these parts, first parts, the introduction. We shouldn't. There's a lot there. **Colossians 1:1—Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.** I remember someone one time asking me, a minister, well known, "Why are you telling people? Why do you feel that you need to tell people," basically, I'm paraphrasing a little bit, "that you're a prophet?" Well, I'm supposed to. How do you know? Well, this is a good example right here. You've got to tell people who you are. We weren't accustomed to that in Worldwide. But when you have a job to do and you're to tell them, "I am... Yes, I'm a prophet. I'm an apostle." Well, then in the beginning of that time I had a hard time saying those words. I really did. But I don't have a hard time anymore, because it's something I'm supposed to do and I understand that. It's not a matter of pride or haughtiness, it's a matter of letting others know this comes from God. "I'm an apostle of God Almighty and Jesus Christ." It's from them. It's not from me. I'm here to serve according to what they give.

Going on here... **To the saints and faithful brethren**, "to the saints and faithful brethren"; to the Church, in Christ who are at Colosse: **Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** See, this is what God wants to give, over and over again, this message here. He wants to give that favor, that grace in your life. He wants to give you that peace. It's there to be received. All we have to do is ask God for it, cry out for it, seek it, be faithful, seek to be faithful. **We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith.** I'll tell you what. I really appreciate and want to give thanks to everyone who remembered me in prison. Jesus Christ said to do that, by the way. Okay? Not just to prisoners, but to people who are a part of the Church. See, there was a time in Worldwide where we didn't grasp that. We thought we had to go into prisons and do certain things and help different ones out and so forth, and they were no more a part of the Church than a man in the moon when it came down to it. They were just looking for a way out. But for those who are truly there because they were a part of the Church... Because, see, in times past there were a lot of people who went to prison who shouldn't have been there. There were a lot of people who were put in prison because of the hatred that was there by the government. And so Jesus Christ knew what was coming, knew exactly what was coming, and said to remember those, to visit them. "If you've visited them, you have visited me." So I want to think everyone who did that, because you know what, I was encouraged by your faith. I could read, I was able to see the kind of faith, where you were, as you shared certain things in your life with me about what you were going through. That was an encouragement. That's what he's talking about here. He was encouraged because he heard of the faith of those in this particular area of Colosse and he is acknowledging that and letting them know that. **...since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which you have to all the saints.** Awesome!

James 1:1—James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different temptations, different trials. Count it all joy? That's not generally the first response we have. But as time goes along and as we begin to grasp - now, sometimes the more we've done it the more we can begin to do that and that's exciting. The more you go along and the more you grow in these things, then the more you can grasp and understand this could be very good, very good, if it's used properly, if we look to God properly. **Count it all joy when you fall into different temptations.** As a whole, as human beings, we generally just don't want them. Now, that can be temptations, trials as well, because troubles, it has to do with, it's the same thing here. This is what it's basically talking about in context here. **Knowing this, that the trying of your faith...** "The trying of your faith." It has to be tried. You have to go through things. God is going to know (which He does) where you are, but His desire in molding and fashioning the very mind you have is very much a part of this. The trying of your faith yields itself to being able to accomplish that more fully. You have to go through things.

I can't wait 'til we get to *chapter 6*, because there is so much there. And I'll just say it now, you, in some parts of it, you're going to feel lost. And I understand that. But as time goes along you're going to begin to pick up on things and understand things and see things as you begin to build one row of block and then another row of block. And finally, the building's standing and strong as the mortar sets. It takes time. Nothing comes all at once. So just keep plodding forward and it'll be there. God will give it. But there's so much, brethren, that God has to give to us.

That the trying of your faith, works patience. And we have to be patient. I look back at the time of the Apostasy, and if you're not patient - and some were not patient - and where are they? They're not here. "The trying of your faith." So if you grasp the value, the incredible value of your faith being tried, of going through hardships, of going through difficulty. If your life is going along, especially in this time, smooth and easy and no problems and it's just the best you've ever had life, uh, something's probably very wrong. Okay?

But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. "Lacking," that's what it means, "wanting nothing." Lacking nothing. That God give to you, supply you with those things that you have great need of in your life spiritually.

One last one here. **2 John 1:1—The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.** You know, if we're not in the truth you can't love someone else the same way. If someone isn't really in the truth, in the same manner, there's going to be a barrier there. They're not going to be able to receive it in the first place because of whatever things going on in the mind. We are of one mind. God gives that one mind. And if we yield to it, we will have it. **...whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all those who have known the truth; for the truth's sake, which dwells in us.** Isn't that an awesome thing, to understand what God gives to us and the things we see? Had a conversation just before services talking about a little of this, that the fact that we're family, the fact that we feel this and know this. And the more we feel it and sense it and experience it as a matter of our life, it's because of this unity of spirit we have. We believe the same thing. And God

gives that! God is the one who can give that. It's not something we can work up in any fashion or form. It's either there or it isn't. **...for the truth's sake, which dwells in us, and shall be with us forever.** The truth. The truth. What is truth? God's word is truth. That which comes from God. That which God gives, as we have learned in a very powerful way, through the Church, through the ministry, through the apostles, on into the Church, through the ministry to the Church. That's how it works. That's how it's always worked. It blesses everyone to be able to be fully focused on God. God has a process in that even in our physical lives, and we learn that, that we learn to yield to that process. Because if we resist it we resist God.

Verse 3—Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. Over and over again through scripture, "in truth," "in the truth," oneness, unity, family, in love, God's love. **I rejoiced greatly that I found of your children walking in the truth.** What a comfortable thing. Because it hurts when you see someone not walking in the truth. You hurt for them. You hurt for what damage it can cause within the body, but we have to learn those things and grow and it's a part of a growing process then. **...as we have received a commandment from the Father.**

So I want to, again, I want to mention that when I looked out over the congregation it was indeed a great honor and privilege - I feel that now; I felt it then - to be in the presence of those who have remained faithful to God. What an awesome thing we have by being able to be together in a family.

At this point I want to insert something into the sermon about future sermons. And I realize I have much that I want to say after three years, as I mentioned. There is much that God is giving to us. So much! So much! I didn't think I'd probably be doing much speaking later, but I know that's changing. Anyway. Although I realize that I'll be speaking quite often from now on I'm still going to have the evangelists give sermons. I'm still going to have the senior elders, some of those, some of them give the splits. And we're still going to put them on the site so they'll be right there with the sermons that are given. And that way an opportunity to sharpen your vision, to be sharpened spiritually even more so, that on a Sabbath, if a person chooses, especially some of those who don't have regular fellowship, they may have the time and may want to listen to two on the Sabbath. That's fine. They may be able to listen to one then during the week. So they're still going to be put on the site, and these individuals need to keep sharp too. It gives them that opportunity, because there is a training process. There's a process you go through and at some point even more information on the site is going to be more helpful to others. And it's helpful to you presently. So we're going to have more, not less, being given to us, that we can glean from. So in that way, again, a matter of what this sermon is all about, a sharpening of our vision.

So, presently, we have a decent... I want to say this, we have a decent understanding of where we have been over the past seven years. Decent. Because there's a lot more to learn. There's a lot more to learn about where we've been over the past seven years. But as a congregation, again, we just, we do not yet fully grasp all that's occurred during this time. And you're going to find it very inspiring as

you digest it, you truly are, what the Great God has been doing in our lives. Because it's about us. It's always been about us from the beginning.

Things about the end-time, we used to believe in the Church (Worldwide) that the Seals, the opening of the Seals, those first four Seals - "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" - what does the world believe? Because they can only see physically. They can only see on a physical plane so even within the world, what has the world believed? The "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"; we didn't make that one up. That didn't come from Worldwide. That's in the world. The "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," because of those first four Seals. So it was seen as something physical and great war. And, well, it leads to that, but little did we know. But we learned later on when God revealed it to us it was about His *Church*. *All about His Church* and what was going to happen beginning with the Apostasy, the second horse, the false ministry, and so forth, all the things that happened with the third horse. The fourth horse, the destruction within God's own Church! Awesome! But we didn't know that until it came time, until God gave it. Never about physical fighting and wars and so forth. Never meant to be that way, but we didn't know that because, see, our present truth at that point in time, we weren't there yet because God hadn't given it because it had to come after the Apostasy to begin separating out who was His and who isn't, of those who would receive that message when God began to give it. How many rejected it? The whole Church! The whole scattered Church. Do they believe, as a whole, that they have been scattered? Do they believe that there's been an Apostasy? They won't even yet acknowledge that there's been.... I don't know of anyone that acknowledges that there's been an Apostasy, except one group. I don't know... (us). I don't know of anyone that teaches about the man of sin, the son of perdition. I don't know of anyone who teaches.... Do you know of anyone who teaches that? Truth that God has given to us to understand deeply and mightily, what happened to us, what we experienced. Awesome! On and on it goes, doesn't it. But in God's time He began to show it through the means He was going to begin to teach His Church, but the Church was so (scattered Church) was so filled with pride it wasn't going to accept that message - especially from me. Okay? Who was I? Pastor out here in Toledo and Findlay, Ohio? Who is he? Amazing how God works. Amazing, how God works. Amazing how God works. It's about humility. It's about being yielded to God, whether or not we will listen to God and honestly, objectively look at something that's given and then discern (judge).

So, again, we could go on and on with some of this but I need to keep going here.

Once we get to that chapter 6, again, I just want to mention, you'll begin to understand what I'm saying even more so, as it reveals much more about what we've experienced over the past seven years, and most importantly *why*. It's inspiring! And it's about us again, just as much as the first four Seals. It's about the Church, what we have experienced. It's still about us, very much so. God's not through with us. And His primary focus is, you know what? His people. Always has been. His people, what He's molding and fashioning. The world will come in its time. It'll be about the world in God's time, when it becomes time to begin bringing different ones or opening up minds and leading them into the Millennium. But that will be a whole different story. That primary work will be done, that

primary work will be done when Jesus Christ and 144,000 on the earth. Up until that time, it's going to be very much about the Church.

So, again, you're going to need to be patient until we get there, but I'm going to be giving you different things as we move along here to prepare you for some of what's there so that it'll be easier to receive when we get there. Just as I mentioned in some of the posts, there's been a lot in prophecy that's changed. And some people that kind of maybe blows their minds, but it shouldn't. It's awesome. It's beautiful when you understand the purpose for it and what God is doing.

Some of the things written in the last book don't apply anymore! They're not going to happen that way anymore because God has changed it, because He has a different purpose for what He's doing now than what He was *GOING TO DO* in 2012, leading up to 2012. Because, you see, God was going to do something different. The world had already been judged. Just as the sermons that God inspired to be given. The world had already been judged. Incredible. And there was certain destruction, very massive, that was going to take place. But something changed to accomplish a greater purpose that God *wanted* to do, but could only do depending upon us. It's a beautiful thing, it truly is. Awesome! Inspiring when you see the whole picture. It's going to take some time to get the whole picture. I can't keep you here for several hours. They won't let me stay, yet.

So, some have been making comments about how plain and easy it's been to follow the book written so far, that's been written so far - kind of like how *The Plain Truth* was - the flow and so forth, the ability to see it. And my response in each case, as I mentioned last Sabbath, is, "Well, you haven't gotten to chapter 6 yet." It's going to change. And chapter 7.

So at this point there are some points that we can begin to address. I'm just going to mention some things here to fit into the picture of it all - matter of sharpening our vision. During the fifth prophetic end-time period of 1260 days, which was that period from 2008 to 2012, we experienced a most fascinating period in God's Church. It was, in some respects, kind of a dry run. Not... In some respects. Because some of the sermons that were given back then will apply to now, and they didn't apply to that period back then. Some things were changing even back then but (I'll get to it in a moment), but even the 63,000 - the 7,000 and the 63,000? That was for later on. Because, you see, God already had determined in 2008 that Jesus Christ was not going to come back in 2012, but He didn't tell us *for a great purpose, awesome purpose!* And in time you'll understand and you'll rejoice in that and you'll be excited by what God is doing and how God is doing it. Truly. So there are things that have been given in the past that apply to the future. Incredible.

So, again, there was a period that God had established for Christ's first coming, because, again, the world had been judged, mightily so. The scattered Church had already been judged. And I have it in my notes here somewhere, so I'll probably fumble around for it, part of it here, but I just want to say here that 63,000 that we talk about, and the 7,000, the 7,000, it talks about the great earthquake, and the 7,000 - I believe I mentioned it in the post recently, didn't I, of the... sometimes between the book and the posts and stuff - about how that (speaking of that particular group of people)... I'll just

mention here that of the 7,000 it talks about in Revelation, that's about the scattered Church, of those who will *not* come through, of those who will *not* by name (that have already been determined), who will *not* be allowed to live on into the Millennium. Okay? Most of those will be allowed to live later on during the Hundred-years, but not all. They are numbered.

Now, if 2012 had happened that would have been a physical thing. It wouldn't have been about the Church. You see, God... There are so many things that you cannot know. God can use His word, depending on what His purpose is and what He's going to do, any way He so desires. And the only way to understand what is written here is when He gives it and says it, "This is what this is. This is what you are now experiencing." That's the only way we can know. That's the way it's always been. You can't know until God reveals it to you! People have tried to understand this inside and out and they can't until God gives it. And when it's His time He will give it and then we'll be able to see it. But there are a lot of things written in here - that there are outlines, as a whole, there is that which is set in prophecy that can't be changed, but within some of those there are things that can be changed. Ever how God desires. *Ever how God desires*. And no one is going to tell God how to accomplish and how to fulfill His word. And yet many try, truly.

And so that 7,000, as an example, when the sermon was given later on we began to understand, God began to show us that it was about the Church. Because it wasn't going to happen in 2012. He was preparing us for what He was going to do later on. A great mercy! Because, you see, if things had happened, my point being, is if things that happened in 2012 there would not be 63,000 who would be able to live on into because it would apply physically and not spiritually, in the sense to the scattered Church, it would have applied literally in a literal area of Jerusalem and it would have been fulfilled in that manner. That's what God has shown.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Okay. Hopefully in time. If you don't, don't worry about it, it'll come. It'll be very clear as we go forward.

But how inspiring that as we got farther and farther into it God began to show us some things that were going to change later on. And if He hadn't given that, I couldn't have written a book. I couldn't have written the book. So He has to give things in advance and prepare us for things that come later.

Let's turn over to Ezekiel 2. So again, the date "Pentecost 2012" was not set, though we thought it was. I thought it was. I thought it was even after we passed it. "What? What's going on? Maybe we have a year of the Lord?" That's the only thing that made any sense, that could possibly fit in there. That wasn't it either. And God didn't reveal it right away. And that's, again, in the book. We'll wait.

So, brethren, again here, the good news is that this date was moved forward to 2019. That's good news. You're going to be excited when you come to understand these things and grasp them more fully, what God's been doing and what He's doing right now. I'll become much clearer as we continue on with sermons. And really, this sermon here about a sharper vision is really about a preparation, or

if you will, a kind of an introduction into sermons that are going to follow, and especially leading up to chapter 6.

So some may be uncomfortable with the fact that we in God's Church, speaking of some of us in the ministry and those who speak, who've been speaking, are speaking very clearly about Christ's coming in 2019 as now being our... as now being set as our vision, as a matter of our vision and what we see prophetically in God's Church. I think of Johnny's sermon last... Was it? I think it was last week's sermon. Yes. Hit it many times - Pentecost 2019, 19, 2019, 2019. Wham! Wham! Wham! I believe it with all my being as much as I believed 2012, and I live by that. And that's a choice we have to make, isn't it? Incredible. And so our focus, the focus of the Church, it's how everything is being geared right now, obviously, just as it was back then. Everything.

So let's consider this date for a moment. Again, it's my focus and my belief at this present time there is nothing else. And I say "at this present time" because I truly hope and pray we don't go through anything more. I truly do. But I can't say that we wouldn't, we couldn't. I really don't want to go through that, but I will do and go wherever God leads me to go. This is not like the sermon about being sobered back in... I don't believe that one iota, truly. And I'm going to go back and I'm even going to go through some of that sermon there because to me it's still exciting what God even did with us back then and what He was working with us. But anyway, as I mentioned here, my focus, my belief, I believe your focus and your belief as well.

Ezekiel 2, notice. This is our truth, our current truth, if you will. **Ezekiel 2:3—And he said to me, Son of man, I send you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me: they and their fathers have transgressed against Me, even unto this very day.** Speaking of those prophecies between 2008 and 2012 and the things that were leading up to the way things would have been otherwise, I should say, though there is something that happened in 2008 that we'll come back to in time concerning you, concerning what you lived, that determined what the date would be. Awesome! But God didn't let us know. He let us live it. *He let us live it* by faith. And we did right up to the very end, some waiting outside, waiting, not understanding how could God fulfill it this quickly, but that's what we live. No matter what anyone else thought around us. Incredible! And God has honored that mightily in people's lives, truly. And speaking here of what it's saying here, I can't help but think of what this is talking about when it talks about Israel - primarily Manasseh. Because the one thing that is unique is that Manasseh has gotten worse in the last seven years, much worse. So much worse off than what they were before that the potential for destruction this time is far greater than what it would have been if things had happened after 2008 - much worse. And knowing human nature and seeing things the way they are, there's going to be some tough lessons for this country to learn. And it's going to be much harder on them than what it was going to be before. And you live here. What you're going to go through is not going to be easy. That's why God is our Petra. And that has to be deeply imbedded in your being. God is your Petra. He'll take care of you.

Do I give this example or not? Yeah, I will. Reminds me of an individual who came up to me in a TV room over in this little place I was visiting, just before I was able to come back to Cincinnati, about a

week before that. And he wanted to change some TV's. He was watching one particular TV and somebody had broken off some of the things for changing the channels and he wanted to watch something else. And I told him, "No, I'm happy with this one here, what I'm watching. You can..." And there was some other things in the background I'm not going to go into right now. He lost it. He lost it. He's a big guy, really big guy. Much younger than me. And he started cursing and swearing and he started hitting his fist. And he says, "Who do you think you are?!" He says, "You're not above having your teeth knocked down your throat!" and a few other things that he had to say. I just sat there and looked at him. I was totally calm. And I knew that God gave me the calm. There's no sense in... And there was no fear; not one iota of fear. And I knew that God gave that to me at that moment in time. I wasn't concerned he was going to do anything. I really felt that no matter what was going to happen God was going to take care of it. And all of a sudden he looked up at a window, and I don't know what he saw but his countenance changed and he turned away and went and sat down. And as I got up to leave I let him know - which you might think is not too bright, but I did - because I felt that I needed to address it. I said, "I just want you to know that I have no respect for you for what you did and I have not one iota of fear of you." And I said a couple of things. I can't remember exactly how I stated it. But anyway, his countenance was totally changed and he said, "I am *so sorry!*" He said, "That's not me." He said, "I don't know what came over me." I do. I know *exactly* what happened to him.

Brethren, that's a small thing. That's a small thing. But, you see, you're going to see things, you're going to experience things in your life that are going to be far, far worse than that - between life and death. And it's a matter of understanding you rest in God's power. Your life is in God's hands 100%. That's why I'm not concerned whether I ever die. If I die I know it's God's doings. If I live I know it's God's doings. If something happens to me I know it's God's doings because my life is in God's hands because God loves me and cares for me and is molding and fashioning this mind. And He's molding and fashioning in yours, your mind as well, your being. And Your life is in His hands. And the more confidence and the more understanding you have of that, who can touch you? Who can harm you? Who can do anything to you? Doesn't it say something like that in here? Who can? No one can. Because you belong to God. You belong to the Great God of this universe.

I could tell you some incredible stories that I've known in times past that have happened in Worldwide. Awesome things where God has intervened to protect people. *Awesome* things at a moment's notice to help us to learn this very thing, to help us have those kinds of experiences. Okay? Just relying and trusting in God. Your life is in His hands. He cares for you in ways, because He's done a lot with you, He has a purpose for you. He has great desire for you!

Anyway, continuing on here. **Verse 4—For they are an impudent children and stiff-hearted. I send you unto them. You shall say unto them, Thus says the Lord Eternal. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there has been a prophet among them. And you, son of man, be not afraid of them. Now, this is to all of us. Please understand, this is to all of us. And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be**

afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with you, and you do dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And you shall speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But you, son of man, hear what I say unto you; Be not you (Do not be) rebellious like that rebellious house: open your mouth, and eat what I give you. In other words, God is saying, "Don't be like them, but receive what I have for you." And that's what God does for us. He's telling us to receive what He has from Him to be given. To do, to accomplish, to fulfill the truth, the present truth that God gives to us, to live by that, to accept it. And we do. God has brought us a long way. Brethren, when you go through some of these things, we start talking about some of those things later on, I believe it's going to be deeply inspiring to you to recognize the level of faith that God has brought us to, of what He's molded and fashioned within us as a body. Because if you'd live... I know some have been here much longer, but when I was baptized in 1969, I've seen a lot of things and I've never seen this, never experienced the level of ability to grasp, to see, to live by faith, to do what God has brought.... And God has done it. God the Father and Jesus Christ has created what we have here, truly, and it's most inspiring.

[Ezekiel 3:17] So, You, O son of man, I have set you as a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, you shall hear the word of My mouth and warn them from Me. See, I don't know what's, how things are going to unfold. God will show them when the time comes. He'll reveal. I know some things, but other things, you know, there are other things to fill in. I don't know. There are details that haven't been determined yet. There are details that get filled in later on. Things change! People change! Nations change! Events change and those change people! And so it's a very flexible and fluid situation out here, truly, in a very powerful way. And God works with that in ways we can't even begin to comprehend, and reveals to us what we need to know *when* we need it because it's changing. So He says, **and warn them from Me. And when I say unto the wicked, O wicked, you shall surely die, If you do not speak to warn the wicked from their way that wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood will I require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the wicked of their way, to turn from it, if they do not turn from their way they shall die in their iniquity but you have delivered your soul.**

And so, obviously, our desire is to do what God says. Our desire, in other words, it's a matter of a process of salvation we're living through, a process of yielding to God and God molding and fashioning us, and changing, and indeed looking forward to being changed and being a part of His Family, whether it be when Jesus Christ returns, for a few, or some other period later on after we've lived through a period of time into the Millennium. So, again, here, I don't feel bad in any fashion or form if a group of people have been told once before - 2012, 2013, whatever it is. You do it because it's right. If you believe it, if there are things that God has given you to see and understand, what's going to come upon this world. And how much closer are we today? How much closer are we today?

Supposedly I had an article sent to me not too long ago, a few months ago, about Russia. And supposedly they leaked this to the news, or supposedly it got leaked to the news. Nothing leaks to

the news. I mean, let's say that news somehow found out about it in Russia. They don't just somehow find out about information like this. But it was something they wanted to communicate to others about a specific kind of torpedo they have right now that can run under the water that carries nuclear weapons. Cannot be detected. Cannot be stopped. Why would they let that out? Why are they planning such things? So powerful that when it goes off it can cause a 1,100ft tsunami to crush into the continent. Pretty powerful. And that's its purpose. That's its purpose. So many of the things like that that are happening, brethren, do you think they'll take place? Do you think it'll happen? Is it scary? You better believe it...better believe it. We're going to see things that are going to be scary. We're going to see things that are fearful. And it's just the way it is. And we're being prepared for those things. It's not going to be a pleasant time by any measure.

So again, incredible where we are in time and why we've gone through some of the things we have.

Along these lines it'd be good to point out at this stage that we're at the beginning of the seventh prophetic end-time 1260-day period. We know that. Please understand also, *this year*, this following year is fully about the book. Sometimes we get some funny ideas. I understand. We read about two witness and we think that things on that day have to start that day. No, they don't. No, they don't. Most of the things Christ taught, the greatest impact he had on the world, was in just the last few weeks of his 3½ year ministry. Not at the beginning, toward the end. Okay? There's a reason we had some of those things talked about in times past, because they're for now.

So, again, we're in a particular period of time. Maybe it'll follow the pattern of "a time, times, and a half a time." Because this year is about the book! It's about getting it published. It's about getting it out there. It's, first of all, about teaching the Church and helping the Church to come to understand more fully what's written in it and why, where we've been, and why we've been there, why we've experienced some of the things we have and where we're going. It's in there. And we're going to go through those things. And it's going to be published, again, as the first book and the second book was. And we have a great opportunity to promote it. I'll very likely get a publicist, just as I have before. I don't know if it'll be on radio again and some of those kinds of things. And I know exactly where they're going to go with their questions and I don't care. I'm going to tell them the truth. And I'm going to tell them where we are. And I'm going to tell them what's coming. And I know God's going to give me a boldness greater than what I've ever had and news events to go along with it, Thunders to go along with it. I already know that.

And so in the following year here we'll see some things. Not, I don't believe, major events yet. I don't believe God is showing us that yet. If it does, then we will understand it when He shows it, for whatever reason. Because I also have learned in a great way that there are some things that God doesn't give to a certain point in time because of the being who inspired this. Okay? There are wars that go on and God allows them for a purpose, and then He gives to us what we need when we need it. So we'll have what we need when we need it. Okay?

Now, the next two years after that? What will that be if it follows that pattern? I don't know. God may be opening up a bit of a window right now to begin understanding that there are some things that can fit into that timeframe. Far greater Thunders? The destruction of this nation? The dollar? See, I think it's interesting, awesomely interesting that all those who were predicting September and October of this year... didn't happen, did it? It looked like it was coming. It looked like something was going to come to pass but it didn't happen. Next year? We'll see. But it wasn't to happen this year because of those, especially religious leaders who predicted that it would happen. It's not going to come through them, see. Interesting how God works, isn't it? So things are held off. Not going to happen the way they said, but it will happen in a certain way that God shows.

So, again, awesome times we live in. Awesome, truly. And so there may be a long period, and it may not happen at the beginning of that two years. Maybe we'll have a second Feast of Tabernacles. *Awesome!* Count your blessings. Count your blessings if it can happen that way. Because when you begin to experience some bad things, brethren, you're going to experience some bad things on a plane and on a level you cannot comprehend yet. Truly. I don't say that to scare anyone. I say it to sober us. Of a matter of reliance and staying close to God and realizing God will take us through. God will make us stand. God will give us strength. God will help us. He will intervene for us. He will give us what we need when we need it. You can have that with great confidence and boldness, of understanding, of knowing.

The last half a time? I can tell you absolutely it's going to be a horrible time - horrible time for this earth. No matter what happens, even if it doesn't follow that timeframe, most everything does build up to that last six-month period. That's when the worst is going to take place on this earth. And we just have to be prepared, thinking about it brethren, working toward that goal, working toward that end, and understanding why it has to happen. There's no other way, no other way that mankind can be delivered. And, candidly, the reason that we have this period of time is that so many more have the potential to be saved. In 2012 there would have been far more massive destruction. It could still be that bad if people won't listen to God, but the potential is going to be there this time for people to be able to repent, for people to be able to begin to change, for people to be able to begin to cry out to God and be able to live into a new age. If it happened in 2012, not so. The destruction would have been far, far more massive potentially. You'll understand as we begin going through some of the things in the book.

So that last six-months. And then after that, *wow!* That last 50 days. Oh, I can't *wait* until we get to that point! I *can't wait* until you get to the last 50 days and understand what has changed and what God is doing at that particular time. *50 days!* What awesome meaning! Who could ever of imagined? Someone said recently that anybody could manipulate numbers. Oh, no you can't! You can work with what's there. "This is clear. This is there." But to manipulate them? No, you can't do it this way. Mathematically? *Wow!* Wait until you get to chapter 7, again, and go through some of those things. And to understand the precision of Almighty God - seven periods of 1260 days? Seven end-time periods? Prophetic end-time periods? One with seventy that could have been, as far as the five

periods, man's number, man's judgment, judgment upon mankind, and the return of Jesus Christ. And then extended to two more periods - seven periods, complete end-time prophetic periods? And fifty-days. And this time the fifty days is tacked on at the end. *Fifty days!* How much more beautiful could you get as far as a plan being fulfilled? Fifty days. The Wave Sheaf to Jesus Christ standing upon the Mount of Olives - Pentecost 2019, fifty days - *with* the 144,000. That is an awesome, awesome picture. And how long before that did God reveal to us in a very powerful way and through sermons how powerfully the Wave Sheaf from that period and the wave loaves are tied together, that fifty days that is so tied together in what it means. That's *awesome!* It really is! Powerful and mighty!

So, again, we have much to learn about what's coming, what's going to take place at that particular point in time. Some things that have changed and in a very big way in that one there, of what God is going to do during that period of time as He works with this world *directly*. *Directly* for fifty days. *Powerfully* for fifty days. For the purpose, primarily, of helping to save many more if they will listen. Potential - the potential is there. And if they don't He will destroy those who are destroying the earth. But the potential is there. And I believe we're going to see some awesome, awesome, awesomely inspiring things when the world has this opportunity because of what God's doing during *this* period of time as opposed to what would have happened before. Because this isn't just a matter of judgment, this time, this is a matter of judgment with awesome mercy, made possible because of this Body, because of you. And it will be written about and spoken about for a long, long time. It gives me chills because I see it, I know it. Incredible! Because of what you have lived, because of what God has molded and fashioned into you the world has changed, what God is going to do has changed. And if we weren't there, it wouldn't have that mercy extended to it. Because God's first concern is for us, that we be where we need to be when the time comes. But now we're able to go through this period of time. We have already started through it very powerfully so. Incredible. Absolutely incredible.

So, again, once we reach chapter 6 we'll be focusing in on things that have changed prophetically. We're going to talk about things that are set, that cannot be changed. And as we go through it you're going to find it exciting, because we have never seen this facet fully. But it's there. It's always been there. But now we'll be able to see it more clearly. Truly. Then we'll be able to begin to absorb some of those things a little bit at a time. And again, to remind people, just to be patient and not to expect to grasp everything all at once. Sometimes I think we become fearful, "I'm not going to be able to see it." Or, "I'm not going to understand it as I'm going through it." Just wait.

See, I had to write chapter 6 three times because I didn't get it. See, some of the others, I...I... I am truly dumbfounded by the message that I was able to give to you on the Last Great Day, of how fast that book came together. I look back at it and it still blows my mind! To write a chapter in three days? Now, the editors might think, "It looks like you wrote it in three days." Anyway... I'm just kidding. No. But anyway, the main meat, it's there. May have to tweak a little bit here and there. But starting out with whatever it was, two and a half weeks, then two weeks, and then it just got faster and faster. I couldn't believe what was happening. I couldn't believe it! And it wasn't something you

can plan out and think about it, that you just sit down at an antiquated computer (because they're antiquated there) and you start typing away. And, whew, dumbfounding. But chapter 6, I wrote it and I knew it wasn't right. You see, because in order to teach it I have to be able to see it and understand it. And so God was teaching me certain things. And so there was a framework there that God was giving to me but I knew it wasn't complete and I wasn't satisfied with it, because there's a knowing as well, "This isn't it." And I remember talking it over with my wife and I don't remember if she's the one that told me, "Just start rewriting it." Did you? I think you did, some point there. Anyway. I just scrapped the thing. Now, the knowledge and the ability to see some of the things that were being given was there, but how to put it altogether, I wasn't able to yet, just as you're not going to be able to put it all together when you start reading it. It's not all going to fit in place immediately. I was going to say, "Even though it's expertly written." No, I'm just kidding! I'm just kidding. Anything that's good and right and plain there is because we know where it comes from. That was just a joke.

So, anyway, I was not happy, because a lot of work went into that chapter. And here, you do that much writing and it takes you a little longer than the rest of them to write and you're struggling and you don't feel.... It wasn't a pleasant thing. So I knew that the only thing to do was, again, when it came to me, when it was given to me there, to scrap it and start writing again. And all of a sudden now - you see, because it was a matter of growing. It's kind of like some of those ones on fellowship. We had that series on fellowship. God was revealing some of those things right then and there. Did not know them before. Didn't understand a lot of those things that were there before. And all of a sudden things we've experienced in the past begin to come together because God was showing why we had those experiences and what it meant for the Church and how He was working with the mind. And just some of the things having to do with the mind being set, to me were fascinating. Fascinating! To understand how the mind can become set. And in some cases the mind can become set against God that people aren't, they don't, they're never going to change. Just like there were some who would not change in the angelic.... Once they made that choice, they wouldn't and couldn't because their mind was spirit. It was instantaneous. You know, for us it's a little different, but the mind can become so corrupt that it can become set beyond repair, and corruption... will not repent, has no desire to repent.

So if you have a desire to repent, embrace that always. Always embrace repentance. Always embrace the fact that you can repent, because that means you can change, you can be transformed. What an awesome blessing we have to be able to repent through Jesus Christ because of what he suffered, his sacrifice. And to be forgiven of God and it's gone! Let it go! It's gone! You don't have to carry it anymore. You don't have to carry it anymore! What an awesome blessing! It's very hard, sometimes, for people to come to a point where they even forgive themselves, and yet God lets you know, "Yes, you're free!" That's what it means, you're free from it. You've repented! You're seeking to go forward. You're revealing to God this is what you want. You want His way. You want to walk in His ways. And God works with that. God will *always* work with that. What an awesome blessing we have!

And so even going through that particular series there, seeing what happens to the mind, learning things about how the mind is transformed. How God works with the spirit essence that's in our mind, to me, is a beautiful picture. He's letting us see and understand things about that that are awesome. And I don't remember what chapter that's all in, but anyway, it's in there even more so. Some of that is even covered again in a certain way.

But again, chapter 6, second one wasn't good. I had to rewrite it. It still wasn't there. But the framework now was.... It's like having a... It's like the puzzle Mr. Armstrong used to use. The corners were there, many of the sides, and part of the picture was in there, but it wasn't all in the right place yet. And I knew that. So a third time. And all of a sudden. See, because I had to learn. I had to be taught. I had to experience it. You can't teach something unless you "see" it and know it. And I knew that wasn't there, so either chapter six is going to be there or there won't be a chapter six... or it'd be something else. But it all came together then, finally. Beautiful, beautiful picture that God was showing. But He teaches a little bit at a time and it takes some time, then, doesn't it? That's what I'm showing you, telling you. It takes some time to absorb it so that you can build more upon it and bring it all together and see it more clearly. A vision. A sharper vision. Insight. Understanding. An ability to grasp something. It's beautiful. Truly is.

So, anyway, I'm so looking forward to getting into some of these things. And we're going to keep touching upon some of this leading up to and preparing for that chapter. So we'll address some of those things as we go forward.

Anyway, I'm just going to.... I don't need to keep you the whole two hours.

Brethren, we have an exciting year ahead of us. We truly do. An exciting year ahead of us.

It's getting a little warm in here. Does anybody feel warm? I've been going through all kinds of things this past few weeks. Cold. Super cold. Now I'm hot. I've needed this to be able to get up here and speak, I think. That's what I needed, so I can get warmed up.

Anyway, we have an exciting year ahead of us. Truly exciting. And I hope you begin to grasp that more and more as we go forward, as things continue to be given to us, the experiences we have, the things we have to look forward to. Truly exciting, brethren. Just to let you know God's giving us much. And even though it's a final end-time prophetic period of 1260 days it's still a year of very much calm. How blessed are we? A year of calm, as a whole, over all. Doesn't mean there are not going to be ripples here and there. But affect us directly? We have a work to do and it starts out with a book. So the two witnesses is not about things happening right away and calling down different things to have to happen. I believe with all my being that won't happen until the end, more toward the end, and especially when certain things happen with this country, which will be in that period of time as well. It'll be accelerated then. But for now it's about the book. It's about getting it out there. That's the first part of this phase of what we're going through. So have that vision, to grasp and understand that. That's where our prayers need to be, that we be blessed, that the translators be

blessed, that all those things go smoothly. There's a lot of work that has to go into it yet to get it out there fully and completely, and for us to be able to fully absorb it in the beginning.

So, again, an exciting year. A time of calm. Because what's coming is really far worse than what we have really ever grasped or imagined - what's behind it.

So all of what we've covered today is about what God has been doing, what He is doing now and will continue to do through many of the sermons that are going to be given, as we go through a step-by-step process, sharpening our vision mightily, so that as each group - whether it be a series or just single sermons, or whatever comes along, prepares us for what God is giving in the book. Because it's about the book. It's about what He's given in the book. And it needs to be deeply embedded in our lives, that we see it and understand it. Just like me and chapter six, it'll be for you, as well, in all the things that are in there, that that message be very powerful to us and that we grasp some of these changes that have happened and why, why changes have happened as to what's going to happen to this country. Because it's changed.

What God is offering to Europe, to the other tribes that wasn't going to be offered before. *What* is going to be offered to Germany and to Russia that wasn't going to be offered before. You may see some awesome things. I really hope we do, and I have hope for that because the potential is there, to potentially see some, possibly an entire nation of people repent that you would never have dreamed would repent. And I'm not talking about Israel and the scattered nations of Israel, though they are being allowed and given an opportunity that they wouldn't have been before, to repent, to listen. And they're going to have opportunity to see certain things to help motivate that, that they wouldn't have been given if this had happened before. Because they had already been judged as to *exactly* what was going to happen to them without mercy. That was the seriousness of where we were back then. Without mercy. There is a time for mercy and there is a time God will not show mercy, because they have been judged. Just as with the time of Noah, there was no mercy for the rest of the world to be given. They were judged as to what should happen to them. Only Noah and his immediate family. It wasn't a time that God was going to extend mercy to the rest.

So we're living in a very unique time at this end-time, that this world had a judgment upon it because of what it has lived and what it has done that was set. And it was just. And it was righteous, from the Great Almighty God that these things should be fulfilled and in an exact manner. Thankfully not all of them were set. The framework is there allowing for changes, that there be mercy. It's a strong message in that book, it truly is, about the mercy of God if only you will listen. And if you don't, you will suffer. Sad. Human beings won't listen so often. But they're going to have motivation this time to listen. But whether they will or whether they won't, we don't know yet. That wasn't going to be offered before, brethren. I hope we understand there's a distinction there - something that was not going to be offered before that's going to be offered now. Awesome! Inspiring! Exciting!

Might as well bring it all together to, to show that, and if they don't, if they will not after this kind of mercy's been shown, the potential is also there that they will not only suffer to the extent of what

would have happened before, but can suffer far worse. It's in their hands. It's in their hands as to how they respond and what they do, truly. Because God's going to give a lot of motivation this time, a lot of opportunities to change, to listen, to hear Him. And to me that's a beautiful thing, an awesome thing. And no one can ever say to God, "But You didn't tell me. You didn't warn me." Oh, yes. He has through time. He did through Mr. Armstrong for a long, long time, for well over fifty years in a very powerful way. For thirty years throughout the world in a very powerful way. And who listened? Only those that God was calling. World never listened. And they weren't motivated to it either, were they? But they had the opportunity. They had the opportunity. Shows human nature and what it's like.

So, again, all of what we have covered today is about what God has been doing, what He is doing now and will continue to do through many of the sermons that are going to follow that will help to sharpen our vision. And this will give us, brethren, a greater strength, a greater confidence, a greater boldness, and a greater faith as we move forward.

So as a parting thought in this sermon, in regard to our recent past and part of what will help to sharpen our vision, is to come to understand and see what God has allowed us - not only allowed us but blessed us incredibly, incredibly so, brethren - by letting us experience what it was like to have lived 2008 to 2011. One day, if you're not thankful *deeply* for what you experienced during that period of time, in time you will come to, just as I am thankful for what I experienced. I wouldn't trade it nor any other hardship, nor any other trial that has molded me into what I am today. I wouldn't trade any of them for anything. God knows what's best for us, brethren. He shows incredible love and mercy and patience. And we need to grasp that with all of our being.

So, right now, brethren, we are exceedingly far better equipped to serve God's purpose on through to Pentecost 2019.