

This sermon today is *Part 4* of a sermon series entitled *The Virtue of Truth*. And again, "virtue" in this context is about that which reflects good and righteous character, strong moral quality and excellence. And obviously, that's because the source of the truth is God Almighty. Last Sabbath we ended at Truth #21, which was the last of the 18 truths that are reflected in what God restored to His Church through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. And after Mr. Armstrong died in January of 1986 the Philadelphia era came to a close and the gospel that had been going out into all the world as a witness to all nations began to come to an end. So it took a few years, but again, the process had begun. And once Philadelphia ended, obviously, the Laodicean Era of God's Church began. Then the Apostasy occurred in December of 1994.

We have a lot of history, a lot of things we've gone through in God's Church, and those things having to do with the things that occurred after Mr. Armstrong died that were a steady process of deterioration, and things that began to happen in the Laodicean era of God's Church that is the very reason why we're going through this sermon right now. Because that is a spirit. It is an attitude. It is a way of thinking. It is a process of inaction. It is a process of beginning to take for granted the truth that God has given to us and not exercising the kind of gratitude and thankfulness that we need to have because we are keenly aware of the fact that all truth that we have is because God has given it to us and there has been a lot that has gone into God giving us His truth. A lot. A lot of suffering through time that people have gone through. And then God's process, His means by which He has begun to reveal those things to us more and more as we draw closer and closer to the coming of His Son.

So today we're going to begin by focusing upon the truth that God, again, began giving to His remnant Church after the Apostasy, which was still in the era of Laodicea. Let's turn over there to Revelation 3. Good for review, just as the annual Holy Days are good for review, of things we need to keep focused upon.

Revelation 3:14-And unto the angel of the Church of Laodicea write; These things are said by the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. Now, God Almighty gave the book of Revelation to Jesus Christ to in turn reveal things to John. And these things indeed are first and foremost always about God Almighty, but understanding that these things were given to Jesus Christ to give to John. "The faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God," specifically then about what God was doing through Jesus Christ. "The beginning of the creation of God." I marvel at this when we go through this and read this, when we read a scripture like this, because we understand this in the light of truth, that others who are scattered from the Church in times past don't see it in the same light. Because they're still attached to a false teaching that started in 325 A.D. in a very powerful way concerning the trinity and that second part of that trinity

being, in essence, that Jesus Christ had eternally existed. We know that he hasn't. And we understand what this means then when it talks about "the beginning of the creation of God." The point being is that *nothing in creation began until God purposed everything that was going to take place through His Son*. His Family, and everything about it was the first of God's purpose from the very beginning of time. It was about His Family. The angelic realm was created in order to in time have His Family, in order to create His Family. It wasn't created first and then an afterthought or something that came along later, as many have thought in times past (because they didn't know), but still hold on to at this particular time in areas that are scattered because of false concepts, of not understanding the present truth that God has now given to His Church. And that is, again, that Elohim was not an afterthought or something that God determined later on after the angels and the angelic realm had been created for whatever billions or we don't know of time and then all of a sudden God decided to do something else.

On the contrary! Before God ever began, before God ever set out to do what He did! He doesn't do things "off the cuff" like that. It's all purposed and planned, meticulously so, in ways that we can't even begin to grasp. We cannot *grasp* the mind of God. I can't *grasp* the universe. I can't grasp the Milky Way Galaxy and everything that's in it, let alone the universe. And man's still trying to see the outer edges of it. He doesn't... We don't even know what's out there. We're delving into things that we can see at this time about 13-14 *billion* light years into time. We don't know what's beyond that! We don't know when certain things happened! Perhaps there are things created after that that the light hasn't even reached the earth yet! That's how our minds work. We are contained in a small area of our ability to grasp things of God. And to even grasp that, that there are things out there that we're looking at now because the light is just now reaching the earth! To think that we can see something that is 13-14 billion light years away means that when we see it that it took 13-14 billion years for it to reach the earth so it could be seen! You can't grasp that. I can't grasp that! How can we grasp the mind of the Great God who did it all? We can't!

And so He gives us things as we can receive them. And so with mankind, that's why we have a progressive revelation, because there's a process of why He hasn't revealed more at the beginning as to Adam and Eve, because mankind had to go through various things in order that God could begin to reveal more so that it would be able to be presented in a manner that man could begin to grasp it and begin to see why he has lived the way he has and God's purpose behind it. It's awesome! The more we see, the more we learn, especially at the end of the 6,000 years here, and as we're in this end-time before Jesus Christ comes to this earth, it is so incredible. It is so awesome! And that's why I marvel at how fast God is giving us more and more, and the truths that He's given to us. *Incredible!* Incredible what God just continues to pour out upon us.

And so again, what an incredible history through time of things that God has given, and all beginning, again here, with what God purposed from the start, that there would be nothing. There would be nothing, except that the focal point had to be His Son. The focal point. Because it's God first, then His Son, because he's the first of the firstfruits. He's the first of Elohim. But he's unique because he's

the very son of God. There could only be one son of God, *one* who could be given the Word, the mind of God in the flesh, whose father was God Almighty. I can't grasp all that, but what I do grasp, it's exciting and it's awesome. It truly is! And then the process whereby the rest can come into that Family through him.

Especially because we're in these day's right now, we're focusing upon Passover and the things that God purposed in His plan concerning Passover. Again, how can you describe the magnitude, the importance, the awesomeness of all these things? We really can't. But we *can* become lukewarm! But we *can* become lethargic with this truth that God has blessed us with, the ability to "see" things that people before us have never seen! We are discussing and talking about things in this sermon series.... I've just discussed some things that people before us in the last 6,000 years nearly now, have *never* known, have *never* seen, have *never* been able to comprehend - even in this 21st Century! Talking about the universe! They had no *grasp* of what the universe was! They had no grasp of the magnitude of what God had created. They could look up in the sky and if they were able to meticulously plot it out and map it out, perhaps count - which they couldn't. I mean, how can you go out there and count 3,000 stars? You're going to miss a bunch over here and you're going to add a bunch more over here. How can you do that? But that's about the maximum of what you can do by the naked eye. And then in time the ability to see farther and beyond that? Still extremely limited. And then for man to come to a point in time, not too long ago now, to grasp that we're in a, ourselves, a solar system that is within a galaxy. And to go beyond those things, to grasp all those things that exist then in a universe? They had no comprehension. And we're just talking about something physical. We're not talking about truth from God. We're not talking about things that were going to happen to mankind and why they had to happen to mankind and why mankind has had to go through what he has to bring us to this point in time.

Progressive revelation - just what we've been given to grasp and understand by that alone is awesome! To understand what Jesus Christ brought to this earth after 4,000 years of mankind being here that man had no knowledge of, had never heard before. They didn't *grasp* the spiritual things of God! Now, God called various ones to work with - not a lot, candidly, in the first 4,000 years who are a part of the 144,000. But of all those that were called, they were given of His spirit, they were impregnated with His spirit, and there is a process that worked in them as works in us, but very few. And God worked with them directly, individually, not as a body like He is today and has been for the past 2,000 years for the Church. Even to understand that is a marvel. Even to grasp that is a marvel.

And so to grasp after 4,000 years all the things that Jesus Christ came along and began to reveal and magnify in a physical law (speaking of how man deals with it), about the 10 Commandments, because man could only see, as a whole, then the physical aspect of that and Jesus Christ came along and began to reveal the spirit of that. And then the Church was raised up so it could begin to understand the spirit of God's law. But only the Church. And now we're almost to a time when God is getting ready to jump forward in His plan in a way that is immensely exciting to Him and to His Son, and should be to us. And it is to us when we can think about it and meditate upon it and recognize a new

era is about to come upon this earth, a millennial reign of God's government on this earth. Something that God has been working for and working upon for 6,000 years! And all those that God is going to have the opportunity, those whom He has worked with brought back to life again. Can't comprehend that, but I know it's exciting and awesome beyond words that could describe it. His opportunity, that opportunity to once again be able to communicate directly to, to bring them into a time that they had looked forward to, a time when God's Kingdom would exist on this earth and be able to see what all that really meant in a greater way. Because they only saw it slightly, barely, for what they did "see." But they held onto it. And God's going to be able to communicate again, once again, because He's going to bring them back to life, starting from the very beginning of those, like Abel, and going up through time, Noah, different ones we think about, those of the prophets, David, Abraham, as an example, Sarah. Incredible!

So again, given by "the beginning of the creation of God," speaking of Jesus Christ. **I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot.** That can't happen to us. There are some of us who have experienced that, what it means for that to happen, for that to occur. But it's happening in part again and God is warning about that. "Don't let it happen. Be stirred up." Recognize, as an example, in a race that this is not the time to begin drifting along just to make it till the end. Because that's not how it works in the race that we've been given. Now is the time to throw yourself into it, to put your entire mind - because that's what it's about, it's about your mind - into it. Your body may not be able to go as fast or be as well as it was in the beginning of the race, but sometimes you surprise yourself. And with God's help and God's power in your life you'll do far more than what you can know.

But this is not a time to become cold, to let down, to become lukewarm. God's desire is that we be hot, stirred up, on fire for His way of life. That's why it goes on to say here, **I would that you were cold or hot.** In other words, "This is a hard thing." Laodicea was a hard thing. "Because if you're hot, then I can work with you." It's God's message. "I could stir you up and motivate you and lead and guide and direct you and give you more." But if you're cold then that's obvious and that's obvious to everyone that's hot, that you're cold. And if you're cold, in time it's going to be able to be easier, in that respect, to have a separation take place. Because it can't be in the Body. That which is cold has no place in the Body! It's in the court! That's why we've gone through what we have - still going through it in part because it's still going on. So we can't be, or can't get to a stage where we're cold. If we do, God will deal with it.

So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, kind of in the middle. What is that? What is that? It's this thing of trying to hold on by staying in to the court area and yet not really engaging in the temple and being a part of a temple, and putting on that façade as being and even deceiving one's self that they're actually a part of it. Incredible! **And because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.** A word that has to do with just "vomit" you out. In other words, separated from God, no longer a part with God, away from God, separated from God. This is what it's talking about and he uses very descriptive language. "I will spew you out of My mouth! You're not going to be a part of Me."

Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods... Well, obviously, it's not something that is said verbally, because people tend to deceive themselves into thinking things are okay and things can continue on and we can kind of coast and whatever. You can't coast in the Church of God. You can't coast in this way of life. You can't "straddle the fence" in this way of life! We're either on one side or the other. But people have tried to straddle the middle of the fence and people have tried to coast. And God will be patient for a time and work with that for a time to stir up - just like the example of the vine or a tree, whatever - prune off some. And hopefully then fruit will begin to be produced, to give it opportunity, to dig the ground and fertilize and water, and hopefully then growth will begin to take place. So God does those things in our lives. But we don't always as human beings respond.

And so by actions, by the way people respond and what they're actually doing in their life, are saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." It's that attitude of someone that wrote in, in one of the elder reports here this past week, again a reminder of something I referred to at different times and that is of those at headquarters who no longer though they had to be there when Mr. Armstrong was speaking. They could stay at home, or whatever. Different of the evangelists and different of the pastors and ministers, and frankly, almost all of them that just wouldn't come anymore no matter where they were in the ministry. That's what they were saying, "I am rich and increased with goods. I have need of nothing! I don't need to be there." I mean, that's what the evidence of what they were doing reflected. Very good example.

...and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. That's what we *always* need to understand. That's why Paul said, "*Oh wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from the body of this death?*" Because that's what it is of and by itself, carnally speaking, humanly speaking. That which motivates the human mind, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" sum up everything about the way human nature is, the selfishness of human nature. And so we have to see that our nature is wretched. That's why we make the choice, "I don't want this! I want to hold on to that which God gives me and offers me, of a different mind, of a mind that thinks differently. And I want that transformation to be continually growing and developing within me." That's what we're saying. So not to acknowledge, or not to face up to the reality of what we are. If we think we're doing quite well, if we think that things are going along really well in our lives, in that sense, and that we're handling everything quite well, *we deceive ourselves!* Incredible how sometimes I still hear that! And I think, "Oh! Oh! Oh! If you only knew you don't 'see' yourself, you don't *grasp* the real battle that should be going on! There are things that you need to see about your nature so that you can understand what you are." Be careful, "He who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." First scripture that ought to be branded into our minds if we ever think that we're at that point in our life. On the contrary! We need to understand there is *always* a battle, always a battle. And if we're not engaged in that battle, in fighting the way we think as human beings and seeking to yield to the way God thinks and yielding to what He says how we should think, and practicing that, and striving to live that, and omitting and getting rid of the garbage that we otherwise might participate in, think, say, or do or whatever in our life. It's a constant battle isn't it? Well, Laodicea quit fighting that. That's what happened. Quit fighting that as they should have been.

So, **Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and do not know that you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.** Without God that's exactly what we are. And our human nature of and by itself is *exactly* this way. That's why we have to have God's spirit living in us continually so that we're not spiritually naked. That's the only way we can have that which is right and true in thinking.

I counsel you—verse 18—to buy of me gold tried in the fire. Beautiful example here. "I counsel of you to buy of me..." Put your investment in, put your time into, put your energy into, put your work into... the example of trials, gold tried in the fire. Ask God for the help to be able to see what needs to be seen, and understand that oftentimes it's going to come through various types of trials and difficulties in life. It's not going to come the easy way. And then, by those things that happen to us, we can cry out to God to help us to learn from it. That's what's unique. Mankind lives his selfishness and learns nothing as a whole from it. We, on the other hand, with God's favor and help can understand the thinking that caused or led to wrong choices in our life, wrong decisions or wrong reactions. And God will help us to see what's wrong in the mind, because it all starts deep down in the mind. Before it's ever spoken, comes across our lips, it's in the mind. And the farther you can dig back there to see your motivation - What was your motivation? "What is my motivation for this? Why? Where is this coming from?" What an awesome blessing that God helps us to see that. Because only then can it really be changed! You can start working on the actions without understanding the motivation - that's a beginning when you're first called. But later on as you mature and grow it's a process of getting into the mind and digging deep. And we've been blessed a lot in the last few years to be able to see that more and more, to grasp that, things of the mind. That's where it all begins. That's why the thing of the transforming of the mind is such a beautiful scripture there in Romans 12. Awesome!

So again, **Buy of me gold tried in the fire.** Throw yourself into it. Learn from the mistakes. Seek help to understand from the mistakes, from the errors of life, so **that you may become rich**, truly, in God's way, in God's spirit, in God's mind and the transformation of the mind. That's where the real riches are, when God's involved with it. Not when we're coasting, because then we're not really looking for God's help. We're not really relying on God. We are relying more on ourselves and kind of going our own way of life and getting caught up in the world and things of physical things out here in the world. **...and of white clothing, that you might be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear.** The carnal human mind, of and by itself, that's what's going to be there, when we talk about being wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. And the only thing that can keep us from that is God's spirit - God's help, God's truth living and dwelling within us as we exercise it, as we live it.

...and anoint your eyes with eye salve. I love these verses because in the Greek this has to do with you take this and you rub it around thoroughly inside the eye. It's not just a mild putting on a little bit of salve in the corning, or something. It's like taking the eyeball and just putting salve all the way, all around it for healing. That's what it's about, **so that you can see.** Spiritually that's what we

have to do in our lives on a regular basis, so that we can see, stay close to God, be close to God, seek God's help. Because the only way that we can continue to see and be able to see and hold on to what we see and be excited about God's truths, to be able to "see" what God has given, o really "see" it, not to just know they're truth, but to "see" them with a sense of excitement, to *know* how awesomely blessed we are, to "see" how awesomely blessed we are, we need God's spirit. We need God's help in that. And God will help us in that, truly. Can't do it on your own.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. God loves us. So there are times in our lives we're rebuked, we're chastened, and it's because He loves us and He wants us to have blessings of life, to be blessed. But our nature resists Him and fights against Him and kind of wants to do our own thing, as growing up in life, as a teen begins to do as they begin to change and grow in life. And it's just a normal process in life, of something, a resistance in their mind that's just naturally going to be there at some point. And if it doesn't hit in the teens, it will hit, because it happens. And there's just a natural resistance in a process of life. That's just the way it is growing up, toward a parent. And we can do the same thing and do the same thing toward God oftentimes. Our nature obviously does resist God. We want our way. We, sometimes by just putting it aside, we don't want to think about it, we just go out and do what we want to do.

As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Be zealous and repent. So when we're given opportunities, as in sermons and so forth, what do we do? We seek to drink in what God gives to us. We seek to examine ourselves, just as we do, as we're approaching Passover and we're reminded of that, and Unleavened Bread season, a desire to look into our lives to see what it is that needs to be changed, to see what it is we need to see in ourselves and to know that there are things we constantly need to repent of in life. And ask God for help to be able to "see." Perhaps to see that we haven't treasured and embraced the truth He's given to us enough or that perhaps we're letting that kind of drift along a little bit and we need to recapture it, and need God's help to recapture that excitement.

Because we should be excited about the truth! All these truths we're going through, they should be exciting to us! All the ones we're getting ready to go through right now, the Church didn't have before the Apostasy. *The Church didn't have the truths - from now on that we're going to look at, before the Apostasy! They didn't have it! We didn't have it in God's Church!* How awesome is that to grasp how much God has given to us above and beyond?

So anyway, **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me.** Blessed with spiritual food. That's God's desire. This is talking about a spiritual relationship of food and the way God gives it to us and the way He blesses us with it and the ability to take it in. And He gives that example as being that of dining with Him. Awesome! Because it's spiritual in nature.

This reminds me, too, of the book that's coming out. If people would just listen. If they will just listen, just a little.

So I'm going to read here what's in that section of the 57 Truths under the heading here, "Truths Revealed During Laodicea." This is all so good for review, because we do need to be stirred up once again in these truths that God has given to us, because over the past several years now they have been begun to be diminished in importance. That's not good. They have begun to go by the wayside in that sense in our thinking to a degree it should never happen. And that's why, just as with Holy Days, we need to think about these things on a regular basis. And I know that there are those who do, but there are *a lot* who have not.

Going on here it says, "Herbert W. Armstrong taught that the Church of God would always continue to grow in understanding and the knowledge of God's truth." It does, and from that time forward when he talked about those things, as a whole it did, until something else began to happen. And the fault then is ours, not God's. Because God's Church is either going to grow or something's going to happen. And boy, did something happen. The prophesied Apostasy, because of becoming lukewarm. We don't have to go too far back to see what happened to Sardis. It came to a point where spiritually they were classified as being dead, as a whole. As a whole. And it says there were a few, just a few who came through all that, through that entire period of Sardis, ever how long it was. Two hundred, three hundred years? We don't know exactly. But whatever that period of time was.

Going on, "There can never be a point in time that God's Church stagnates, otherwise we cannot be God's Church." And so many in Sardis were not a part of God's Church. They just weren't. God's spirit didn't dwell within them because they didn't do what it said to Sardis (which I'm not going to go back and read again, you can read that). But anyway. Going on, "Wherever God's spirit dwells there will be growth." Otherwise, God's spirit just isn't there. If God's spirit is there, there is going to be growth. Awesome! "Yet today we are in a time where most who were scattered have been stagnating. Many have been growing in lies and deception (rather than truth)." So again, "Many have been growing in lies and deception that contradict the word of God and what was restored to the Church by God through Herbert W. Armstrong."

"Despite what has been happening to most who were scattered, God has continued to ble^ss a remnant of His Church with a deeper understanding of His word, especially as it pertains to the end-time. The Church has indeed continued to grow in understanding and truth." How blessed are we? How blessed are we to be a part of a remnant at the end of an age? And how blessed are those who are awakened? We have those who are new, who weren't a part of the Apostasy, but how much those who lived through that, who experienced that? How blessed are we?

Going on, "All who become part of the remnant God is calling will come to agree with these truths. The 3 truths remaining at the end of Sardis and the 18 truths restored during Philadelphia separated God's Church from the World, and those truths are vital for salvation. The truths given during Laodicea separate God's true remnant Church from the rest who were scattered after the Apostasy." That's awesome to understand. "These truths identify God's true Church and who His people are in this present era of great confusion. Most of these truths represent a transition from a strict physical view in the past to a deeper spiritual understanding now."

So again, let's go to number 22, the first given during the period of Laodicea to the Church, still in the period of Laodicea. "These aren't in any order," as it says here in this article. "They're not in any particular order of importance. Some overlap and some could be expanded upon or combined to either lengthen or shorten the list." But this is what God has given to us:

22 (1) There has been an apostasy that is unprecedented in the Church of God as prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.

If we're not careful that can lull us to sleep! Sure, we know about the Apostasy! Sure, we grasp that. But *you're the only ones who grasp that!* All the thousands of others out there who are still scattered don't grasp this simple truth! *They can't "see" it!* How blessed are you that you can "see" it? There has been an Apostasy! It's clear to us. Let me read the rest of this:

The context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is for the end-time, before the return of Jesus Christ, and was not for the period of the early apostles. The word "apostasy" means "to forsake and depart," because it has to do with forsaking or falling away from, departing from the truth that God gives to us. ...and in this apostasy there was a forsaking and falling away from the truth God had given to His Church. Never before had this happened within the top leadership of the Church of God. Thank God, to understand this, to understand what took place. Never before had there been such a large departure from the truth by the membership of the Church. This had to happen before the unfolding of end-time events that would lead to the return of Jesus Christ.

And the more we understand that and why and what happened and why God allowed it, and what the purpose of all this is, the more awesome this truth becomes, truly.

Many of the scattered Church do not yet believe that this apostasy has happened, and so by implication, they believe they must grow much larger than what Worldwide was in order to fulfill this prophecy.

Because they still believe it, for whatever they're able to believe, to the depth they're able to believe it, that there is going to be an Apostasy. And some may not believe that anymore because they're so weak.

23 (2) The Man of Sin has been revealed to be Joseph Tkach, Sr., who initiated the end-time Apostasy.

I think about when this came out and how many people found such fault in what was being said, by a servant of God who was telling this, who was saying this was the case. Like, how could you speak against anyone? How? It's like you're not doing and talking about somebody the way Christ said you should talk about people. And then I had to go back and kind of talk about, "Well, now, wait a minute. Paul talked about certain ones in scripture here. He named them by name. *Judas Iscariot* is named by name for a purpose, so that all would know what he did." He was, in that respect, the first to betray Jesus Christ. And yet this betrayal was far more important, far more severe in what it caused because this happened and the repercussions of this happened to a Body, to an entirety of a

Church of God's people. Obviously the other happened because of a purpose God had in Jesus Christ becoming Passover. But this betrayal against Jesus Christ, done by this man, was far, far, *far* greater. And so people sometimes in order, because they don't want to deal with certain things, can find fault in the strangest of ways. And it shows how Protestant minded people can become the weaker they become spiritually. It can happen. Going on:

Mr. Tkach tried to change the law of God, and his actions led to great destruction within the Church. By changing the law of God, he exalted himself above God. The word "sit" in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 means "to be given authority." (That's how it's being used in these verses.) Mr. Tkach was given authority in the Church to be its physical head under Jesus Christ, and shortly afterward he turned against God. Joseph Tkach, Sr. died 40 weeks to the very hour....

A marvel! And yet people aren't remotely, as far as the scattered Church is concerned, this means diddly-squat. This means nothing to them! Coincidence? If we're not careful Chapter 7 that's coming out, we can begin to think that some of those things - as one person who is in the Church of God said - anybody can manipulate numbers. Still attending church. I hope they've repented of what they said. I hope they hear loud and clear what I'm saying today. So how can *anyone* take all those things, seven particular end-time prophetic periods of 1260-days, 50 at the end, 70 before that so we were focused on the coming of Jesus Christ, when you talk about the first five periods leading up to 2012, and now the 50 days and Pentecost and everything that God is revealing about that, how can you have those numbers contained in there and be all a matter of coincidence and chance? It shows design! God's involved in it. Just as this did! An individual, when he began to take away from the meaning of the Sabbath and he began to say, in essence, it was no longer commanded by God, and the Holy Days, to die exactly 280 days later, 40 weeks to the hour?! And people out there, "Kind of interesting, but it's coincidence. Whatever. Anybody can manipulate numbers." That's to deny God and the power of God and things that God does, things He does by design. Timeliness. Incredible design and how He fulfills them.

Anyway, continuing on.... "...so he died forty weeks to the very hour that he delivered his sermon of Apostasy." And not just that, but when he specifically spoke about the Sabbath - to the hour. "...which was a sign to God's Church that Jesus Christ was now coming and that final end-time events had begun." Incredible! Incredible that God has revealed to us the First Seal is opened, the beginning of a process that began to open, an Apostasy has occurred in the Church, the countdown, a timing for Christ's coming has already started. We didn't know what it was, fully was. I hope we know now what it fully was, otherwise, there's more in store to learn and hard trials to go through and more refining and I... But wherever God leads, I'll go, and I believe you will go. You've been tried in that.

24 (3) The "temple" in Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, and in many other prophecies, is about the Church of God.

How simple this is. This is so easy to see. But the scattered Church doesn't see that. You see it. And if you're not careful you can begin to take that for granted and not realize the only way you can "see"

that right now is because God has given it to you. That's the *only way* that you can see that this is true, if you believe this is true. That's the only way! People who are a lot smarter than me, who are scattered, can't see it! It's not about how smart you are! It's about God's spirit! It's about God dwelling in us and giving it to us. Awesome! Going on:

The Man of Sin, who "sat in the temple of God," was Joseph Tkach, Sr., who sat in authority in the Church of God. As taught by Mr. Armstrong before his death, only God's presence makes anything holy...

I marvel when you go back and listen to the last things that Mr. Armstrong focused upon and how important they were that they be deeply embedded in our minds. And they weren't like they should have been, because we entered into a period of Laodicea and what gradually happened within the Church. So again:

As taught by Mr. Armstrong before his death, only God's presence makes anything holy, and a physical temple built by the Jews today could not be holy because they are not God's people spiritually.

Why is this important? Why is this even stated? Because there are people to still believe, who have ideas that somehow something's going to begin to be rebuilt. That somehow there's going to be a Levitical system re-established. And Mr. Armstrong was making the point, if you believe about the Abomination of Desolation, in essence, that it has to occur again at some point in time - they're seeing it very physically - and that there is a literal Levitical system that has to be re-established, Mr. Armstrong was making it clear *it isn't of God*, because it can't be considered "holy." They're not able to make anything holy. Even if they were able to know who the Levites are and they were able to know who the priesthood is, and they got something going and brought people together in Jerusalem, God won't make it holy! That area of the altar cannot be holy! It's just going to be a block of rock! And they can put on that what they want to! Even if somebody did that - what if they did bring in a rock, you know, an altar and they killed some animals on it - what does that mean? And somebody else comes in then and offers a pig on it like Antiochus Epiphanies did, and is that going to be the defiling of the temple or the defiling of the altar? It can't because it's not holy! Because it has to be holy for an Abomination of Desolation by God to occur. That's why this is important!

Because this is what people believe out here! This is what people in the world, or people who are scattered in the Church at least had a belief of. I don't know what they believe anymore. I don't waste my time in going and reading their literature anymore to see where they are, because they're asleep, in a coma spiritually. Until they're awakened again, until they can come back again, when they're given the opportunity to do so. But you "see" it. Is it easy to take it for granted and not understand how awesome it is that *you* can "see" it? Because you should be moved by that! You should understand that it's God's *spirit* that enables you to do that. You're not doing it on your own ability! You're not doing it because of how smart you are! Not a one of us is! I'm not! You're not! What a beautiful thing! It's because of God's spirit in your mind. It's evidence that God's working with you, that God loves you, that God has called you, that God has given you an awesome opportunity to "see"

these truths. How *awesome* is that? How moving is that? It moves me right now - puts chills up and down my spine just talking about it because of what we can "see." God's spirit in our mind. Beautiful!

I was going to try to rush through some of these. I'm not going to bother with that. We're going to take time and go through these. I don't care if we have six more sermons. Maybe I'll be able to go faster. But anyway. Because I'd be doing the very thing then, giving in to the very thing that I don't want to occur. And that is that we take any of them, begin to look down upon, just take them for granted. I mean, that's what we do. We don't see the need of what we already have, to hold on to it, that we have it, that what it means spiritually for us.

So again, Mr. Armstrong made it very clear that a physical temple built by the Jews today could not be holy because *they're not God's people spiritually*. There is no Levitical priesthood. There is no Levitical system. God isn't working through a physical system like that. And it was never spiritual in the first place. God's presence made the temple holy, because that's how God was communicating with them at that time through Moses, through things that happened in the temple in the wilderness, and then the temple later on and how God used that and communicated through the prophets who were a part of that, who went into the Holiest of Holies once a year and God worked with them and taught different ones on a spiritual plane even - very few.

So again, there is no temple that is going to be rebuilt. One of the telecasts out here, of one individual, basically, I did see that one several years ago. May be still showing reruns of it, I don't know, but I know he still believes the same thing. One past evangelist talking about how that his scholars, the ones with him, have told him that they believe at least there has to be an altar built. If there's not a temple and no stone is placed in the temple, to fulfill the prophecies of an Abomination of Desolation that at least there has to be an altar. Where is God's spirit? It's gone. It's *gone!* It's not there. Can't "see." Doesn't grasp and understand that's all physical. That the Abomination of Desolation is what the Apostasy was all about. How much more heinous could something be? *Far, far* worse than what Antiochus Epiphanies did with the pig on an altar! Far greater because it was about God's Family, it's about God's begotten children and what took place. An Apostasy. An Abomination of Desolation. Incredible!

So again, not only is there no temple that is going to be rebuilt, and not part of the temple and not an altar erected that has anything to do with Christ's coming, even as it goes on here to talk about the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition. Another thing to glean out of this in 2 Thessalonians 2 - is not about the Pope. There are still people who think it's about the Pope. Where does that come from? Well, comes from things we didn't understand in the past. We didn't know. An antichrist? People today think all kinds of things in the world, in the world of Traditional Christianity, who it might be. Leaders? Or often times it goes back to the Pope, the antichrist, and thinking that's about a Man of Sin who's going to arise, the Son of Perdition that's going to arise and confusing a lot of different prophetic things together then that have nothing to do with what it's talking about. And so there are some still looking for a Pope to fulfill the antichrist. We're not even to that truth yet. What an awesome truth to understand.

25 (4) The Abomination of Desolation is about what Joseph Tkach did in the Church. This “abomination of desolation” began within the Church as a result of the sermon he gave in Atlanta on December 17, 1994, where he changed the laws of God.

He sought to change the laws of God to His Church, to God's Church.

This was an attempt to defile and to destroy the “temple of God.”

Because, you see, there was a being behind it all. There was a being who motivated it all. There was a being who worked with those individuals to do what they did. Satan. A very powerful spirit being, that when people are cut off from God and he has a purpose to fulfill, he desires to fulfill, he has great power to deceive and to hurt and to destroy. And he set out to destroy. And as oftentimes, he has believed he'd done a great thing. Finally was able to achieve a great thing. And yet God allowed him to do it for a purpose. God prophesied it was going to happen a long time ago. So Satan was just an instrument to fulfill a part of God's plan as he has been from the very beginning of having been left in the Garden of Eden. He could have left him on Pluto, but He didn't. He left him where He put man. And people ought to ask the question, "Why would God do that?" Because it leads to some incredible answers, doesn't it?

26 (5) The stones of the temple... Again, these can seem so simple to you in your mind that you can begin to not value them in the way that you need to value them, to grasp and comprehend what you have. **26 (5) The stones of the temple are about the people in the Church of God at the end-time.** The discussion between Christ and the disciples in Matthew 24 is about the end-time. Christ stated that the stones of the temple would be cast down before he returned. This happened immediately after the apostasy at the time of the scattering of God's Church—the spiritual temple of God.

So what is it that anyone can be looking for concerning these stones? The spiritual temple of God. Well, again, they think it's about a physical temple. And I think about Mr. Armstrong talking about those things before he died. The Church is a spiritual temple. And where did we lose all this? And the stones, never recognized it for what it was, never recognized the importance for what it really was. So again here, scattered Church doesn't grasp this, that they're all stones in the temple - or they were. They're not anymore. They're not right now. They're set aside. Now, at some point they're going to have opportunity - most - to come back in to be a part of a spiritual temple. And where they will be? Well, God has all that planned out too, of where they'll have opportunity to be. Because of what they experienced is going to make them uniquely fit into places of service that are going to be unique to them, for those who can receive it. There'll be those who can't. And there will be those who won't even be given the opportunity, not even in the Great White Throne. They went too far in some of the things they did.

27 (6) All in God's Church during the era of Laodicea were Laodicean.

For us, what does that mean? Well, for those of you who are new, it may not mean a lot. I don't know. For those who lived that period of time, ought to have a great deal of meaning to it. Because,

The Virtue of Truth, Pt. 4

you see, this is one of the biggest obstacles to people coming to repentance in the scattered body. This is one of the biggest obstacles, because they can't say, "I was Laodicean." Or, "I *am* Laodicean." They can't say it. They can't bring themselves to that - too much pride. They can't be deceived. They can't be wrong. They can't be wrong about what they know. And after all, isn't God working with a lot of different ones of us now and the organizations and He's just kind of all bringing us all to the same thing? At some point in time He's going to bring us all together. Yes, He's going to give us opportunity, but it's not going to be the way they think, and not working with them in their present state. It's amazing what the human mind can do to deceive itself.

So again, to understand that we experienced in God's Church after Mr. Armstrong died a period called Laodicea and that it wasn't a period that ran along with at the same time with Philadelphia. Because there are a lot of people that wanted to hold on to that too for various reasons. There were people plotting and planning before the Apostasy to split off. And *they're* Philadelphian. And there are others who thought they were Philadelphian as well. Because, you see, those, to be Philadelphian means that era still has to be going on. And now others who don't see the same way you do and don't grasp what you grasp, they're Laodicean. They're the ones you kind of look down upon. I mean, *who* could be a Laodicean?!

Those of you who were in the Church, you know what I'm saying. But those of you who were not, you don't know. Trust me. *You don't know* what that means and what that meant for people who were taught certain things in times past concerning Laodicea, because you didn't hear those sermons. You weren't taught those. You didn't grow up on those. Because we didn't know. Because it wasn't God's time to reveal it. So we can know certain thing by knowledge, but to really know it, we don't know it. But hopefully we grasp and can grasp that this is a great truth that God has given to His Church and that the only reason we can see it is because God gives us the ability to "see" it, to know it. Isn't that an awesome thing, how God's spirit works? That when He gives you the ability to see something you just "see" it. It's not by how smart we were to figure something out. If we ever think that, we're in for some hard knocks. We're going to learn some hard lessons in life because God's going to take that one out of us. He will take that out of you one way or another! And we *will* become humbled and we *will* acknowledge, "The only way I can see *anything spiritual* is by *Your* dwelling in me in my mind and giving me the ability to 'see' it. Otherwise, I am as blind as everybody else." It's God. The glory is God's. It's not ours. It's God's. God in us. *Awesome!* What a beautiful thing! He wants to share with us. It's never about how great we are and how lifted up we are in our own minds, to think of the things we know.

27 (6) All in God's Church during the era of Laodicea were Laodicean. (Referring to the period of time after Mr. Armstrong's death up to Trumpets of 2008).

And I hope we still understand that, "up to Trumpets of 2008." Because Laodicea ended at that point in time. A new time began, a time for the end, a time for the coming of Christ, a time for a specific important countdown to the coming of Jesus Christ. We didn't grasp that at that point in time because it had already been determined it was going to be 2019, but we didn't know it. But God let

us live that for a purpose. And hopefully we're coming to grasp that more and more as we continue on. Going on here in this truth here, number 27:

The Church of God formerly believed that at the end there would be two eras coexisting side-by-side: Philadelphia and Laodicea. One (Philadelphia) was to go to a place of safety...

How incredible that one, too! There are people who still think they're going to a place of safety and they believe they know where it is. In Petra, over in the country of Jordan. Some of you... How many of you have seen pictures of some of that? Most everybody here, okay. Easy to find. They take tours there. They have hotels out there now. And I'm sure there are people who believe they're built there for them, for their groups and different ones that are coming there. Because they know there's not enough place in Petra itself, in the little area where those caves are and where they carved out the temple and whatever things are all there that exist there. An area where Aaron was, where Moses was, a region that they had travelled through. Incredible history of some of the things that took place in those regions. I believe that even Aaron was buried near there, wasn't he? In that region? Yeah, pretty sure he was. Anyway, I may have that wrong; *don't* quote me on that. But anyway, going on here... Some out there will love that, "Yeah, you are..." Anyway.

One (Philadelphia) was to go to a place of safety, and the other (Laodicea) would have to go through the great tribulation.

It's kind of like this attitude of mind of this great rapture that's going to take place and there are going to be those that if you're in a 747 or something at that particular time and the pilot and the co-pilot happen to be in that rapture, you are up the creek! Unless somebody can fly. Because that's it for you. And they're going to sit up there, be up there somewhere. What is it? They teach seven years in the rapture? Seven years up there watching everybody suffer down here. And anyway, it's the same sort of thing here, people are going to be over in a place of safety for 3½ years because they are the "elite" of God's Church. Even those scriptures have been used and misused. And there was "an elect," "the elect of God," special. And a lot of them knew who they were so they tended to look down upon the others who they knew weren't. A lot of judging going on. It's amazing what we've gone through, it really is, the growing pains we've had, the things we haven't known, the things that should have told us, "I need more help. There are things I don't grasp because this can't all be right." But we weren't there. We couldn't. We just weren't there spiritually yet. Because that's a process of growth and God gives that growth in His measure, in His time, just as He has progressively given truth from the days of Adam and Eve on over the past 6,000 years. Going on:

Yet, one era cannot overlap another. Our history has shown that all who lived during the era of Laodicea were Laodiceans. While some may exhibit some of the traits of other eras, all are primarily lukewarm and full of pride until they acknowledge and repent of this condition in their lives and God begins to work in their lives once again.

28 (7) All of Laodicea was spewed out of God's mouth as prophesied, separated from Christ, and scattered.

Just in talking you can't help but talk about different truths here going through this without discussing some of these things. And even talking about Laodicea as earlier that we went through and read there in Revelation, and already having talked about this. A truth that people don't understand who are scattered! Only you are able to grasp and "see" this. "All of Laodicea was spewed out of God's mouth as prophesied." If you can't acknowledge that there was a period of Laodicea, that people within the Church up to the Apostasy and after the Apostasy were still in Laodicea, if that can't be acknowledged what does *this* mean? Because they know that's where it leads. That's why you can't go very far with some of these things and, "Oh, that can't be true. Can't be Laodicean. We'd be cut off from God. We know we're not cut off from God." Because that's what this means. If you're spewed out of God's mouth, you're cut off from God, so, "We aren't. We're Philadelphian."

Going on, "This happened in order to help awaken some of God's Church." That's how God used it. Talk about having to be shaken! To be so asleep, to be so far down in Laodicea, to be so spiritually lukewarm that God allowed something like this to shake us so mightily that it took that, with God's help then, because only then God can work with a mind to prick the heart, if you will, in the mind, to be sobered into a reality, to begin to address some things and be honest about that, of what was taking place. And that's how God worked. He used it as a process to help awaken those who He would draw to be a part of a remnant. So again:

All of Laodicea was spewed out of God's mouth as prophesied, separated from Christ, and scattered. This happened in order to help awaken some of God's people. God will not accept that which is only lukewarm and steeped in pride. God will not be around sin and pride is sin.

We have to be willing to admit what is hard. We have to be of a mind that is willing to be humbled and to acknowledge we're not great, God is great! But He allows us to imbibe of that which is great in Him, in His Son, in His spirit, in His power. But we're not great. Anything in us that's great is from God. God's spirit is great! The mind that God is offering us is great. But it's spirit and it's from God. Going on:

Pride and spiritual sluggishness permeated the Church of God through the mid-90's, and the entire Church was, therefore, separated from God, as prophesied in Revelation 3:16 [that we read at the beginning of the sermon]. Until this condition is acknowledged and repented of, God will not work in the lives of such people.

It's something to be repented of! A person has to *repent* of having being lukewarm. A person has to be willing to look at it and say, "I am *not* stirred up with the power of God's spirit. I am *not* stirred up with the mind I should have. I *have* begun to coast. I *have* begun to allow myself to become more involved in the world and thinking in the world and not my mind deeply embedded and focused in

God's Church as it needs to be, and in His truths that He's blessed us to have." It takes repentance and that takes humility. Going on here, again, talking about being steeped in pride:

God will not be around sin, and pride is sin. Pride and spiritual sluggishness permeated the Church of God through the mid-90's [as I read here], and the entire Church was, therefore, separated from God as prophesied in Revelation 3:16. Until this condition is acknowledged and repented of, God will not work in the lives of such people. Even after that point, spiritual sluggishness is a condition that must always be fought against as those in Laodicea were admonished.

Do you know this battle? Do you recognize this battle? Because God has told us very plainly that this is something we must always fight against, that kind of thinking, that kind of mind. And especially the more you're given, the more you have to battle this. Because our natural human tendency - *our natural human tendency* - is to do exactly what we've been talking about throughout this series, is to devalue, is to take away from, is to let down in the importance, if you will then, of those truths that God has given to us. It's just the natural process.

29 (8) The entire Church fell asleep just as it is described in Matthew 25:1-13.

Again, these can seem so simple, and in many ways they really are. But they're awesome truths! Because you're the only ones that "see" them. What does that mean? To be so simple, to be so plain? That's why I loved the magazine when it was called, *The Plain Truth*, because it made that which the world can't see so plain. It was written in a manner - it wasn't just the manner in which it was written, because millions read it and never got it - but with mixed with God's spirit it comes alive because then it becomes plain, it becomes clear. It's like, "That's so simple. That's so basic. It's easy to understand."

So much of what you have is easy to understand, but the value of it, how important it is for your life is oftentimes, if we're not careful, devalued by the way we think. It's why it's good to go through and focus upon these things and realize, deal with the reality of what we see and what we grasp, and to know the love, the power, the might of God that enables us to see things that others *cannot* see. They think you're nuts to believe this. They think you're nuts. You're wacky. "Who is that you're following?" Well, Jesus Christ and God Almighty. That's the real answer. But see, they can't see that. They just see a person. "Look at his record. Look where he's been. That just goes to show... Look what you're... Don't you get it? If he's been over there and you're still there, what is *wrong* with you?" And yet to acknowledge this, "The entire Church fell asleep just as it is described in Matthew 25." "You believe that? Do you really believe the entire Church was asleep? We're not asleep! We never went to sleep! We're still here. Bunch of people went off, Mr. Tkach did what he did, Worldwide, Joe Jr., all of them, all those ministers they went off and they turned Protestant, back to the world for what they were called out of. And yeah, a lot of people just quit and became disillusioned because they weren't right in the first place. But we're still here, we're still fighting the fight. We're still sending the gospel into all the world, to preach the gospel into all the world. To do what Mr. Armstrong didn't finish." Now, they don't say that, but that's what they believe. They're continuing on

and doing something that they believe Mr. Armstrong didn't finish. They don't recognize that God finished it already, doing that phase of what's prophesied back there in Matthew 24:14 that was Mr. Armstrong's commission. Not United's. Not Living. Not anybody else's commission. So again:

29 (8) The entire Church fell asleep just as it is described in Matthew 25:1-13. This was the direct result of being Laodicean.

I remember when we went through this. I remember when God was revealing deeper truth about this. Because we were sitting in a basement over here in Cincinnati. Well, what's that town over there? Fairfield? Fairfield, in a basement, in a home. Incredible! And God was giving things about Matthew 25, about the 10 virgins, that we never grasped before. Truth. Awesome! Exciting! Going on:

This was the direct result of being Laodicean and lukewarm. [That's the reason the Church fell asleep.] The Church used to believe that there were five wise virgins who went on to the wedding and that the five who were foolish were rejected by the bridegroom. Yet the Bible says **all** of the virgins fell asleep...

Now, that's important because? Because people never acknowledged, we never grasped. For whatever reason, our eyes were blind to that verse. Matthew 25:5 says, "While the bridegroom tarried," that means more now than ever before, "they all slumbered and slept." They *all* slumbered and slept. It doesn't say the foolish slumbered and slept, but that's what the Church has always believe in times past. But it's a clear scripture; it's a clear verse. But I couldn't see it. You couldn't see it. And they still don't see it. Something so simple and so plain. It's plain to you and it's simple to you. *How awesome is that?* See, we need to have the value there in that in what it really is. How valuable is it that the things we can see that are so clear and so plain to us, that we can begin to take for granted, and the norm of something that we begin to diminish and value is awesomely valuable, that we can "see" and understand, and are admonished by that then, to realize what can happen, and what did happen, and what's still ongoing, and what can happen to us still if we're not on fire, if we're not hot, zealous for God's way of life, throwing ourselves into doing what we need to be doing. So reading this again:

The Church used to believe that there were five wise virgins who went on to the wedding and that the five who were foolish were rejected by the bridegroom. Yet the Bible says **all** the virgins fell asleep, and it does not say who was accepted by the bridegroom.

Because the concept, the idea was all the five wise, they went on, they were accepted by the bridegroom. It doesn't say that at all, does it?

Many in the scattered Church today go through the motions of religion like the Protestant world, talking about the truth, but without genuine zeal for it. Only those who repent of the Laodicean condition will be accepted by Christ at this end-time. Only God can awaken someone out of a spiritual sleep that has encompassed the whole Church.

You know, I really, I so look forward to that time. Because, you see, it's something God has to do. When the time is there that He begins to pour out His spirit upon many of those who were scattered, and to come to that point in time, any of you who were awakened, but consider how long it's been now compared to when you were awakened. Consider what it will be like by the time that far more have an opportunity to be awakened, and then to come to the point where all of a sudden you're able to "see" it? Because that's what's going to happen. And then a choice has to be made. Doesn't mean all are going to choose it. Doesn't mean all 68,000... Is it 68? I think I got that right. What is it? 63! Anyway, 63. I *knew* it didn't sound right as soon as it came out. All 63,000 when they have that opportunity, whenever it's given, whenever that happens, doesn't say all are going to accept it. Please understand how prophecy works. It's a matter of choice. I don't want to get into the other part about Ezekiel, but there's much to be learned by what we've gone through in our past and learned from Ezekiel and what God gave and when he talks about 10 percent of the third, and if we understand how that came about. Never fully happened as part of a remnant, but God still called and gave that opportunity. But very few chose, made the choice to accept to be a part of a remnant. Incredible!

30 (9) Matthew 24 is first and foremost about the Church at the end-time. As Jesus Christ gave prophecy concerning events that would lead to his coming as the Messiah, he first spoke of events that would occur in the Church (vs. 4-21). These events have been believed to be about physical events that would happen on earth, but they are about the Church.

First and foremost. So we read through a lot of things, even the Seals of Revelation, the first four Seals of Revelation in our minds because that was the present truth. It wasn't because there was error in Mr. Armstrong's mind that he chose to believe something wrong. It's just the fact that God hadn't given it yet for a purpose. It wasn't to be revealed yet. God gives truth when He chooses! It's *His* choosing. It's *His* doing. He blesses us to be able to see when He chooses us to be blessed to see. Just as the perfect example is the thing about Pentecost. So simple to see it was on Sunday, but man, were we deeply convicted. I could have sat down with you pre-1973 and gone through the things with you in the verses there and showed that it was on Monday. We were convicted of it! But it wasn't right. And in God's time, for His purpose, He revealed when it was, what the proper timing was. It was on a Sunday, not a Monday. And so it is with something like this. Didn't take away from Mr. Armstrong whatsoever. God gives what He will, what He wills when He will. (If I said that correctly.)

So again, these particular truths here, verse 30, uh, chapter 30... Where am I? I need to stop here and take a break!

Number 30 of the truths: "Troubles in the Church, began in the 1970's." [Reading on...] "Ministers began to rebel against Mr. Armstrong and the Laodicean condition began to slowly set in. While Mr. Armstrong tried to put the Church 'back on track,' as he stated many times, he openly doubted just how many people really got it. He warned the Church many times that they were falling asleep during the 1970's..." His sermons toward the end of the 1970's, that's what he was warning against because he saw it taking place. "...and 1980's, up until his death in 1986. This is what was being spoken of in the verses before Matthew 24:14, with wars and

rumors of wars." We've always taken that to be physical. Now, there is a corresponding correlation in a sense of things that are going to take place physically, but these were really spiritual about the Church. It was a warning about what was going to take place in God's Church, wars and rumors of wars.

I think about living through that and hearing different rumors about things that were happening in different Church areas. And then all of a sudden it would come out, and then the truth, God would make it known of what was happening and different battles with some of the ministry and some of the members of God's Church. And I still think back to the time Washington, DC, an entire Church area over there, all of (I believe it was all of) Hawaii, as a whole were taken because of the ministers they had in those regions. And I even remember the name of the minister over there. Which is, I don't do well with names over a long period of time, but going back way back then, the individual who was responsible in the Washington, DC area who led not only that area there but had great influence over several other ministers in some of those areas and so there were still some battles going on in some of the areas where other people left and other ministers left. Incredible!

So these things began to happen slowly. They began to happen going back to 1972. The first shakings in the Church, when you talk about a shaking, "earthquake." It's translated earthquake. But it's like a shaking taking place within the Church and sometimes God does that. He allows us to be shaken to shake out some of that which doesn't belong and to help those things come to the surface so they can be dealt with because that which shouldn't be a part, that which is pulling down, that which is hurting, that which is like leaven that begins to leaven much more within the Body, it has to be gotten rid of or it *will* spread through the Body. Just like the Apostasy did.

So going back to those times, thinking about some of those things and things that took place, this is what we're talking about. Mr. Armstrong warning about this attitude that began to come in. And so some of these battles that took place in '72 because of what they said he was teaching, that we have an immortal soul. Then 1974 about Pentecost. And then him getting sick and being at point of death and later in the '70's there. And then getting later, toward the end of the '70's there getting strength back and his desire to put things back on the right track. Because by this time a lot of the ministry, too many in the ministry, were doing things that were wrong! And they were beginning to lead churches and people in their own direction and people were beginning to fight with one another, in essence, in backing up different evangelists who they thought might be the one... "Because Mr. Armstrong's going to die. That old man's going to die." That was the attitude! He's going to die. He was close to death. I think he did die, didn't he at one point and then brought back?

So you think, how incredible! So weak, so frail, and he came back with power! Incredible! And God used him, mightily so, to work to set the Church back on track. But the Church didn't all follow at that point and some did get stirred up. But as time went along he began to say, talk about, "50% of you..." and then later on he said, "I wonder if 10% of you get it!" He said it a lot stronger than that. Still that sound is kind of reverberating in my eardrum.

So again, some of the things we've gone through, what continued, the Church, He came back several times there and talked about getting things back on the right track. And he stated many times, he openly doubted how many people really got it. So, "He warned the Church many times that they were falling asleep during the 1970's, the 1980's, and up until his death in 1986. This is what was being spoken of in those verses leading up to Matthew 24:14, about wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes [as I mentioned, this "shaking"; that's what it means], ("shakings" within the Church), "but the end," as it says there, "is not yet." The end is not yet. It's about the Church! It wasn't about physical wars and physical earthquakes. It was about something spiritual within the Church.

"After Mr. Armstrong died," continuing on here, "and the gospel had been preached 'into all the world,' Laodicea and the final end-times began. Verses 15-28 describe the Church being scattered, fleeing into the mountains." What an incredible thing to come to understand what that meant, the different organizations that sprung up of those who were scattered. That's where most went, into the "mountains." Some went in the "hills," smaller ones, you know. But the majority, that's why they're mountains, some of the big ones, they went to. That's where they went. Why? Well, there's reasoning for that too. "...and of greater trials upon the Church," again, of fleeing into the mountains, "and of greater trials upon the Church including spiritual warfare, deception, and famine. Events like these will occur in the world, but these scriptures apply more fully to the Church." We never knew that. We never grasped that.

I'm reminded of Matthew 24:28, "For wheresoever the carcass is," the body. Isn't that awesome? "...there will the eagles," in essence here, vultures, carnivorous birds, that's what it's talking about, "will be gathered together." Where the Body is. That's their mindset. That's their thinking. Because it's about us. It's about God's Church. It's about their attitude toward what's true from God.

So again, continuing on with what was written about this truth: "God has now shown that there is a duality concerning both the Church and the world that applies to verses 21 and 22. All these prophesied events in Matthew 24 lead up to the time of the very coming of the Messiah to this earth (vs. 29-31)." So if we don't know what those are we need to go back and review them and pray to God about them and thank God that we can "see" it. Because you're the only ones who can.

Let's read verse 21 and 22. **Matthew 24:21-22— For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except... We know that there's going to be physical, and there was spiritual, because of what we went through. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.** Incredible. And God's taken us a little farther to accomplish something far greater, because He's made us able to. He's made us able to. Otherwise, for the elect's sake, they would have been cut even shorter.

How many of us, if you think of different things that could happen, or could have happened to us in the past, how many of us, how many in God's Church could continue on? How many? Ask yourself if something were not to happen in 2019, could you go on? How long do you think you would last? And what would it depend upon? You think you could go on another 21 years? I'm not saying that in any

fashion or form, but I'm saying it to sober you up in your thinking. To sober you up in your thinking, again, yes, exactly... Why are you here? Why are we here? Where is God's Church? How convicted *are* we of God's truths? Because I'll tell you right now we would not survive. We would not survive. I won't live that long if time were to go on. I plan on living 3½ more years. And I'm not worried.

Going in Monday for consultation about having some robotic stuff done finally. Whether it does or doesn't, because I'm feeling really good... I'm feeling better and better. I'm feeling stronger and stronger. Probably don't need it anyway. But I've got this human element in my mind, a human weakness of the human mind. Yeah, if I can have it done, maybe I should have it done. But to be really candid with you, I really don't care. *I really don't care!* Because I know what is to happen to me and what is going forward is going to happen. It's all exactly according to God's... in God's hands. That I know with all my being. Anyway... And that's from God. The honor, the glory, it's always God's, brethren.

31 (10) The first four Seals of Revelation are about the Church, and these parallel Matthew 24.

Mr. Armstrong always believed that Matthew 24 and these Seals, that they did go together. And they did. The only thing is we saw them physically because God hadn't revealed yet they're spiritual about the Church. They do go hand in hand. So God gave a portion, a part, and more later on. Progressive revelation. Present truth. It's a most awesome thing to understand that truth. Reading here:

These four Seals are not about physical events at the end-time. Herbert W. Armstrong taught that these four Seals of Revelation could only be understood by understanding Matthew 24. He was correct about this, but he taught that this was about physical events rather than spiritual ones that concerned the Church as God later revealed. Most of those who are scattered still do not understand that this is not about physical events, but spiritual ones. As we lived through these events, it has become evident that Matthew 24 is about the Church, and so is Revelation 6:1-8. The First Seal is about the Abomination of Desolation. The second concerns the spiritual warfare in the Church. The third is about famine of the preaching of the word of God (Amos 8:11).

Look at what we've been through! Look at what we've lived through! Look at the battles we had! Look at all the teachings that came up in the different groups and different organizations and how some let down. Organizations that wouldn't even address the subject of 14/15 because they were afraid to do so! You know why they were afraid to do so? This came out as time went along. You're going to lose people. If you take a stand on it, you're going to lose some people. Well now, that's a pretty good reason for making a decision like that, isn't it, of what is true and what isn't. Isn't that amazing? Rather than them standing up for what's true before God, what God says is right, you make a decision because you're concerned how many people might stay in the Church and continue to give tithes and so forth to the Church. It's not how it works.

The second concerns the spiritual warfare in the Church. The third, about famine of the preaching of the word of God (Amos 8:11). The Fourth Seal speaks of the perpetuation and worsening of all of these conditions within the scattered Church organizations that sprang up from Worldwide after the Apostasy.

32 (11) [This is what I was referring to earlier, or part of it.] Ezekiel 5 has been spiritually fulfilled through the scattering of the Church of God since the apostasy.

Again, I remember once coming out with some of these things, and people thinking and talking about, basically, we're just nuts. Read things into scriptures like that? Anyway, going on:

After the Abomination of Desolation, approximately one-third of the Church remained in the Worldwide Church of God that had then become completely Biblically corrupt (or they accepted the same kind of beliefs of other false churches in traditional Christianity), one-third gave up completely, and one-third went into the various organizations that formed afterward.

Why can't someone just do the math and accept what is right in front of their face? Well, there are reasons why a person can't do that. There are other motivations. Going on:

That last third was to endure further trials, mirroring what God said about Laodicea. Within all this spiritual destruction, God prophesied that a tithe (ten percent) of a third would survive captivity within this end-time destruction and be offered [they would be *offered*] to become His remnant Church that would continue to the very end.

I battled with some of this for a time because I knew these things were from God - the third, third, and third, and the 10%, but never saw that number within the remnant. Where are the rest? Where are the rest? Started counting up the *hundreds*, hundreds and hundreds who have come and gone - who have come and gone - a part of this body since the Apostasy, but still not there to that number. So where is the rest of the answer? Incredible when God reveals in His time and what is true.

This small remnant Church is spoken of in many other prophecies of the Bible. [For more understanding of this remnant Church, see truth #34.]

But anyway, I want to make sure, maybe... Yes, some of this I'm going to, it's going to come out as we go along here. Anyway, I'll just make comment here about some of this, about those numbers and about those who would become a part of a remnant. You can be offered something, just as people in the end-time, as I mentioned earlier, 63,000 (got it that time), are going to be offered what they will be. Doesn't mean they're going to choose it. Isn't that an awesome thing? Just because... God is working right now that there is going to be an example. There is going to be an example in time. I know of at least there will be at least one nation (and I believe several that God has revealed), but at least one that is from the top down is going to be offered an opportunity to come through some of these end-time events and have prophecy changed mightily concerning the destruction that would otherwise come upon them. Just as what happened to Nineveh. It's going to be their choice, though, as to whether or not they will *choose* what God reveals to them and what God opens their minds to

"see." Because there's going to be some things He's going to give them the ability to "see." Awesome!
But the choice is theirs.

And I think of what happened - God's word is true - as far as what it says here as well about Ezekiel 5 and about the 10% of a third in total number. It doesn't mean just out of one-third, but in essence here 10% that God would work with through time of a remnant, that they didn't all choose it. Their minds were opened up too. My wife and I visited with some. We were talking about this the other day thinking about some different areas, not just some of the ones we were invited to earlier that totally rejected it, because that was two different congregations. One in Minneapolis and one in Tucson, Arizona. Two entire congregations that had an opportunity to "see" what was true. Individuals who were reading some of the literature, *Time is Running Out* and *Time Has Run Out*. I think of some in California that we sat with, couple in particular come to mind, different areas of California. Visited with them. Their minds were opened up. They could "see" certain things. They were understanding it. And there's only one way you can see the truth. But they didn't choose it. There was something holding them back. God's word is true. He's called that many people, given that many people the opportunity to be a part of His remnant. But look at our size. Look at where we are.

That's what's kind of so scary in many ways, as I think about it, and what is going to happen to Ephraim and Manasseh - primarily Manasseh - because we are so steeped in pride. And see, that was the... that's the condition of the scattered Church. And when pride is that great it's very hard, even when your eyes are opened, to see certain things. It's very hard to turn away from your own desires, your own thoughts, your own way of seeing things and to accept what God's revealing. And I'll be candid with you. I don't feel good about what's going to happen here. That's why I think we're going to go through a lot harder times in this country than what we would have before 2012. That's why God is preparing us more spiritually, to be able to deal with some of the things we're going to see. I believe that. But the potential is still there. But pride is a powerful thing. I hope we see that. Pride is a powerful obstacle. Hate to see those things taking place and what's going to take place, because what determines what's going to happen to nations.

33 (12) There is no literal physical place of safety...

We've already touched upon this. You can't help but talk about certain truths. And with what we know we talk about others because they all fit together. It's all a part of God's plan and it's a part of a picture of something we're able to see. We see it so clearly. And sometimes we see it *so* clearly, again, if we're not careful we can begin to minimize or devalue how important these things are. Again:

33 (12) There is no literal physical place of safety for the Church during the time of great tribulation, but there is a spiritual one. The wings referred to in Revelation 12:14 are symbolic of protection, as are the skirts (Hebrew for "wings," as in "protection") in Ezekiel 5:3.

So when you read through those things it's talking about some of the same things. It's about God's protection. Pretty simple. Pretty basic. But again, you're the only ones that see it, that believe it. Going on:

This is in reference to a specific time period of protection for a few [speaking of Revelation 12:14], a few whom God first began calling to be part of a remnant.

See, this is important because it's a part of our history. It may not mean as much now, but the fact that we see it and we know what happened as a part of our history, of something we can recognize of what we went through after an Apostasy, it's an awesome thing when you recognize the protection that God gave to us from a spirit being, from Satan. Because that's what it's about. It's about a period of 3½ years until we were established, until we became established, until God established us as a Body and began to pour out His spirit upon us in a far greater manner as an organized body once again. And then that protection was taken away. But that protection, until that point in time, was needful in order to bring us to that moment to re-establish His Body, a remnant Church. And so it's an awesome, it's a beautiful thing, a part of our history. That's why we're here. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here! How valuable is that to you? Incredible. So again:

This period of time lasted [as it says here] for three and one-half years [already mentioned]. It's already come and gone.

34 (13) Of all those who have been scattered, God is awakening a remnant out of it as a witness of this end-time.

Number 34, it explains more in number 32, the truth what number 32 is. But 32 here is really very specifically here about what took place within the scattering and the thirds and what took place. But there's a spinoff of that, and that's what number 34 is all about.

I think we'll stop there today because there's a lot to cover in that particular item and it's good for review, to go back to it again, just again to be reminded of our history, what we've gone through and of the importance of the very thing I mentioned earlier about the choices we have to make. That there are things that we have *our* choices to make. And so it is, always. Always has been. But I think of the book again and what God's going to give so many in the world opportunity to see and choices they have to make.

But isn't that what it's always about? Choices, choices, choices - what choices do we make? What choices do we make now as to the things we're hearing and as to our response? I know what they're going to be because I know what God's doing. He's stirring up the Body. He's stirring up the Church of God. He's desiring to pour out more of His spirit in our lives. And as we go through this Passover period - because this timing isn't by coincidence - that He's allowing us to see these things so that we can be stirred up more in spirit to have a greater spirit of gratitude and thankfulness as we approach

the period here of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And at that time God is going to continue to pour out more and more of His spirit upon us. How blessed are we?