

It's great to see everyone that's gathered here together in the Dublin, Georgia area today. It's been a long time since we've had services in Dublin, Georgia area, since I've been here speaking anyway. And matter of fact it goes back many, many years. I'm not just talking about Forsyth and some other areas maybe we've met at, I'm talking about when we used to get together there here in the very beginning before... Well, I guess we were... I don't even know if we had the name PKG yet, did we? We didn't even have that part of the name yet. So that was very early on and we used to meet up north on occasion by a little lake. And kind of mixed emotions about all that because most of the people that were together at that time are no longer around; the vast majority of people who used to come together.

And so it's good to come into an area to see those who are continuing to fight the fight. Because that's what it's about. We were talking about that just before services here. And that's what this way of life is about; it's about a continual fight. It's a battle. And that's why those analogies, those examples are used in scripture. Because if you're not in battle, if you're not in the fight things aren't going to go well and in time you'll go by the wayside. That's just the way it works. It's a fight against our own human nature. It's a fight against the way of this world. And it's a fight against powers that are out there that want us to fail.

So every day of your life you have to fight. And if that's not in your mind to want to do so, nobody can give it to you. So it's good to see those who continue to fight, who remain faithful and stay in the struggle. So, that's encouraging to me when I see that. Because far, far more have gone by the wayside. Can't help but think about "many are called, few are chosen." Few through time have made it. And I understand why.

I don't know if I should mention Carol's birthday today or not... No, I won't! I probably shouldn't. I'll refrain. I'll refrain from going into that. Okay!

I thought I'd mention we have quite a few here today, different states again. I thought I'd mention those: Georgia, obviously, Florida, Hawaii, South Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee. And did I miss any? North Carolina as well. Well, it was a pretty much complete list. I didn't try to add to it, so I'm glad I had what I had here.

And anyway, I was going to say something else... Oh, yes, I did want to make comment that I wanted everyone to know that I do understand, I do know that two weeks ago I was in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and last week we were in Indianapolis, and this week we are in Dublin, Georgia. So, I don't know what happened last week when I was talking there, but sure got off on a wrong course.

I thought I would mention, too, today that it looks like it's 99.9% sure we're going to be keeping the Feast in Europe. So that is exciting! Australia is going to have to wait. And I think they'll still come through but it's a longer process to get things approved. And I have an idea that's probably going to be for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the period of Unleavened Bread next year. But I thought I'd go ahead and announce it today that we are going to start making plans Monday, reservations on the airlines for Europe. So thought I'd pass that along. That way, at least, all of you in the United States can have the same sermons that we have each day there in the Netherlands. Those in Australia will have to stagger a little bit because I can pre-record sermons but they're never the same as the live sermon. There is always some difference. And I prefer the live ones myself. So, anyway, we're going to work with doing that and giving everyone over here those same live sermons, so that'll be good.

I did want to mention a special hello today, as well, to Bill and Diane out in the Portland, Oregon area. And I thought I'd just go ahead and mention it today - we're going to send it out to all the elders as well, more of the information - but Bill is struggling with some pretty bad colon cancer and it's pretty severe. So, anyway, they're going in next week for more tests to see, to try to zero in on some of the options of what they're going to do. But I know they'd appreciate if everyone kept them in your prayers. So, again, special hello to you out there.

Today we're going to begin a new sermon series, and this is somewhat of a follow up to some of the things covered in parts of the last sermon series, but with the very specific focus that has to do with how each of us is responding to all that God is giving to us. And the title of this series will become clearer as we go more deeply into this sermon. But again, the sermon title today is *Own Your Choices*, with this being *Part 1*. I don't know if it'll just be a two part sermon but there are some things we're to go into as a follow up to everything that I think you'll understand as we go deeper into this sermon.

But in order to do that I'm going to begin here taking off from where we left off last Sabbath. And in the subject matter we're going to cover here the bottom line is that each of us has choices that we make, and we make choices every day of our life. And we do so throughout every hour of the day that we're awake. And the great truth in all this is that no one else makes our individual choices. And when we come face to face with the full acceptance of this truth and deal with it in spirit and in truth then we'll actually be owning our own choices and never deflecting them, never excusing them - in other words, making excuses for what we chose to do in the first place - nor blaming them (in other words, our choices) on the influence, control, or persuasion, or fault of others. We have to own our own choices.

No one - I've made comments like this in the past - that no one makes us unhappy. No one makes us angry. We do it to ourselves by our choices. No one is to blame. We can't blame anyone except self for things that we choose to do that aren't right, that cause wrong responses in life.

So we'll come back to this and talk about this a little bit more as we go along here. But for the beginning of this series we're going to focus on some scriptures we addressed in the sermon last

Sabbath, and it concerns what is said about Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4. I want to expound on that a little bit more. And I'm doing this because this is probably more for me than it is for you in some respects, but it's inspiring when you understand what God is saying and why He's saying it. It's something that I have to become comfortable with. It's something that I have to... Ah, I guess that's really the best way of saying it. I have to be comfortable with it. And so that's why I gave the example last Sabbath of the first book, *The Prophesied End-Time* and how on the back of the cover there it talks about my being a prophet. And I cannot explain to you how incredibly uncomfortable that was. I did not like to do it. I actually didn't even want to do it, but I knew that I had to do it. I knew that I was given *charge* to do it. And even then I couldn't say it all the way in the sense of knowing exactly what I was being given to say. So I had a few conversations with God about it... and you do what you have to do.

So the same thing is true here. There are certain things that I am learning, I'm understanding right now, because of going through this, and because of having gone through now this Bible Study of Mr. Armstrong's and seeing how *profound* it was. The things that he had to say in 1978 after he had come close to death... Well, actually he did die, I guess, but came to a point of everything ending as far as his work was concerned at that time. But God wasn't finished with him because he didn't die until 1986, January of 1986. So he had quite a bit of work ahead of him to do, and the greatest portion of his work, and a book that was to come out that would be the summation, the fulfillment of that entire work of what God had given to him. *Mystery of the Ages*. Awesome! Awesome what God gave to him through time to bring him to that point of writing that book.

And I remember Laura and myself being at a ministerial conference out there sitting in the class when he came in there and had the books piled up back there and he was *so excited* about that book. And I'm understanding more that excitement. Because he knew what was being given and he knew what people were going to have the opportunity to receive - not just those being drawn and called, but what it's going to mean for people in the future. Because we've been blessed to build upon that. We have actually been blessed to add even more to what is being said in that book and what God has been revealing. And it helps to start the Millennium in a very powerful way, the knowledge that's going to be out there and ready for people and how they're going to be able to learn things that they've never imagined about the plan of God and what God is doing, learning about the angelic realm and what God created and why and the purpose and why man was created. And so, a very powerful book. And again, I understand that excitement.

So he was reading through things that gave him encouragement at that time because what he was doing was a "type" of some of that at that moment in time, but actual fulfillment of some of those things, we're living it right now. That's why I marvel when we went through that Bible Study and read those things, how this is about the Church today! Those things that they were looking to be fulfilled and accomplished in the Church and in the world that they thought was coming rapidly at that moment in time, weren't going to come for quite a long time. And they still haven't happened in fullness, in the full aspect of it. But as far as the Church is concerned, that's where we are. And so

again here, it's awesome to grasp what God's doing with us in our lives and where we are, the incredible calling that we have.

So again, what's in Zechariah 4 that speaks of Zerubbabel shows me what my main focus should be, again, towards God's, or toward God's Church. And it is still about a continuing process of living up to our name, "Preparing for the Kingdom of God." So again, the timing of the context of Zechariah, again, shouldn't escape us, as I just mentioned. It's very much about the final period of God's refining, molding, and preparing of His Church. That's what's awesome to understand. When you read through things in scripture and you read through various portions of it, the focus so much of the time is about the Church. There are so many things even in prophecy that are about the Church, about God's people. Now, there are things about the world and the end-time and things that are going to happen with nations and things that have happened with nations and the rise and fall of nations, and so forth, but the primary focus of God has always been toward His people and the molding and fashioning. Because we are living something that is so awesomely unique in 6,000 years of history. Anyone who has ever been called, that God has worked with, especially in the first 4,000 years and you look at that period of time and you think of God pouring out His spirit and working *personally* with different.... He works with us personally, anyway, but within the Church it's a little bit different because it's through Jesus Christ, through the ministry and the things that God has established. And He still works with us on a very personal plane, but He works with more, in that respect. But in the beginning and through time, first 4,000 years, incredible the people whom God called, worked with, and revealed a little bit to, a little bit more as time went along, others are called toward the end of that period of time, God even began to reveal more. And it's been a progressive revelation that God has been giving about His plan and His purpose. And it's awesome!

And then came Jesus Christ, almost 2,000 years ago and the establishment of the disciples who became apostles. And then Paul was called to go to the gentiles. And all the knowledge, all of a sudden taking a giant leap forward in truth and knowledge and understanding God's purpose and God's plan for mankind that would be written up in scriptures and so forth in the New Testament. It's really awesome when you realize you have a part in that. You are amongst those individuals whom God has been calling early on. And many more have been called, as I said here in the beginning - thousands upon thousands upon tens of thousands of people in the last 2,000 years, and maybe hundreds of thousands, we don't know, have gone by the wayside. Maybe started a journey and then pulled away by something, didn't stay in the fight. And then those who did God continued to mold and fashion and then prepare for certain places within His structure of a government that's coming soon. And to be a part of that, or to be a part not just of the 144,000 necessarily, but to be a part of those who at the very beginning have an opportunity before it's even established, before God's government is established on the earth, to have an opportunity to have a head start, as far as the Kingdom of God is concerned, when it comes to govern this earth, and the Millennium that's established and the opportunities, that you already know.

There are going to be people who want to know so much from you because you have an experience in something that is quite unique. So often we have *no idea* the *vastness*, the *awesomeness* of what we've been given. We get to a point oftentimes where we begin to take it for granted and we don't remember the value as when we were first called, when our mind was first opened up and that excitement we had, that first love. That's why it talks about it in scripture as that first love, because it's so powerful. All of a sudden you "see" things and you go and try to share it with family and friends and whatever and you learn that doesn't work. That doesn't work. They don't have the same excitement. And you learn through that. You learn that God has to do the calling. God has to draw by the power of His spirit. And you can't give it to anyone. And the *best* thing you can do is live the example, live the example we're supposed to live of this way of life, of living *right* in the world so that others when they come to know that *you* were a part of the Church of God that they can say, "Now I understand why they did that and lived that way." What a horrible thing if they say, "They were in the Church?! You're kidding! *They* were in the *Church*? And I remember them doing 'this,' and saying 'that,' and blah, blah, blah and blah, blah, blah, blah, and losing their temper here and saying this there," and whatever.

So we learn. We learn the importance of what we're supposed to be, of the example we're supposed to be, of what we carry in our life. We carry the life of God the Father and Jesus Christ in our being, in our minds. And that's what's to be reflected. And that's what people are to learn and see from. And we're not to remain the same old person we were. Families and others should see a distinct difference in you over a period of time. They should see it immediately, frankly, and as time goes along they should see a far greater difference in you, that you're not the same person at all, you're totally different, see, because of what you live day by day, and they see that. Awesome! And that's what we're striving to do. And that's what a lot of this sermon is about.

So again, the timing and context of Zechariah 4 should not be lost upon us, it shouldn't escape us. And understanding the period of time that this is all about, it's about *this* period of time that we're in right now, and really, very much about a final period of God's refining, molding, and preparing that He's doing of His Church, His remnant Church *for Christ's* coming. It's not a small thing. God's anticipation, we can't even begin... We can strive to appreciate it and God shares with us some of that excitement, but we're limited in what we can receive of it. And the more we yield to God, the more we strive for this way of life, the more we hunger for this way of life the greater that excitement will be in us as well. But God Almighty has planned this, has looked forward to this specific moment in time we don't know how many millions or billions of years. We can't comprehend that and neither can you. But if you want to talk about the Great God who has that kind of anticipation, that kind of excitement? That's awesome to understand where we're about to be in the return of His Son, in the coming of His Son, and something that He planned so long ago. Because everything else has basically been planned around that, because it starts with His Son. He's the beginning. He's the building block of it all. He's everything that is being built upon, the entire God Family. And we have much to learn about that yet.

(So, no problem with sound? Okay. Good. Just want to make sure so I can have peace. If the webcast here isn't going well then I don't do well, because it's for all of you here, but it's for a lot of others out there too.)

So, **Zechariah 4:1**. We're going to go back through this, add a little bit more to it as we go along. And again, this is very much for me, but it's for you as well to share in and to be inspired by, to be moved by, to be motivated by. **And the angel that talked with me again... or came again and awakened me, as a man awakened out of his sleep.** Now, I know, see, I've eluded to this and said what this means to me. But I know what this is about! It is about exactly what we went through in God's Church and the Apostasy came and *we all fell asleep* before the Apostasy. When the Apostasy came we were fast asleep as God's people. We were Laodicea in the worst case, if you will, fast asleep. And God spewed us all out of His mouth because of that. Now, that's what it took to begin awakening us spiritually. And so I remember being awakened. I remember being shaken. I know what it was that I went through because I lived it. And I know where we are now and I look back and I see what God has done over this period of time.

You know the primary way I see what God has done? By all the truths that He's given to us in His Church! Because those things come from God Almighty. They're just there. I've been reviewing some of those because I'm starting to go through thinking about some of those specific ones because we're coming up to the Feast. And coming down here I was writing, not driving most of the way, preparing, starting to work on Feast sermons. And I am in *awe* of what God has given to us. I truly am. I am in awe of things that should be so simple for people who are scattered, but their minds, they can't "see" it because they're still asleep. And until God wakes you up you can't see something. It's just like the calling - you can't "see", you can't give this to anybody. You can't give this truth to anyone. And neither can you, if you're asleep, you can't see things that God gives. And they can't see the simplest things having to do with what happened to the Church, what happened in an Apostasy, a man of sin, the son of perdition. Simple! Simple! But they're not simple, see? And we have them for one reason, and one reason alone, because God's spirit has given it to you. Otherwise you wouldn't see it at all, you wouldn't believe it at all.

Sometimes I think we begin to think that we can or we would see it. You wouldn't. We have a history of now just... Well, a lot of history, but just in the past few years of the time period of measuring the temple where there are people who sit right with some of you in this area when we've had services, people who have sit together in the same services who once they have gone out it's gone. They can't see the same things anymore. They go back to things that they believed in the past 12, 15, 20 years ago. And you think, "How can that be?" Because when God's spirit is taken from you, *you can't "see."* Incredible! So, again, something that God does.

So I know what this is about. I know what this is about. I don't have any doubt in any fashion or form. I know exactly what... I know the context of what is being covered here and I know it's about me, it's about us, it's about the Church today. It's about what we're to be doing today. Okay? And it's about the fact that we were asleep and God had to wake us up and God had a work to do and God was

going to accomplish it. And it's a powerful work. It's an important work because it's what prepares the way for Jesus Christ's coming - the Church. The Church. God's very concerned about the state of the Church at the coming of His Son. See? He wants everybody to be clothed properly when His Son returns, otherwise they're not going to be there to share in it.

And so we still have... Someone asked me before services here, "Are there some still going?" And I said, "Yes." And some are still being suspended, and some are still going by the wayside. *And it isn't over with yet!* And I have *no qualms* about that! Because what needs to be cleaned up needs to be cleaned up. And it either repents and makes itself right with God or it's gone! Because this Body is going to be cleansed! This Body is going to be clean! This Body is going to be on fire for God's way of life and fight for it till the end! That's what our calling is. And we're going to take it that seriously and understand the awesome blessing we have as His people! That's where we are and we have to take it that seriously. This is not a small thing with God.

God has incredible patience. God has incredible mercy. And He's given all that to us. We're just at a point now where we need to make sure that we are shaping up even more so in our lives, that we're actually seeking to draw closer to God than we ever have. And that's what God is offering if we'll receive it, that we can draw closer to God, that we can become much stronger spiritually. This is not a time for a lukewarm spirit. This is not a time for complacency. This is not a time for drifting. This is not a time for taking it easy. If you're taking it easy something is very wrong in your spiritual life! This is a time to get charged up spiritually! This is a time to cry out to God and ask God to stir you up in the power of His spirit, to become... I can't help but to talk about this way of life and be stirred up and excited! And that's the way we should be when we hear it. We should be moved and motivated. There should be something we feel deep inside of our being that *draws* at us. And if it isn't, something's wrong. And if we don't "see" things that we have in our life that we want to change and make better, something's *wrong*. Because every one of us, no matter how long we've been in God's Church, can do better. And that's what we have to seek to do, to do better, to understand the importance of what's getting ready to take place - not just with the world but the change and why the change. Because Jesus Christ is coming and a whole new world is going to be established and we have the opportunity to be a great part of that - far greater than what you grasp right now.

And so again, **The angel talked with me, came again and awakened me as a man out of his sleep. And he said to me, What do you see?** So I think about that. What did we see after the Apostasy? Didn't see a whole lot. We were wondering what happened. "How, if this is God's Church," I knew it was God's Church, never doubted it. "If this is God's Church, then how can anything like this happen to God's Church?" "How could such a *massive* things happen to God's Church, where overnight ministers that I knew, people that we would talk to on the phone... We had, I wish I could remember the kind of phone bills some people had. And if I'm not mistaken 400 and 500 dollars in some cases wasn't an unreasonable thing. Does that sound? A month. How much? 1800? Okay. Because it was expensive back then. It wasn't cheap like it is now. And I remember being on the phone with some ministers for a long, long time. It wasn't... it was with the ministry, it was amongst the ministry and

the things that were going on after that sermon that was given in Atlanta. And I remember talking to people I have spent a lot of time with, ministers that I knew very well, I felt I knew very well, and in the same region, and talking and discussing something one day and literally the next day, because they listened to Joe Jr. for 2-3-4 hours. And when they did that something happened to their minds and they were not the person I knew.

I remember one minister, the very next day. Talked to him the day before he talked to him and the day after he talked to him, and I didn't know him. I didn't know what I was hearing. I didn't know who he was. And that's why we began to talk about the old science fiction show, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, because people one day were one way and then these alien things, whatever it was in the mind, and they were like something... they were different the next day. What happened to their mind? Where did it go? Don't know them. How could you do that in one day's time? One day believe in God's way of life and the next day be in the Protestant world? That's a toughie!

And that's why when it talks about signs and lying wonders and the power that was there, a power of Satan and the demons to do what they did, it's a world that you don't want to be a part of. And to understand that when you're called and you're given this way of life God makes it clear, Paul talks about this; when you're severed from this way of life once you've been given it, you know who you're given back to, or where you're given? You're given to them. And they want you more than they wanted you before. Because they didn't really care about you because you were already deceived, but now they really want you. That's something to fear, to not be in God's hands, to not be in God's care, to let down, to let up, to become lethargic and those things to happen in your life, to give in to things of this world, or whatever, that pull us away from, that can pull you away from the truth, God's Church, cut you off from the power of God's spirit. So again, what happened in the Apostasy? What happened to the Church? Where were the answers? And slowly, but surely God began to give those.

And it went on to say, **I have looked, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, the Church over the past 2,000 years, with a bowl upon the top of it, and has seven lamps thereon, seven Church eras, time, periods of time that God would work with His people to prepare the vast majority of those who would be a part of the 144,000, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof.** And so I think of what we could see at that point in time. Because they couldn't see those things earlier. Sardis couldn't see these things. Thyatira couldn't see these things. But we saw seven lamps. We saw, by the time the Apostasy occurred, and after it happened and God was working with us, what we began to quite clearly see was that we have gone through seven periods, seven eras of the Church. Mr. Armstrong, it was becoming clearer and clearer, was in the Philadelphia. And when he died there weren't two more eras, if you will, two eras that co-existed. That one ended. And what was accomplished in Laodicea became clearer and clearer and clearer. And what happened to the Church? We fell asleep. We became lethargic. And God had to spew the Church out of His mouth. Those things became real to us. We were looking back! We were looking back now in time, in history of God's Church and what happened to seven eras. It became very clear we were at the end because

we could see *we have lived this!* We have been *spewed out of God's mouth!* The entirety of a Church that had grown to a very large size, as far as the world is concerned, or the Church was concerned. In the world it's not that great and not that large. But for us it was very large. *Awesome* what we lived through! But we could see a little bit here and a little bit there, and that was clear, very clear. And then we were able to build upon that. Not only that... Well, I'll get into some more here as we go along.

Zechariah 4:3—And the two olive trees are by it, one upon the right of the bowl and the other upon the left thereof. I've already read, but we'll read it again, Revelation 11:4 just because it fits in here, where it speaks of the two witnesses who are clothed in sackcloth.

And then it says in **[Revelation 11:]4—These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks,** and really, I don't understand Greek fully. Well, I don't understand it well. I have to study it to understand certain words, okay? Same thing with Hebrews. If you want to study into certain words there are certain things you can work with to try to understand in a better way, because a lot of things that are translated... And with God's plan we can understand things better because we know the context. It's like the book that's being translated. You've got to know what's being said in order to translate it right, because it's the thought, it's the intent. It's not just word for word. And even the translators out here that translate it they deal with that, they work with that, it's brought to their attention from time to time, that there are certain things, "That's not what's being said. This is what's being said." And so again, it's something that is a matter of God's spirit. It's a matter of what He gives to us.

And let's just go on here; **These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks...** And so right here there is a phrase being used and a term that's translated into English that though I'm not able to go to it right now, because I *don't* understand - I can't read Greek, I don't know Greek, I'd have to study into certain, specific words. Which, I want to take you back a little bit in history and tell you about.

One of the first things when I became a minister that God began to reveal was what was stated in John 14 and what was stated in 1 John and so forth about Jesus Christ coming. And we've gone into that a lot so that we can understand what it's talking about, he is coming into our life. It wasn't about his second coming. It wasn't about the fact that he came in the flesh. It's the matter of the fact that he is coming in the flesh in our lives. And so the world, and even the Church had been taking it physically. But God began to reveal to us that there are words that are used here, this word "coming," there has to be more to it. And it wasn't... How long was it? My, seven, eight... eight or nine years later after God had given that to know what that was without knowing what the Greek was but knowing that's what was said, to finally find a book that showed what these words were as far as what we could equate to being like present progressive in tense and usage. And all of a sudden the proof was there, and there it is.

And that's the way this is. What it's showing here is "these are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks" - it's "of the two candlesticks." They aren't the candlesticks. The candlesticks are about

the Church eras, the periods of time. They're *of* the two candlesticks and they're the last two candlesticks. That's what God was going to do, they had to be "*of the two candlesticks*." I think too here of one of the words here. Thought I had it here marked - let me see if I can see it right quick like here. Yeah, I'll come to that in a moment then. Don't want to get ahead of the story here.

But again, God had a purpose of something He was going to raise up that had to experience not just Laodicea but they were to experience Philadelphia as well. And there are reasons for this. There are things that had to begin, that God was going to do and accomplish through those periods of time. It had to do, a great deal to do with the apostle as well of the Philadelphian era because there were things that had to be molded and fashioned and learned during that period of time as well in order to prepare something for the future. And that's what God did.

And so we're reading here a history of some things that have already transpired and already taken place.

Verse 5, going on, **Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Do you know what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spoke unto me saying, This is the word of the Eternal unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Eternal of hosts.** Not only is it about this work and this end-time and what God is going to do, it's about what He's talking about right here. He's making it very clear this is something that *He* has done. *He* has made it. *He* built it. We understand as far as God's plan that's what He does with everything, as far as the Church is concerned, as far as the 144,000's concerned. But God is making it very clear here that this is something we need to deeply understand. It's God's work. And it doesn't have to be something that's great and mighty. *God* is almighty and He's letting us know in a very powerful way that *He* is doing it. What an awesome blessing that we get to share in it. Every one of us gets to share in something at the end-time.

We don't grasp... There are apostles, there are prophets, people in God's Church through time who would have loved to have known *a fraction* of what you know! That's awesome to understand! *A fraction* of what you know and understand. They didn't have what you have! And we don't realize how richly blessed we are sometimes, because we live in a sick, perverted world and we have problems in our life, we have sometimes too much drama in our lives. And after being in the Church for a time we begin to *lose* understanding of how precious a thing that we have actually been given that the world doesn't have.

That's why a lot of people have commented on this thing of 1 in 14,000,000 people, of what it's meant to them. It sunk home. It sunk home in a strong way - that that's *awesome*! You look at a city out here of 14,000,000. I think of all New Zealand. They don't have 14,000,000 in the whole country! In the whole country! Incredible! There are a lot of people... 14,000,000 people, a lot of people. And 1 in 14,000,000 having opportunities that God is giving to us? How blessed are we? Instead sometimes we get all bogged down with "Woe is me," and how hard life... Yes, life is hard! Life is difficult. But God has given you an opportunity to go through, whether it be in the world... Do you want your

problems in the world or do you want them in God's Church? Do you understand what I'm saying is the difference here? You want them in God's Church because the difference between this and the world is that in God's Church God's going to use it to refine you and make you stronger. In the world you have nothing but problems and it just gets worse without hope. In the Church of God it's different. God will mold and fashion your mind to go through a trial and hardship so that you become something different, that you could... there is no other way you could have that change in your mind.

The transformation is a miracle! It's the greatest miracle that God can perform, the transforming of a human mind. It's greater than putting out an entire galaxy out here somewhere! That's peanuts to God Almighty! But to change your mind? To make that mind something different? To help that mind become something different than what it is? That's awesome! That's awesome. And it doesn't happen quickly like He can create other things in the universe. It takes a lifetime in us because we fight all the way. And that, the choices, depend upon us, what we do all along the way. Will we keep fighting? Will we keep acknowledging the choices we make? And will we begin to realize this is, "I have to look at myself in the mirror day in and day out? And it's about "me" changing and yielding to God and crying out to God to change this mind and the way I think and help me see things that are so deeply buried in "me." And I'll tell you, every one of you listening today, you have things *deeply buried* in your mind that *you don't even begin to see yet that are wrong!* That are wrong! And they're deeply buried in you!

You don't think you have those things, but you may think that. You have prejudices and biases of things you don't even grasp yet! But God will show them to you in time. Because wrong thinking in a selfish human beings, we just have a lot of wrong thinking. And conversion is about coming to "see" those things and repenting of them and saying, "God Almighty, I don't want to think like that. I don't want that. I don't want to think about somebody that way. I don't want to think wrongly of them. I don't want to misjudge them. I want to be as You are. I want to have Your mind, you know, love, to love, to have patience, to guard my lips, to guard my tongue, to guard my thinking." Because by doing that then you're guarding the actions that come from it. And to have a desire then of having right actions that come out of right thinking. And so we have work to do. We always do. But right now we're at a time of great refining if we'll just yield to it.

And those who don't? Bye-bye, sayonara, auf wiedersehen, dos vedanya, and any other words you can think of. Because this isn't for you! We're entering a time of greater fight than you've ever had to fight! And the battle, most of all, is with self. Self! Self! Self! We are the battle. And God wants to give us more. What an awesome thing if you know that God wants to give you more. I mean, look what He's given us already. Look what we have! And He wants to give us more? More power? Spiritual strength? You haven't experienced anything yet. You haven't experienced *anything* yet. Hold on! Hold on! Because what we're going through is the most exciting time of human history, especially for God's people, especially for those who have opportunity to continue on.

So, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Eternal of hosts." God didn't need a Church of 150,000 people. On the contrary. Just like He did one time in a great battle, and He said, "That's

too many. Let's whittle this down a few tens of thousands." See? Gideon? "Let's whittle this down a little bit. Let's whittle it down *a lot!*" And finally came down to - was it 300? And because of the way they drank water, and they were chosen. Awesome! See, we've known a long time that's for us. That story! That story was for God's Church at the end-time. There are a lot of stories through scripture that have been inspiring to people through time, but that story was for us, to be fulfilled on a different plane, not a physical one.

And so there were too many. God allowed an Apostasy so that one of the greatest, *some of the greatest lessons ever* that mankind can learn could be drawn from that and what happened to a Church of that many people who fell asleep, who were spewed out of God's mouth, scattered. What we have lived is *awesome!* I mean, really is awesome! Painful? Hurtful? Stressful? All the things anybody that's experienced it from the beginning to the end, gone through a lot. Wouldn't trade it for... I wouldn't dream of trading it for anything you offered. Nothing! Nothing, nothing, *nothing* compares to the *awesomeness* of what's in front of us and what God has made of us.

[Verse 7] Who are you, O great mountain? Who are you? What are you? Do you know what it's talking about? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! "Who are you, O great mountain that became lifted up with pride, rich and increased with goods. Look at yourself, what you have done. You became lukewarm! You didn't treasure what I gave to you. Instead, you began to look to yourself and look upon yourself, how great you were, how great your knowledge is, how important you are," whatever it might be in what happened in Laodicea and during that period of time to the *Worldwide Church of God*. "Who are you, O great mountain? You are going to become a plain, before Zerubbabel." "You're going to be flattened out and come to nothing." Why? "Not by might, nor by power, *but by My spirit,*" says God Almighty. Because God's going to show He has to do this and He doesn't need many to do it, to set the example, to dumbfound the world, to show what He's going to do with a small, little group. Awesome! Awesome! "Who has despised the day of small things?" Who has looked down upon it? Who has not esteemed it like it should be esteemed? This period of time should be esteemed in a matter of *awe* of what God has given to us and what's before us. Because we haven't even done the work yet that's still in front of us, obviously.

"Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain." "You're going to be flattened out." So, something that some have had to experience. We've had to experience, those who were a part of that period of time had to experience what happened, and saw what happened to something that was so large, so great, had so much potential, to do what it did.

Interesting word here, "Zerubbabel": "Sown in *Babylon!*" "*Sown in Babylon.*" And so God did sow some individuals in a period of time that became nothing but massive confusion and made us something that we couldn't have become unless it had happened that way. See? I experienced things I would never have done, and God, because of God's spirit, in the very beginning when those things happened with the Apostasy and began to do some writing of things - that I am not a writer. I don't have to kid myself. I am not deceived in that in one iota. And wrote some things that began to turn in a different direction one upon another because of what was happening in here, because of what God was doing,

because of what He was showing, what had happened to us, "sown in Babylon." You talk about a third of the Church that went back into a Protestant world, a third of the Church that just gave up, was so discouraged because they couldn't believe this could be God's Church anymore because nothing like this could happen to God's Church! Nothing like that could happen to God's Church! Not understanding, "Whoa! Wait a minute. Who's at fault here? God? Is God to keep everybody in a certain place? Is it God's responsibility to make people so that they're not lukewarm? Did He not warn again and again and again, and especially starting in 1978 and talking about, "Are half of you even listening? Are half of you getting it?" And then toward the end, "I don't know if 10% of you get it!" That's what Mr. Armstrong said. And he said it with a lot more power than that. Because that's what he said, "I don't know if 10%..." And you know what? I believe that he was square on the moment he said that! 10%, maybe, who were left, who were still a part of Philadelphia attitude, and 90% that were already Laodicean. Because Laodicea came fast. And as soon as Mr. Armstrong died it was here. It was here. Philadelphia was over. Awesome! *Awesome!*

And then to experience what we experienced during that period of time? Incredible! Incredible - Incredible - Incredible! Babylon - Babylon - Babylon! It just got worse and worse and worse until finally the Apostasy occurred - and then massive Babylon! I hope we understand that. I hope we grasp what happened to a lot of people who were once a part of God's Church sitting down Sabbath by Sabbath, just like you are today, listening to sermons. Sometimes just listening, hearing, but that's about as far as it went. Heard the words. Incredible what can happen to us spiritually sometimes.

So again, "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain." That's what some are going to see - total flattening out of something that was so, so large, so great, able to do a great... a work, if you want to talk about a work, become absolutely nothing. Nothing!

And he shall bring forth the headstone, thereof, with shouting, saying, Grace! Grace unto it! I'm inspired by this. I can't tell you how inspired I am by that because, again, it says so much. It says what we've already been going through and what we're getting ready to go through. We get to see that, the headstone—Jesus Christ brought forth on this earth. We live in that period of time. This is the period of time it's talking about. We get to be a part of that, helping to make that become a reality. Because there's a work to be done for God to bring forth the headstone to this earth.

That stone? I remember it on TV. You remember that picture, that some of you saw it, and they were talking about the big statue? You know, Nebuchadnezzar's statue, the dream? And then out of the sky comes this great big giant cube and smashes the feet of it and it crumbles, depicting, showing what was talked about in that dream. And here it was something that was done on TV on a screen you could watch. I still have that vision in my mind. That's what it's talking about. The headstone, when it comes, bringing down all nations, bringing an end to man's rule, establishing God's rule, the Kingdom of God over this earth. Awesome how blessed we are to know what we know, to see what we see. And we not only see it spiritually we're going to see this physically. Well, some will see it spiritually. I guess you see, you see. It'll still be a physical thing that happens in the world.

But going on.... So, anyway, again here talking about, "Then shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, saying, Grace! Grace!" So this word "grace" here comes directly from a word that means, "mercy." And I hope that means something. Because, you see, been blessed to write a book, and the primary focus of that book is God's mercy. I hope you understand that. It's about God's mercy. Because the world was judged to be condemned with far greater destruction, far more massive destruction to where there wouldn't have been a whole lot left, brethren.

We had the opportunity on the way down here, wanted to go by and see it. I didn't even realize it was only about, maybe, 20 minutes from where we live, a replica of the ark. \$102 million dollars to build. Awesome! And you can't help but walk through that... Now, they have a few little things wrong here and there because they have some cages inside with some little dinosaurs and stuff. But they don't understand. But there are parts of it that are really interesting. I mean, they did an incredible job of something that is probably very, very, very close to certain things that were done and how they were done and how certain animals were taken care of and the process of cleaning up after them. Because you know, it was a pretty big clean-up job, and how certain cages and how it was funnelled down, the excrement and so forth, and how this was planned and worked with to make it more sanitary and so forth. Because you're talking about something that's going to hold... Anyway, I don't have to go into that. But anyway, it's there. And a lot of work! And actually they had a lot more room for a lot more animals because when you get rid of, when you realize the dinosaurs weren't there there was a lot more room they could place other animals. But anyway...

But what an awesome thing to drive up out there and on top of a hill here and you see this massive structure. And you can't help but be moved by realizing we live in the days of Noah again and what's going to happen to this earth and why it has to happen, and why it had to happen then. But *now* massive numbers of people can be saved this time to live into a new age. And that's what we're a part of. And that's a part of the message that we're able to be a part of. But you know what, it's people's choices still. It's up to their choices. Will you listen to God? If you will listen God is giving the opportunity and the blessing He will listen. It's awesome! It really is! And so it's about God's mercy.

So when I read something like this I am moved, because I know what it's talking about, and we're living it. We're right in the, smack-dab in the middle of it! Incredible! "Bring forth the headstone with shouting," excitement, "saying, Grace, Grace unto it!" Before it ever arrives, mercy, mercy to this world if they'll receive it, and the mercy that's coming to this earth to change it from the ways of man to the ways of God, to live under a different way. What an incredible thing. Anyway, awesomely inspiring.

Verse 8—Moreover, the word of the Eternal came into me, saying: The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, so it's God's house. It's talking about the Church. But it's really a little bit more than that when we understand the timing and the timeframe here of what's being discussed. His hands shall also finish *it*. So it's about God's work and what He's doing and what He's going to fulfill and those through whom He has sent. And so that's why I believe this with all my being. That's why I'm not worried about the ticker. We haven't been concerned about it, period; not

in the slightest iota. Not one little bit. Because I also know that if something does happen to it God's work goes on. But I also know where we are in God's plan, and that's inspiring.

So, anyway, this is about a work that's to be done, to be finished, to be accomplished. And we *ALL* share in it. That's why we talked about, in the last couple of sermons, about work. Mr. Armstrong said, "*Get behind this thing!*" He was desiring the Church to get behind something that the Church was letting down in at that time. The Church was, especially within the ministry and what was happening there and Mr. Armstrong getting older and so forth and how they looked upon him as an old man, "He's going to die soon and who's going to lead the Church then? Who are going to be the two witnesses then?" That's the kind of garbage and stuff that people were talking about! Ministers were talking about it. You think, "Did you leave something out of the picture here? Where is God in all this? You don't have to be concerned about it. God will do what God is going to do and you don't have to work it out and you don't have to decide who it is you're going to start backing, who it is you're going to try to rub up next to in order to get favoritism!" Because sometimes human nature does that. "I want to be close to them because then I receive something special back from them." No, that's just repulsive, okay? But that's what human nature does to be recognized, to be seen.

And so they want an in, because if I can get close to you and maybe you'll give me something. And that's what was happening within the ministry. Sick! Perverted! Sick-sick-sick! How sick could it be? Anyway, human nature is just sick. And that's what we have to repent of. But we have to see it first in ourselves. We have to acknowledge it in ourselves and ask God to clean up our minds. That's a beautiful thing. We can become something different. We don't have to remain the same - selfish creatures that we are by nature. That's just the way we are. We acknowledge it. Yes, that's my nature. But I'm thankful that there is something else now, that there's a spirit alive transforming and changing that thinking. And I see fruit. I see things that are being produced that are not of me but are of something that's been transformed in me that comes from God and requires the continual presence of God. See, it's a matter of how we think. And that's the excitement of it. We can grow. We change. We can learn to do things far, far better. And that's an ever growing process.

And so it goes on to say, "Zerubbabel has laid the foundation of this house," speaking of a... And you know what's unique is that it's about something that follows Philadelphia and Laodicea. It goes into a period of time, even in some of this, where it's a matter of something that's unique to itself because it is a remnant Church. And that remnant Church wasn't to be a part of Philadelphia, that remnant Church wasn't to be a part of Laodicea. In time it was to become itself, what it was intended to be so long ago that God had already planned to do something very unique on the earth.

Verse 10—For who has despised the day of small things? Awesome! That's what it's talking about! We're little. We're small! And people make fun of that because they have no understanding. They have no understanding of what God is doing. And sometimes if we aren't careful we can begin to think in similar lines, "Well, we're just getting smaller and smaller. Isn't that kind of a bad thing?" No, not if we're becoming stronger and stronger. I welcome becoming smaller and smaller if we are becoming stronger and stronger. I welcome that. I welcome it, the fact that there's going to be

greater unity as a result of becoming smaller and smaller - bring it on! Bring it on if that's what it takes. If there is other that is pulling away, that is hurting, that is weakening it, that is... Then it's like anything in life. It's the lack in my own life. If there are things in my - of which there are, all of us, weaknesses, things that need to be repented of, help me to see them, because the more that's gotten rid of the stronger I become, the better I become, the more at-one with God I become, the more that God can do in and through me! And that's the way we are as a Church. The stronger we become, the more cleansed we become as a Body, the more we yield ourselves to God's purpose, the more that God can use us, and use us in situations that are going to happen in the future here. You're going to have opportunity in things that you don't grasp yet because you're not there yet, because you haven't lived that yet. When you have tonnes and tonnes of people out here who want to *know*, "What do you know? You were a part of that? Tell me! Share with me! What is it you've exper...? I don't understand these things." Simple things that you get to share with them. And you have no idea what you have coming. You have no idea the opportunities you're going to have. And it isn't about you, and it isn't about... And you won't feel that at that time, because of what's going on around you. You'll be humbled. And if a person wouldn't be, then God's not going to use them and He's not going to use those opportunities that would otherwise be there.

So we have some awesome times in front of us, brethren, we really do. If we hold fast, if we seek to become stronger and seek to become more at-one with God in unity with God He's going to give us more. It's just coming.

For who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice and shall see the plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel. Not "with." But again here, there are certain words here that just aren't there, and they change the thinking if you're not careful. ...**in the hands of Zerubbabel, of those seven, those seven, those seven here talking about, the eyes of the Eternal, which run to and fro over the whole earth.** There are scriptures that talk about this and the spirit of God and talks about in spiritual terms that I don't comprehend. But it's about God who sees everything. It's about God who for the purpose of what's being shown here, especially for what's being shown here of the things that are seen. Just like within the Church, God sees everything. And God is focusing more at this point in time of seeing through that spirit and that power to bring certain things to light. Awesome, what's being spoken of here, because this is about the Church. It's about God's Church and what God's spirit is doing in and through the Church at this time.

So, again here, speaking of **the eyes of the Eternal, which run to and fro on the whole earth.** Everywhere where God's Church, where God's people are, that's where God's spirit is working. And that's where these things are at work in the lives of people, because nothing remains hidden from God. And this is a period of time where those things are going to be illuminated that otherwise are hidden.

See, every era of the Church there are people who have hidden things in their lives, who have not lived in spirit and in truth and where certain things haven't been addressed. And every era has experienced some of those kinds of things to one degree or another. And we just happen to live in a

time where God's focus is very sharp now, more than ever before, upon what's remaining - the remnant - and those who are brought in to share in a remnant body. And it's a spiritual matter.

This word "plummet." I want to take a look at this word, "plummet." I mentioned this again here last Sabbath, but again, a unique word, the two Hebrew words, the two words that are used here. The first comes from the root meaning "to build," but it means... and more to do with stones that are being hewn as stones; in other words, shaped into place. We look at ourselves, we talk about all the pieces that need to be chopped off, that have to be chiselled out of our lives so that we will reflect that or become that which is intended. And we recognize that there is a lot of that that has to take place in our lives, a lot of chipping away that has to take place to get rid of the things that shouldn't be there.

The second word comes from the root word that means, "to separate or divide," and used to mean, "dross, and a lot of times for tin," less valuable metal, that's in this case here is not like silver and gold that they desire to keep. So it's being taken off the top when something is heated up, speaking of silver or gold. So the dross comes to the top. Words are important that are used in scripture. Names are important. Just like "Preparing for the Kingdom of God," it has meaning in it. And just like this word for "Zerubbabel." There are things God gives that has meaning in it and reveals and reflects so many of the names He gives. They're there for a purpose to reflect what He's doing and what His plan is. Over and over again you'll find that. Just like in the name "Israel," if you will. We can go through name after name after name.

Anyway, we're going to focus more closely on what is meant by this "plummet." And it has everything to do with this ongoing process that involves the continuing measuring of the temple. It's a continuing process. In the beginning I candidly thought it was just for a small, that period of time, 3½ years, and then it would be over. But God soon began to reveal, no, no, no, it's going all the way to the end. This continual measuring and the focus is going to become sharper as we go along, a cleansing of the temple, a purifying of the temple, and a measuring of the temple, if you will.

And so in the beginning primarily talking about different leaders, different ministers and so forth that God took care of very quickly; brought things to the surface so they could be seen. Certain things happened in the Church to bring things to the surface so they would reflect what was in them, so that they could be made known who they were. And so God allowed those things to take place. I think of the other day, talking to someone, and they mentioned how that someone had mentioned to them, an individual that was with us from the beginning pretty much, and he mentioned how that there was a minister (woman) who had been ordained. And he said, "'Such and such' should never have been ordained!" Now, if he hadn't already been, on that day he was cut off from God's spirit. He sinned a great sin. I hope you understand that. Because he judged something against God, against something that if even God hadn't inspired it directly it was something that was done on earth that God looked upon Himself and sealed - okay? -if you will, as far as there are decisions that God allows and certain things that have nothing to do with... sometimes it's a matter of administration, or whatever, sometimes. And if it's bound on earth it's bound in heaven.

And that's why a lot of people didn't understand things that Mr. Armstrong did. Something as simple as - I've used this example before - make-up. Now, that's a big thing to get excited about, isn't it. Make-up, whether somebody wears make-up, whether women should wear make-up in God's Church. And yet we lived through that where it was changed three times for sure back and forth. And each time people were judged by God, by the spirit of God, by the power of God Almighty as to what their response was to that. Their spiritual state was going to depend upon their response every time. And it was a *BIG* thing in God's Church! It was a big thing within the ministry! It was a big thing in people's lives. It wasn't small. And it revealed, which is hard for people to grasp, something on a spiritual plane. It really revealed... something as simple like that on a physical plane revealed something that was happening on a spiritual plane that was far, far greater.

And, anyway, things happen sometimes in God's Church to try us, to see what we're going to do. 2012 was a big one for God's Church, because that year wasn't going to make your life better no matter what happened. 2019 is not going to *solve* your drama, if you have drama. Because that's spiritual. How you think, how you live toward others, how you deal with others in life is you. It's who you are. The decisions, the choices you make, they're yours. They're yours alone, nobody else's. And so how you deal with certain things, a year, the return of Christ doesn't change that. You think everything's going to change just because Jesus Christ is here, just because 144,000 have been established? I tell you, absolutely *nooooo*. See, the day before he comes you're going to be a certain person, and if you're here the day after he comes you're still going to be the *same person* unless you happen to be one of the 144,000. Then there is going to be a big change, because from that point on you have God in you through time - age-lasting life, and that life always in you and you in it in a spiritual plane that we experience now in physical bodies. Awesome!

Anyway, that word "plummet," talking about measuring. The word "plummet" is used here in Zechariah. It contains all the meaning that involves the building of this end-time Church as each stone is being shaped, and it also contains the meaning of separating or dividing out the dross, or the tin, as it's described. And so we're stones that are being made, molded, fashioned by God if we yield ourselves to that process. But we can also be dross. And you know what? The choice is ours. What do you want to be? And I believe, as a whole, everybody really wants to be stones that God is chiseling away at forming and molding to fit, to fit in a specific place in time. And so we have to yield ourselves to that process.

And so we're going through a continuing measuring of the temple, if you will, a temple that's being highly refined at this time. And so this matter of trials and tests and things happening in life are going to bring things to the surface one way or another. There are things happening out here that are bringing things to the surface in people's lives. They already did for the ones in the ministry who went by the wayside and showed themselves for who they truly were and what they were at the moment in time, and God told them, "No. You're not going to have part in this," and made certain that things came to the surface. And some of those are kind of dumbfounding how they came to the

surface. And God said, "No." And they went by the wayside or were put out and made to go by the wayside.

And as time has gone along, and especially in the last few months God has given a renewed focus. And a reason for the sermons that are being given - to warn, but to encourage, but to warn those who are not doing what they should be doing, "Get behind this thing! Get behind it! Get on with your life! Become productive spiritually and physically in your life! Do what you need to do!" This is not a time to coast and just kind of wait around for 2019. "I'm just going to kind of *sliiiiide* in, see?" Oh, no, you're not going to slide in.

Isaiah 1. Because it talks about dross here. And I'm really kind of amazed at some of the things, and then you go back and read certain things in a specific context with a specific focus, and this is one of those that we have a specific focus of what God is doing right now. We have every power and blessing in front of us, to grab a hold of it. And that's all we have to do, just grab a hold with all of our being and realize it's a fight. And we need to grasp that even more so, that you've got to be in the fight. There is no coasting. There is no taking it easy in this - not even in our physical lives let alone our spiritual lives. There is no coasting! You've got to *fight*! You've got to *pour yourself* into this! And God wants to know that anyway, "Do you *want* this? And if you do, how *much* do you want it?" Do you *grasp* what's in front of you, what He's offered you? And if you do, you'll fight for it! That's why all the examples about military and fighting are so important, putting on the whole armour of God.

These things are exceedingly important for us to grasp because this isn't some cake-walk. It was never meant to be easy! You've got a hard life? Join the club! Whatever it is you're given to bear, whatever it is you're given to carry as a part of your life, to make the changes within that period of time, you have opportunity to make changes. You have opportunity to grow in that period of time. That's the most important thing you can receive. It's not about all the physical things of life. That's just a part, a means to an end. What's spiritual is what's important. What's in our mind is what's important. What God is offering us is what's important.

You know, as much as I'm crying out I know there are going to be some who still are going to stroll. And that hurts. To think that after hearing all these things there are those who are just not going to make changes in their life, who are not going to throw themselves into the race, or into the fight. Fighting! If you're not fighting, you're not going to make it and you're not going to be offered this to the end.

You've got to grasp that what you've been offered is the greatest thing that human beings can be offered. It's the most awesome - especially in this end-time - you're being offered the most awesome thing that any human being can be offered. And how you look upon it and how you address it reflects how you think about God. It reflects your attitude and your mind toward the Great God who started drawing you in the beginning. And if you don't treasure it and you don't want to fight for it, why should He give it to you? And the truth is He will not do so - absolutely will not do so. You come under a greater judgment. And so either we fight for it... See, and that's the difference. If you fight for it,

God will help you fight. God will help you win. God will help you come through this. God will give you strength. God will help you learn the things that need to be learned. He'll bring you through whatever you have... whatever suffering there might be, God will bring you through it. And all you have to do is hold on and cry out to God for the help to do it.

But if you don't throw yourself into it - you kind of want it, but you don't want to do the work involved to get there, you're really kind of, "I want that. I want what's offered." But you're not going to work at it, you're not going to apply yourself, that goes against God's way. It goes against God's law. God works! Jesus Christ made it clear. He said, "I work and my Father works." He set the example at creation of how we're to live our lives. So it's physical and it's spiritual. It's not lazy. It's not lethargic. It's not coasting. It's not Laodicea. And all we have to do is grab a hold of it. And if we don't who are we, 1 in 14,000,000, that don't treasure what we have? Who are we if we don't treasure it? We not only won't receive it, we come under a curse big time.

Isaiah 1:2—Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Eternal has spoken. So these are things that are, in one respect, said to a physical nation, to Israel, especially even toward the end-time and what God's going to do, but they're for us too on a spiritual plane. There are lessons of things we can learn from in here as well.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth! For the Eternal has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. Now, we can understand that about a physical Israel, but boy, oh, boy, you talk about a spiritual Israel? I think of the exact things we've just gone through, Laodicea - Philadelphia and Laodicea and all that God had given to the Church and then what the Church did with all. "I have nourished and brought up children." "Look what I have given them through Mr. Armstrong and the truths that were restored in the Church and the strength of the Church," and all the programs we had and the size of the churches and the opportunities that youth had and basketball teams and volleyball teams and cheer leaders and youth programs and youth camps and all the things to help families to nurture up and bring up children within an environment that is unique and beautiful, and then how it was used and how it was misused and the things that took place as time went along and how it became worse and worse spiritually as far as the spirit is concerned and people not grasping really what they had. Sad.

"I have brought up children and they have rebelled against Me." I can't help but think about the ministry and what happened. You talk about rebellion! You talk about that individual that made the comment he did, "That person should never have been ordained!" I think, "Who do you think you are, you who have been ordained all these years yourself and had opportunity to serve in God's Church, had opportunities, awesome opportunities in God's Church! And look what you're saying! And look what you're doing! And look what you're finding fault with! And you have the audacity, you have the nerve, you have the *guts* to say something like that before God Almighty?! You're going to talk to God like that?! That, 'You have *no right* to ordain this woman, that this woman should bear your spirit in an ordination to serve Your church?'" Whew! Those are shoes I wouldn't want to be in. And I think what he gave up. Not going to be there.

You see, there are some people when they do certain things they're not going to have opportunity until the Great White Throne. And they give up such an incredible opportunity even to live on into a new age. That's why there are 7,000 who are marked by name, by God. Because of that very thing! I think of the change in administration from king David to his son Solomon and certain things that David wanted to make sure of when he passed them along to Solomon. And I believe one individual he gave specific command, "You need to kill him," because of what he had done, even though he served David all those years. Because of certain other things he had done he said, "Put him to death when I'm gone." He couldn't do it. Didn't deserve it. We don't grasp sometimes what we've been given and that's a big mistake. It's a focus, a vision.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth! For the Eternal has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. To turn from God, to turn away from God, to turn from what God has given to us. **The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.** Now, you know, looking at this on a physical plane with physical Israel, that's one thing. But I think about a spiritual Israel and I think how much worse is it? In the beginning, when first being called - I kind of look back in kind of a humorous way now when I hear these comments being made in the Church and you think... and people would talk about, "How could they have done that? God took them through the Red Sea and they get on the other side and they start murmuring and complaining! Can you believe that? Can you believe that people would do something like that after they saw something so awesome? Saw Pharaoh's army destroyed and Pharaoh destroyed in the Red Sea and saw something that's so unnatural, so powerful that took place to deliver them and they get on the other side and they start complaining? Oh those murmuring and complaining Israelites!" It's like, "I wouldn't have done that if I'd been there." That's what we're saying, those attitudes. And that's kind of the way some conversation in the Church existed. Because you think about that, "How could they be so hard-hearted? How could they? How could they see certain things and carnally, physically have that kind of response?"

That was *mild* compared to what the Church did. That was baby stuff. That's not even a big thing compared to what the Church did in Laodicea, to come up to the Apostasy, to do...? Because they didn't have God's spirit. They didn't have the ability to see and grasp things on a spiritual plane. They're just carnal, just carnal human beings. It's easy to understand why they did what they did. But people who have God's spirit dwelling in them 10-20-30-40 years, to turn against the truth? To go back to the world? To go back to Christmas and Easter? Now, that's the shocker! That's the scary one. And yet human beings can make choices that lead to that. Because, you see, not a one of those individuals made that choice at the last moment. There were things they had been doing for perhaps even for many, many years, ten years, twelve years or more that were kind of secretive and hidden in their lives and things that they were doing that they weren't fighting anymore because they'd become complacent in the fighting in the battle against self and their choices in life. And when the time came, when the test came they couldn't stand. Because they'd already been cut off from God's spirit, the flow of God's spirit.

You can't afford that in your life! That's why we cry out to God. That's why you should cry out to God every day, "Father, I *want*, I *need* your spirit in me. I know I have to have it every day. I need help. I want to be at-one with You. I *want* things that are not right in my life and my thinking and my mind to be revealed so I can "see" myself, so I can repent of them and make changes, so I can become more at-one..." That should be an over... that should be one of the greatest drives and desires that we have, to become more at-one, in agreement, in unity with God Almighty. And that means a battle. And we're the battle. We're the battle! We are! We are the ones who resist. That's why it's the greatest miracle of God, because we resist His holy spirit. That's just our natural human nature. We've got this battle going on inside of our being. And the more battles you fight, the more you conquer, the stronger you become.

So, "My people do not consider." Sometimes we just don't think things through like we should. We don't think the end result. We just let life happen. We live through drama, we let drama get to us. And we like... After a while, we kind of like the drama. We like the things that are going wrong. We like the battles. That's perverted! But that's what happens. And people get caught up in them and it consumes their thinking.

I can't stand drama. I've gotten to the point where I can't stand to *hear* drama. Now, if people are having a battle and a fight in their life, a difficult thing in their life and they want help and advice and guidance to deal with, to battle, to know how to address certain... That's different! Because you're trying to address the drama! You're trying to control and bring it to a point where there is no drama. Now, there may be drama going on all around you, and there is, but you don't have to be a part of it. Choices. Choices. Choices. Do you choose to be a part of drama? Because that's a choice.

And I don't know a few, I know *many*, too many in God's Church who get involved in drama! They get involved. And a lot of it, much of it, too much of it has to do with not obeying God! Too much of it has to do with not obeying God and learning how to love others, learning how to forgive, learning how to put things away. You have a choice whether to forgive someone. And you don't even have the right to forgive them anyway, if you understand the truth about it all. We have no right to hold anything against anyone. And when we do, we sin. And that sin cuts us off from God. And we can condemn someone else and find fault with somebody else and what they're doing wrong and excuse our wrong, stinking, rotten behaviour that we're not responding right to them and they're the problem, and blah, blah, blah, and then all of a sudden drama-drama-drama-drama! Drama-drama-drama-drama! People get involved in drama and they're fighting and they're arguing and they're not... they have conflict and they don't have peace. And you think, "Well, get your life right with God and you won't have the drama. Repent, you won't have the drama." Get rid of it. Repent! See yourself. Look at yourself. Accept who you are. Accept your choices. They're your choices. They're not my choices. I don't like it. I don't like to hear that. I could do without it. It's a wearisome thing to me.

I understand why God says about some things now, "It's a wearisome thing to Me." That's what He's talking about. It's a wearisome thing, wearisome life, what you're living. It just wears me out! What

do you want? Oh, choices, choices, choices. Tell you what, pray to God about the choices you make. Ask God to help you to see choices you make, think about the choices you make - to accept responsibility for the choices you make, to recognize no one else makes them but you.

It's amazing how often people justify something, seek to justify their wrong choices. There is no justification for what you chose. You want to try to... It happens within the ministry sometimes, "Yes, but..." and then... "but 'so and so' said and I've seen them do..." I don't care! It's what are you doing? What's your choice? That's what's important. We're amazing as human beings, we really are, with carnal human nature and how we think and how easily we try to deflect something that comes at us. But you know why? We're protecting self. Vanity. Pride. Because we see ourselves... We want others to see us in a certain way. We don't have problems and faults. We're living good. We're doing what's right before God. Give me a break! We all have sin in our life and we have to repent of it. That's what's right before God. He wants to forgive us of our sin but we have to repent of it and just get rid of it! And then we're happier, we're better, and life gets much happier. It really does! It's awesome! It's how we deal with it. That's how you deal with other people. You can't blame someone else for coming at you and then you giving in and getting upset at them and firing back at them and thinking how bad they are to treat you that way and blah, blah, blah.

I've had a lot of mistreatment in my life, and most of it in the last four years. And I don't hold anything against anyone, period. Okay? Because it's just wrong thinking. You just live life right with God. You strive to live it right with God. You don't care about what others think and say about you. You can't! Why? Why would you? Why should you? Why should you? We are what we are.

I don't find it hard telling people, "Yeah, I've been in prison the last three years." You know, that's the main thing when the interviews (if we have some of those come along again) that's what they're going to want to go to. Say, "Where were you?" "Over in Terre-Haute." "Why were you over there?" I'm not going to have a hard time with that. I know exactly what they're thinking and I know why they're doing it. I feel for them. Because as long as people think that way they're not going to be able to accept what God is offering them. I hope that people will begin to accept and begin to... "I couldn't... Man, that's pretty tough. That's pretty tough. I can understand how that's happened to people before and I understand why and this world is really messed up. I understand what's coming. I see what's coming. I see what's happening. We can't govern ourselves." Incredible, the age we live in.

So what's so bad out there that someone's done to you or said about you, or to you that you've got to let it bother you so much? Does it matter? Can you have mercy upon them? Can you have patience with them? Wait till the time they're called? Because they can't help what they're doing, but you can. You can! See, you have the ability to control *your* thinking, to be in control of your thinking and your response to them. And that's what God expects of us. He wants us to be in control, to gain control, to learn control so that we don't respond to people in a bad way, so that we don't take things personally, so that we don't get upset and respond in a negative way, a harsh way, a bad way. Because, you see, that's just wrong to do that. And when we do it we have to repent of it quickly, when we see ourselves doing something like that.

So again here, **Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Eternal, they have provoked the Holy One unto anger. They have gone away backward.** Now, you can read that about Israel and that's an easy one to see. Oh, that's obvious. But in the Church I've seen it a lot, and it's far worse judgment upon someone once they've been begotten of God's spirit to turn against God, to do some of these things. And yet I've seen it over and over and over again where people have lived wrong for long, too long a period of time in all kinds of imaginable things.

Taking drugs! If you want to participate in a drug culture, you don't belong in God's Church. Okay? And I think there may be somebody listening out there today, one, two, or three who are taking drugs - *and you don't belong in God's Church!* Save me the time! Either repent and get right with God or just get out of here and don't leave it to me to do. Because I have no qualms about doing it, because I know the job I have right now. And that's what I'm doing. That's what this sermon's about. And I have no qualms today of telling individuals very clearly, "Get this right in your life or get out!" I've already sent out emails like that. *Make it right or get out!* Because you're hurting the Body. You're pulling down the Body. You're not living right. You're out there in the courtyard but you're not coming into the Temple like you should be. You're not examining your life. You're not repenting like you should be. This is the time for the cleansing of the temple - Get out! It's simple.

I have that as a job to do and it doesn't bother me one iota to have to do it, because I rejoice in the stronger body that remains, that is *desirous* of fighting. And I want to fight side by side with those who are behind this thing, who are a part of this, who want to fight, who want to fight themselves and their own nature. I rejoice in those things when I see young people, you know... I think of the world out here today. It's a lot sicker than when I was called and I had some horrible battles coming out of it. And I knew I had to move from where I was. I had to leave the college environment that I was in and go to another part of the State to be around people I didn't know because I knew if I stayed there *I'd get pulled back into it!* And if you want this way of life you have to separate yourself fully from this world. It was hard. It wasn't easy. But blessed awesomely, incredibly. And that's what God will do, He'll give you what you need to help you need to make the changes.

And so I feel for young people today, mightily so, because the things that are out here in this world that pull at you, your battles are far more, in that respect, around you than what I had when I was called. But God will give you what you need to fight those things. See? Truly! So fight them! He wants to give you His power. That's a beautiful thing to understand. Because He wants you to be something at the end of this that He can use to say, "Look at my son. Look at my daughter. Look at what they have lived and what they lived through to be here today."

You don't grasp the kind of honor that's going to be shown to you in the Millennium. You don't recognize the kind of honor that you're going to have because of what you lived through faithfully during this period of time. You really can't grasp it yet. Because, for one, I intend to be there to give it to you. Okay? My wife will be there to help give it to you. The Harrell's will be there to help give it to you, see? You think they don't love you? You don't think they want to be there to show the honor?

Awesome! You think one of the 144,000 coming around your little community isn't going to be noticed? You have no idea, no idea what that's going to mean to people in the world who are alive at that time and see such things. Come into a small community or a large community, or wherever it is you might be living at that time, say, "Yeah, we're close. We spent time together. We spent good time together. Let me tell you about 'this.' Now, maybe they don't want me to tell you, but I'm going to tell you about it anyway." And the biggest thing, the battle for you at that time will be to remain humble about it all. And you will because of what you've experienced, what you've gone through, and what you know at that point in time.

So, please understand, there are things beyond this that you're only starting to see a little bit right now. By the time the Feast gets here, hopefully we'll see even more - more and more. You hold on tight, you fight the battles, you seek to be at-one with God, you fight against the troubles and trials of your life and what's on the other side of this is awesome, so awesome.

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Eternal, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger. They have gone away backward. Don't want that to happen. I *hate* to write the letters. I don't enjoy it, but I do it because it's needful. And I'm more to the point today than I ever have been in my life. And a lot of that is because of what I've gone through and because of what I've seen happen, and because of what I see needs to be addressed, and what I know has to be accomplished here in the next few years to prepare for what we're to prepare for.

So those words of Mr. Armstrong are for today. When he said, "Get behind this thing," that means a lot more than we really, fully grasp yet. But you can drink in more of that and you'll see more of that as we continue to go forward.

Verse 5—Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. Well, that's this nation today. That's Israel today for sure. And there was a time that was true in God's Church, from the top to the bottom. Sickness. That's why God had to spew it all out of His mouth. We had to have an awakening, be shocked, shaken, and sometimes it takes that to waken people out of sleep.

Verse 6—From the sole of the foot even to the head, *there is* no soundness in it, *but* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores that have not been closed neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Your country *is* desolate. In other words, meaning "in devastation." Your cities *are* burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence; and *it is* a devastation, as overthrown by strangers. Now, I'll tell you what. This is a picture of the way things are turning right now, of what's happening in the world, what's happening in society more and more and how human beings are taking care of certain areas.

There are certain areas that are just a shambles. They shouldn't be that way. South of Chicago. Sad. Pathetic. Horrible. Young people having to grow up almost forced into becoming a part of a gang if they want to survive. They feel that pressure, you know. If you don't carry a gun are you going to survive?

I had one individual share with me a story, lived in south Chicago, who because of some of the things he experienced made him weird, him losing mind, gone, and prejudices and feelings towards certain peoples, other peoples, and so distorted. When they came to get him they took 50 some law enforcement officers because it was such a big thing to them in their mind to go pick him up. And he had a brother in the south side of Chicago that wanted a gun because of all the gangs and things going on, to protect himself. And he wouldn't give it to him because he didn't want him to get caught up in those things even though he was caught upon them himself. Tattooed from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. Well, maybe not on the very bottom, but it was from here all the way around and all the way down. Well, I didn't see it all, but anyway... but he had them. And he said, "I didn't give him the gun." And he says he regrets it to this day because that week he was killed in a drive-by. So he feels bad that he didn't give him a gun that he could have at least tried to protect himself.

That's the kind of world people live in in a lot of major cities. Devastation. Shouldn't be that way. People against people. Groups against groups. It's the way it was where I was, different ones that have these different groups. There are certain groups and they stay together and they learn to hate others. They learn it! It becomes a part of life and a part of thinking. And you think, "What a horrible thing!" And even in the Great White Throne how hard it's going to be to heal minds, of people that are so deeply entrenched with bias and hatred. And I understand how it develops, but it doesn't make it right. But that's the world people live in today. Sick world. And that's what God is talking about here.

And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard. And who is the "daughter of Zion." ...as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and a besieged city. Ah, the Church, those whom God is working. And so I think about what happened, again, that led up to the Apostasy. And it can happen in individual lives so we have to be careful, don't we? We have to fight the fight.

Except the Eternal of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have become as Sodom, and would be like unto Gomorrah. Judgment. 2012. And this is talking about far worse than that, see? If it wasn't for what God had done... Noah? The world destroyed? Only that family brought through? Incredible what's happened through time and the mercy of God to give us this time.

(Verse 10... Oh, my, is it 4:15? Oh, we should stop there. Yes, we should. Oh, yes, I'm afraid so. I know, I know... But you know what I also know? There's at least a Part 2.) So with that we're going to close here today. But there is so much here. It really is amazing the time we have been called to, the opportunities we have in God's Church. And fight for this way of life, brethren! That's my cry - fight,

fight, fight for this way of life! What we're being offered is so awesome, so incredible. So, anyway, watch your choices this week. Think about your choices.

With that we'll end the sermon there.