

Hold Fast, Fight & Wait on God

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Last Great Day -pm - 2016

This final sermon on the Last Great Day of this Feast season is entitled, *Hold Fast and Fight!*

This sermon is *not* entitled *A Time To Be Sobered*, which was the name given to the sermon on the Last Great Day of the Feast in 2011. Thinking back about that particular sermon and thinking about giving this one here, I think about how that sermon proved to be so shocking to quite a few in God's Church that it was followed up by a series entitled, *Sobered Indeed*.

It isn't bad to be sobered from time to time. God uses that in a very powerful way to help us to be able to get to a point where we can sharpen the focus that we need to have as His people, and especially at that time because of what we were going to go through and didn't know why we were going through it. What we were living through was a matter of faith on our part, a matter of following where we were being led and what we believed. And we lived it. And it was an incredible thing that took place and transpired in the Church, and was a very powerful tool to lead into a phase that followed later, which was the sixth period of the time that we recognize as a period of time for the end, that is a 1260 day period, that sixth period of that 1260 days that's prophetic for us to understand the countdown that's taking place.

And the beginning of that was what was in Revelation there about the measuring of the temple and all that we've been going through since that time and what began very quickly at that point in time, but we didn't really know what was taking place. But God later revealed it to us, and as He's done so often especially during the end-time here, of showing us what it is that we experienced and we learn from that, and we grow from that. And so, indeed, the need at this particular time, to hold fast and to fight.

We are at a very different time for God's Church. We have been through so much, so very much since the Apostasy in December of 1994. How many of you witnessed that Apostasy? If you are listening to this in Australia, or the U.S. Feast site, go ahead and raise your hands right now. It's good that others see those small numbers of people who witnessed that time. There aren't that many. And so in this particular sermon, as we go through it, we're going to address things that have to do with what this sermon has been entitled, and we're going to reflect back on certain things that we have experienced and where we are and what is ahead of us.

I do want to say that although this sermon is *not* entitled *A Time To Be Sobered*, we always need to be sobered, brethren. We need to be sobered about the state of our lives, of what

this world is like, of what we know is coming, and to constantly be on guard, to be spiritually alert. We've gone through a lot in this past year. Well, I can't help but think of that Bible Study of Mr. Armstrong's, and the seven part series that we went through in that discussing the things about what he had to say in the Bible Study back in 1978 that really applies to the Church now, that we actually went through at the time we did at a time when that focus really is upon the Church right now. Although the Church needed the things that Mr. Armstrong said back then, what he said really applies, as we went through that sermon, really applies more fully to this period of time right now. And that's exciting. That's inspiring to learn things like that, for God to reveal things like that to us. And all the things that we learn as we go through something like that, very inspiring indeed.

But thinking about what he had to say, much of what he did when he came back from the period of time when he went through the illness that he did and the heart attack that he had, I think of him coming back with greater power than ever before and talking about putting the Church back on the right track. And we've been going through some of the same things. We, in one respect, on a spiritual plane, to get on, to make sure we're on the right track. And as Mr. Armstrong said, to "Get *behind* this thing!" Because we're at a point in time where we're pushing forward as never before. The book is out. The book is out and we have an opportunity to back this in a very powerful way, of a message, of what's going to be said and how God's going to use it that we don't even understand yet, that we don't see as of yet.

And so I think of the time we're in right now and I'm so grateful, I'm so thankful that we have gone through what we have, that we have experienced the things that we have in our past. Because, if you go back to the period of 2008 there are some things that we had to learn, or we had to experience, or we needed to experience so that it would help us to go through what was coming later. Now, those things could have come at that time. They were going to come at that particular time, but it wasn't the prime time that God was desiring and molding and fashioning within His people to experience. And God is all powerful and almighty, but He lets us learn through this process. He lets us *share* in it in ways that we're only beginning to touch upon at this time, and have been for a little while now. God is giving us more and more all the time to grasp and to comprehend. And so as we look back I am so thankful that we have experienced what we did. Because it helped us in a very big way to focus in on things that are to happen at the end-time, that are going to take place yet, and where we believed at that particular stage we were headed.

And as I mentioned, in the middle of 2008 everything changed. Mentioned that in Chapter 6 of the book. Everything changed. Now, we didn't know it, but God's purpose and what He was going to accomplish and fulfill, it changed. And a lot of prophecies of things, and judgments that were going to take place have changed in the sense that the potential now is greater for

the opportunity for mankind, for different nations and peoples to be able to repent if they will listen to God.

And so at that time I think of the big thing that we had to begin to address was the very beginning where we focused in on the exact period that started the final 3½ years, because the history in the Church, the history for us is one of going back and believing that in the final 3½ years we would be living through *great physical tribulation* on this earth, that it would be *horrendous* during that *entire 3½ years*. So when things didn't begin that way, when things didn't take place for a year, they weren't happening... Now, there were Thunders, but no Trumpets. There were obvious Thunders taking place in the world, and a lot of that was really for us, for us to be able to keep focused and to realize yes, there are Thunders, they are increasing, and so forth, of those things that were taking place. But the reality is we had to address some things that God began to show us prophetically. He helped us to begin to understand some things about the kind of *war* that was coming, that we couldn't have a 3½ year nuclear war on this earth! We wouldn't survive it! We couldn't survive an all-out nuclear conflict for 3½ years! And the kinds of devastation and the kinds of hardship that would take place, if it began exactly 3½ years before Christ coming, it would be so horrendous upon mankind and upon the Church. Because God's going to allow us to experience a lot of the physical things that take place on this earth. And the things that are going to be around us, we're going to see.

But I think of right now, how blessed we are. That's why I've been looking at the book, because I have learned through time how God has worked with me and how He has worked many things out in our lives and in the Church, and especially when it comes to things that are published of such magnitude as the books, *The Prophesied End-Time, 2008—God's Final Witness*, and now this third book, *Prophesy Against The Nations*. And so as I look upon those I see and know something in a different manner than I have in the past. And a part of that, as I'm relating this story to you, is to grasp and to understand that with the book and the timing of it, I haven't got overly excited. Now, the only thing I felt any kind of desire and pressure to make sure that we could strive for is to work to get this book out by the Feast. I have felt that this is a targeted time for the Church, for us, and yet it's been moving smoothly in that direction. But also what's exciting to me is this time is different than the book *2008*, because different translations came along later at different times, and yet this one is going to be more upfront, in being right behind, in other words, the English translation. Some are ready to go right away. It's going to take a little bit of time of getting some of these fully together and get them out there, but it's still very, very close in timing. And to me that is not a small thing. There is purpose behind all of this.

So in this year, in the next few months we have opportunity now of getting the other language editions out, of being able to make sure that they are on the internet and being offered to people as well. We're going to begin an advertising process. And as we begin that a lot of those will be online and ready to go. But it's going to take some work yet. There's been a lot of work getting this book ready - more so than the other two books. A lot more has gone into this. And the book is quite a bit larger as well. And so a lot has gone into this, and I'm inspired by that, because I see what God is doing, because He works with our lives, He works in our lives, and not only works in our lives but He works with the *timing* of things that take place in our lives. So to me this is all immensely exciting! It really is. And we will see this as we go along more and more.

That's why I've been making comment over and over with the kind of boldness and the kind of knowing that I have concerning this year, between this Feast of Tabernacles and the next, is that we have *time* to get this book out there because it has to be out there. It's going to be out there. There are things that need to be done in this following year.

Now, exactly what happens, how much the Thunders might increase? At what point the Trumpets begin in the sense of physical manifestation of those things, of those Trumpets that have been blown, that when those things begin to be released on the earth, that's going to be another story. And how those things unfold we don't fully know. But they may very well be held back a little longer in order to get this message out as Thunders increase with incredible power and might. But there is the potential that that first may happen pretty soon. And if it does, we're going to learn from that process, but we're still going to have opportunity because of the internet, because of electricity, because of other things to get a message out. People have to be able to receive it. And the primary way of receiving it today is over the internet, so it has to be there throughout so many of the nations of the earth. And to accomplish that then that means that certain things have to be held back, that they can't take place yet. And that's encouraging to me.

So I'm looking forward to, I believe we're going to have another Feast of Tabernacles next year in relative peace, in the sense of the Church, in our ability to be mobile, to move from one point to another, to be able to come together in a Feast. And if not, we have the internet. We have the means of communication to come before God, to worship before God and to keep the Feast. And so to me that's encouraging.

Now, what about beyond that? What about beyond that? How *awesome* would it be if at some point beyond that then, in that following year past the Feast of 2017 that some things begin to intensify on a massive scale, not yet a nuclear confrontation, but at some point, at some point those first Four Trumpets are going to be revealed and unleashed, as far as a physical manifestation on this earth, and primarily upon the United States. And to what degree they

affect other of Ephraim, we don't know yet. But it's primarily about Ephraim and Manasseh - and all of Israel - but primarily still Ephraim and Manasseh. And so maybe, just maybe - I hope and pray that that's the case, that even up through after the Feast of 2017, think about that following year all the way up to 2018, what an incredible thing if we still have communication, are able to do some of the things we're able to do, and maybe even come together in 2018. It's a possibility.

But you see, I wouldn't have this kind of boldness, I wouldn't have this kind of strength, I wouldn't have this kind of determination, this kind of focus, if I hadn't experienced what I did from 2008 to 2012, because it drove something home that I hadn't been able to fully grasp or couldn't fully grasp to the depth that I did by the time we went through all of this between 2008 and 2012. And that is the reality that a great nuclear war doesn't take very long to be unleashed on the earth and to do the kind of devastation and damage it's going to do. And right now at this moment in time, I've thought about this and looked at this and kind of in awe of it in one respect, that if you look at it from a physical vantage point in many ways there is no way on earth, because of the way the world is at this moment in time, that anyone can see that that's going to be a reality in a few years from now. Now, I could go into this more, and maybe in some other sermons will, but the point being is that just by looking at it, it doesn't look possible. But you know what? When the Israelites came to the Red Sea it didn't look like that was possible either, where they were going.

So much of life, because of God's way and because of how God leads doesn't look possible. But with God Almighty, if He has a purpose in doing something it's going to be done. And that's exciting! That's inspiring. And so I have a completely different outlook than what I did before 2008 because it was still in my mind... You know, when you have certain things that you see as the truth it takes a little while oftentimes to be able to shift gears to see things that are the present truth when God reveals something new, when He gives something in a greater and a more understanding manner. And so we have experienced this many a time.

Just like the Apostasy. We had no idea. We knew one was coming, but we had *no idea* how vast, how crippling, how damaging it was going to be. We had no idea! And so we have learned and we learn through those experiences. And so it is with what we've continued to go through, and we've learned mightily. *I* have learned mightily that the final 3½ years do not have to be a 3½ years filled with great devastation from the beginning to the end because we tend to think physically. We tend to think physically and totally on a physical plane, as a whole, and read something direct and think that then it has to be the full period. It's like the two witnesses and the things that they're going to do. It's like they have to be doing it for the whole 3½ years. No, they don't. So much of what is going out is going out in the book. And so much of what is done by two witnesses will not happen till... as we get closer to the end.

That's the period of time. There are certain things that don't have to happen for long periods of time.

I think of Christ's ministry and some of the things he began to do in the final 3½ years. So much of what he said and so much of what is recorded and so much of what was done didn't happen until the end, until the final few weeks, actually, when so much of it took place. And so we learn from this and we grow from this. And again, there is so much more to learn in what I've just covered.

So right now we need to realize what's in front of us and what the message is for us as we leave this Feast of Tabernacles and go back to our homes. It went by really fast; it always does. I'm going to read some of my notes here as I'm going through this because I want to make sure I cover certain things, so I will be reading some of this. And sometimes when I do that it's a little more difficult for me, in one respect, because I like to get into scripture and I like to be able to start talking about those scriptures and be able to preach about those scriptures. But sometimes when I want to get certain thoughts across I need to write certain things down and so I like to read those. And I'm going to be reading some of this now and making comment as we go along.

And so again here, having made comment about how many people have witnessed the Apostasy, and we've been through so much since that period of time in 1994, and then individuals showing their hands as to... holding up their hands as to those who actually went through that period of time. And then I think of what we went through. Then God protected the Church from Satan during that first 1260 days following the Apostasy. It's always good to go back and look at some of our history and see where we've gone. We've been on an *incredible* journey! And I think of these seven periods - *seven periods* - seven end-time prophetic periods of 1260 days. Who knew? Who could have known that was God's design and primary purpose over all. And then the 50-days at the end, and the 70-days before that! Telling us, in essence to *hold on, hold fast!* Seventy days! Seventy, and the number having to do with prophetic things concerning Christ's coming, it doesn't go without meaning. It has great meaning to it. And so it doesn't escape us, I should say. Maybe that's a better way of explaining it and saying it. It doesn't escape us, the great meaning in there. Christ's coming. He's still coming. He didn't come in 2012; he's coming, the seventy days. What an encouragement! And then finally to see the things all come together - two more periods - seven complete periods - seven complete end-time periods of 1260 days + the 70 in the first five, and the 50 in the final two at the very end. Fifty, bringing the incredible meaning of those things concerning the Wave Sheaf and the Wave Loaves together in a *profound* way! How awesome! How awesome, the Holy Days and all that God reveals to us more and more and more, the meaning contained in those things that people will observe in the Millennium,

looking back upon, as we do when we read various things and certain things that took place in times past, but this will be added to the meaning of the Holy Days because it's about this time. So much of it is about this time.

And so again, Satan, being protected from him during that first 1260 days following the Apostasy. We'd been through much. And before that period had ended there were those of us who were to function as a group striving to hold to God's truth and way of life. And we did so under the corporate name of the United Church of God - Toledo.

I had incorporated the group in Toledo under the name, that name right after I had resigned as a minister from the Worldwide Church of God in early 1995 there. And within a couple of months, a large organization of ministers and brethren came together and affiliated themselves with a new corporate organization called the **United Church of God, an International Association**. And a handful of groups had come together and incorporated themselves together before this and continued with those corporations while affiliating themselves together with this much larger corporate body. So not only those of us in Toledo, but there were others who had become incorporated before United began. That was because we were striving to help the Church - the Church was suffering - and wanted everyone to come together as much as possible. And so a large group of ministers did. And so some incorporated fully for the first time under this larger umbrella. Some of us continued with the corporations we had and then affiliated ourselves. That's why it was called "an International Association," because not all were going to drop their corporate names and the work they were doing in different areas, because of what had happened.

And then by early 1997, I was quickly coming to see that this large corporate body was not living according to the corporate bylaws that had been established. It was not keeping its word regarding a lot of issues, and it was becoming clear that there were doctrinal issues that were not being addressed as they should have been. Politics amongst the ministers and appeasement and compromise was also setting in. It was already there. It just took a little while to see what was all setting in even more fully in that corporate body, rather than standing firm for what was true before God.

And that was especially true with a very basic and foundational doctrine regarding Passover being fully observed on the 14th day of the first month of God's calendar. Began to realize and began to hear different statistics of different ones who had this other belief in a 14th/15th Passover, and in the same corporate body? So why isn't this being addressed? Why isn't a stand being taken and saying, "Look! *This* is the way. *This* is what is right! It's *fully* in the 14th! Mr. Armstrong taught that. He was very clear about that. And if you accept just three basic scriptures there is no way you can deny it." But a lot of those ministers had been taught under Dr. Hoeh and had thought of different possibilities - and all messed up because of some ideas

from the Jews. And you think, "Truth doesn't come through the Jews! It comes through God Almighty through His apostle!"

Anyway, so the fact that the corporate leadership was not leading God's people in righteousness and truth in many of these matters led me to resign on Pentecost of 1997. Now, I did not want to lead God's Church on my own. That was the farthest thing from my mind. I had a *complete* aversion to that. I fought against that in my own mind. Candidly, again, *it was the farthest thing from my mind*, and such a thing wasn't even *in* my mind at that time, because I had such an aversion to it. Just the thought of it... just the thought of it would have been appalling to me. I believed that *surely* there were leaders who had left the Worldwide Church of God that God was working with who would raise up His Church once again; that God would work through them to raise up His Church once again. I thought that might be taking place in United, but came to see God isn't here. God's spirit isn't here. You can't govern; you can't live like this; you can't compromise; you can't play politics; you can't get back into what led us into the Apostasy in the first place! And so I thought that that leadership that God was surely working with somewhere out here would become clear.

And all of us who were together in Toledo and Detroit at that time, who chose to continue moving forward under the corporate umbrella we had started, we continued with it, left that affiliation with the large corporation that called itself United. But it was *far* from united. We did change the name, however, to simply the Church of God and we dropped the "United" portion of the corporate name. Didn't want to be affiliated with United and that name any longer even though we had it before United, as far as a name.

We still did not know *where* God's Church was. So when I resigned in Pentecost of 1997 we still did not know *where God's Church was*, where God was leading and guiding and directing. Because for the Church to be scattered, God's Church, well, knew it had to be out here. Knew it had to be here on this earth because the Church of God was never going to die out. So we did believe that we were definitely following God and that He was working with us, but we did not know where to go. That's the bottom line. So for the Feast of Tabernacles that year in 1997 we all divided into different groups to go listen to other groups to see if we could find evidence of where God was working. And the largest number of us went to Florida to listen to the organization headed by Roderick Meredith of the Global Church of God; later became known as Living, when they had a split and split into two different groups.

Well, again, for me I think back at that time and I knew most of the scattered groups out here. I knew a lot of the ministers, a lot of the different groups that had popped up out here. And there were some that I already knew God wasn't working with them because of things they taught, because of what they were doing. It was very obvious. It was very clear to see. And that's something that God has to give. But He made it clear that if things aren't

doctrinally correct in unity with God then you go on. There is that which is true you have to latch on to and hold on to with all of your being and hold *fast* to what God gives. And so I think of that period of time and going to the Feast there that year, 1997. Most of us went down to this particular Feast site.

And God made it very clear that He was not working with those leaders at the Feast that was being observed in Florida. He wasn't there. It was very clear in the sermons that were being given. It was very clear in the conduct of the ministers. And, incredible what we went through. But that was... I knew some were going to different Feast sites and I *knew* that God wasn't in them. But I thought, well, you know, individuals they have to make their own choices. And if they think that God may be at some other site, then they're going to have to go learn that there and we're either going to continue to be together or we're not and people have to make their own choices where is God. Where is God's spirit? An incredible time that we went through. Still being protected from Satan, because that first 3½ years, that first 1260 days wasn't over yet. It wouldn't be over until Pentecost of 1998.

And so this was '97, and at the Feast of Tabernacles there in Florida. And during the time that followed, and by early the next year, I knew we had to organize our own Feast of Tabernacles observance. By that time it became clear. Until God reveals something to us we really have no option but to hold fast to the truths that God had given to us and to have our own Feast of Tabernacles, which I really... I fought against in my own mind. I didn't want to do it, but I saw no other alternative because, well, I know that God had already convicted me that there wasn't anyone out there yet that was standing firm and standing fast and making it clear this is where He is working. And so we decided to host a Feast of Tabernacles site so that those who were striving to hold fast could come together. And we held it up in the Niagara Falls area.

And by Pentecost of 1998 I knew that we were fully separate from all other people and organizations that had been scattered after the Apostasy. That period of time between the Feast of '97 and Pentecost of '98, and making that decision to host a Feast site up in Canada, well, it became very, very clear. God was showing me things about this group, a small group that He was working with. This was our beginning—and it led into our name that followed later—the Church of God, Preparing for the Kingdom of God.

God had separated a group that was to become His remnant Church and He revealed *exactly that* to us. Then God moved me to begin doing what I loathed and hated...writing. I loathed it! I was horrible in English in college. I knew I wasn't a writer. I didn't like writing. Some of the first things I wrote - God began to have me write some things while I was in United, and primarily in the beginning toward the ministry and to the ministry that, candidly, went out to *all* the ministry, four hundred and some ministers in an email, because I brought certain

things to their attention of things that weren't being done that needed to be done, the things that weren't correct. And that got me cut off from email to the ministry after that. They just totally cut me off because they didn't like what went out. Well, it was the truth. And I know that God blessed me in what was written and how it was written. And so there were some things that followed. There was another letter that followed later on, that I wrote before I resigned, addressing some things that needed to be addressed within the Church if they were truly going to be true to God and hold fast to what God had given to us.

But, anyway, little did I know that I needed to do more writing. And I didn't really want to do it. First came the publication called *News Watch*. Began to realize there are people out here, not just in Detroit and Toledo, who wanted to hold on. That Feast site, that Georgia group, the Harrell's contacted us, Johnny did. And they began to affiliate and come together with us. We went down there and visited with them and we began to have some troubles then in Toledo/Detroit area because people didn't want me leaving that area and going down there. Some people didn't like me going down toward Cincinnati because, see, they basically had this attitude of mind, "We're paying you with *our* tithes from *this* area. You are *our* minister that we want to be here and we don't want you down there. We don't want you going off to Cincinnati. We don't want you going off to Georgia. Now, that caused a problem, because I was going to go through whatever door God gave me to go through, and if people needed help I was going to be there. I wasn't *their* minister; I was *God's* minister ministering *to* them if they wanted to follow God. And so that began a process of sorting through some and dividing some of the group there as time went along.

But anyway, began to write *News Watch* because there was a need out there. So because of the internet and because of word of mouth and people were still searching out there in some cases trying to find things, *News Watch* went out and began to write it quite often, on a monthly basis, and people were able to receive it and being moved by it. They were beginning to see some things as God was inspiring what was being written. Later on, toward the end of that period of time I think there were some that came out, almost as it were, quarterly. But, anyway, incredible what was taking place because as these began to be written it began to be clear that something else could be done, a publication could be written. And the first one was a booklet entitled, *Time is Running Out*. Now, I'm not a writer! Or... Well, I am now. I wasn't then. But now I'm a writer. It's kind of hard to get used to. But back then I was not a writer. And I was able to work with some of the things written in *News Watch*, expanded some of those, added some, and came out with a booklet, *Time is Running Out*, trying to warn the Church. It was about the scattered Church. It was trying to help the scattered Church.

And then the second one, *Time Has Run Out*. Pretty strong message against the scattered ministry. Because it's their responsibility to respond to God, to do what is right and to help

God's people. Then followed later on in the summer of 2004. By this time Australia and New Zealand, some people down there were beginning to be associated with us, also over in Europe. Had been with us, all these had been with us for two or three years by this time. And then by the summer of 2004 the first book came out entitled, *The Prophesied End-Time*. Still very much toward the Church and for help within the Church.

Then sometime early the following year in 2005, my farther-in-law told Laura that I should write another book. Now, he was with another group, and yet he was moved by what was written in the first one. And he made a comment at one time that he felt I had, basically, a commission to the Laodiceans, to the Laodicean Church. Little did he know that we were all Laodicean at that time and that's what God had given, but he didn't know it. And so kind of laughed at what he had to say. But said I should write another book, and basically I said that would *never* happen. Never! But he told her that since he was my father-in-law that I should listen to him. Kind of like Moses having listened to Jethro. And that's kind of how he saw himself, that he gave this advice and because "I'm his father-in-law," that I should listen to him and begin writing that next book. But I only sort of laughed at that inside. It was kind of funny to me, as I knew that would never happen.

But for me, the rather unthinkable happened and I began to see yet another book was intended to be written, but before we could tell him, before I could tell my father-in-law, he died in early July of 2005. It was already in my mind and hadn't really started it yet, but it was in my mind. Things were starting to come to me about a need to write a book, another book. And we were going to tell him. Laura was going to tell him.

But it was a month later then, on August the 5th, I had my first heart attack and had to have a triple by-pass. God revived me mightily after that point in time. And by the Feast of Tabernacles, God had given me some of the most powerful and revealing sermons *ever* that were about Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ. And I began to write the second book as well, around that period of time and following. But I think of those sermons back in 2005. *Awesome! Awesome! Incredible!*

And so again, another book was going to be written. And then, even that which was truly even *far* more unthinkable—and of all things I had another heart attack, flat-lined as a code blue was announced throughout the hospital. *And it inspired me*, when I realized what had happened. When I went through that, experienced that, I couldn't help but think of various kinds of things that had taken place, and who would think that they would be inspired in such a great way to even beyond what I already was to that point in time, because of where I was. But I remembered Mr. Armstrong and his touch with death, and then what followed in his life beginning in 1978 and forward to finish the commission God had given him. And so when that happened - awesome! Incredible how God works. And incredible how He works to inspire us,

to motivate us, to encourage us, and who could think you could be so mightily inspired and moved by a heart attack where you are code blue and have to be shocked to be brought back to life again?

So I began to write. And the reality was *I knew*, even though I had thought about writing different things, I knew that in that environment I couldn't write a book, with what I had there as far as any kind of reference helps - no access to internet except to send emails and receive them. But I had no ability, in one respect, to do so. And yet I began to write while in prison, a third book, and what I hope to be and believe to be, the final book! *Prophecy Against the Nations. That IS my commission*. I believe and hope that this is a commission that is complete before Pentecost of 2019. I *believe* that it is. I am *living* that it is, and moving forward - focused that it is.

But you know what, brethren? If God has more, so be it. There is nothing else. There is only this way of life. And we know that in a very powerful way now. The group that is together now is deeply committed and convicted to that. And that's exciting! That's inspiring to know and to understand!

So now that the book is fully ready, we are going, again, to begin pushing it. And as Mr. Armstrong said, again, in 1978, "*GET BEHIND THIS THING!*" Get behind this! This is where we are. This is what we have been working toward. *This* is what we've been working toward. We didn't fully understand and know that, but this is what we've been working toward. This is everything about a final commission and *work* that is to be accomplished before Christ comes.

So as the title of this sermon says, *Hold Fast and Fight!* We've been being prepared for this for some time. And over the last several months God has been refining our lives, helping us to focus more fully on what we need to focus upon, repenting of the things that need to be repented of so that we can become much stronger spiritually, so that we can push forward to do some of the *greatest work ever accomplished on this earth*. The *most PROFOUND THINGS* that will *ever be done* in such an incredible way on this earth to bring about a change, an *incredible* change on this earth from man's way of government to God's way. *We live in the most profound, awesome, astounding* time of all human history. And sometimes that's very hard for us to grasp, to know, because our lives seem to be normal and we live what is normal before us in our time, but these are not normal times. In the days of Noah those were not *normal times* because of what was being prepared at that time. And what's being prepared now, what has been under way for some time is far, far, *far* beyond that. When Jesus Christ returns with 144,000? How *profound*, how *great*, how *mighty is that*, for all that is going to be taught throughout the Millennium and the Great White Throne, of this period of time that prepares for all of that and what the earth must go through to get there. It's incredible. Wouldn't want to live at any other time.

Now, you have not seen great Thunders yet. You have seen Thunders, but you have not seen what they're going to become, what they will be before this is over with. And you most assuredly have not seen the affects of any Trumpet blasts made manifest yet. They're in front of us. But they are so very, very close. But we have a *work* in front of us and *everything that happens* - *EVERYTHING* that happens - is being geared according to that first. That's awesome if you understand that, if you see that. *Incredible!* Incredible, indeed.

So there have been Thunders, but they have been relatively small for what is coming. Even 2005. Think about it, all those sermons at that Feast. But the reality of it becoming greater leading up to that and what's coming and what this earth is going to see? Ah, this earth is going to be shaken to its core in every way physically and *spiritually* for what they're going to begin to come to see.

So again, there have been Thunders, but they have been relatively small for what is coming. And that's because we still have some important *time* before us to accomplish *getting this book promoted*, so that when greater things *do* begin to occur that the book will then be easier for people to find. And as I've been saying, we may well have, again, a year to get this accomplished. We may have two. If that's the case, then indeed everything has been and is being held back in order to get this done. We may have again one more Feast - what an awesome thing to contemplate - that we'll be able to keep without much interference. And maybe even another one beyond that. I don't know yet because God hasn't shown it. I hope we do. Because when things happen on a major scale, on the kind of scale that is going to take place it isn't going to take long for this earth to be shaken to it's foundation, shaken to it's core again and again and again and again.

Once we entered the sixth prophetic end-time cycle of 1,260 days there was a marked increase and a profound increase in the refining and molding of God's people. We've seen a lot. But we've also seen that that has gone on into the seventh and this last period that we're now in, that's continued on. There has been a strong amount of measuring that has led to those who have been in the court around the temple being removed from the court and given over to the gentiles—the world—and even to Satan. If only people could see that and understand what happens. Because, it's just there's a power there, a power - lying power, a deceiving power, and a dumbfounding thing that can take place in people's minds because what they're given back to isn't just going... isn't just quitting an organization here, isn't just quitting and backing away from things that they've been given. Because of what happens and being fully cut off from God's spirit there is another power out there that enters in. And they have no idea; people have no idea what they give themselves to.

So hopefully by this time now, hopefully, we are pretty well cleansed at this time. There is going to be more refining because we continue to grow until we're through this. And so you

can continue to grow. You'll continue to have things you go through in your life to help you to grow. Because without hardship, without trial, without some fire there are certain things that just can't be brought out of our lives. We want the dross out of our lives. We want that which hurts, that which holds back to come out of our lives. And so sometimes that just takes time, doesn't it? And it takes some hardship to go through some of those things. But it is a process that will continue until we're through this.

There are two very powerful examples of ancient time that I believe occurred and primarily had been written for us. That's something God began to reveal, that there are certain things He gave in times past, certain things that happened in times past that He has used and had recorded to be things that would be of great benefit and strength and help and designed for us at the end-time. That's incredible, if you understand that. To see that, it is awesome indeed, meant for us! Meant for this end-time. Meant for the remnant of God's Church. And the first I referred to last Sabbath as I've been preparing these particular sermons, while I was down in Georgia, at the time that I began working on these Feast sermons at the end of July. It is about Gideon.

We had this story as a kind of very strong banner that we carried following our push at that time regarding the second book, *2008—God's Final Witness*. It was a kind of battle cry then because spiritually it fit so perfectly to what we were going through then on a spiritual plane. There's never been a time that has matched up with that in such an incredible way until this end-time. For us, we are there again with this third and final book. And it is more meaningful now than ever. But it was meaningful back then and it gave us strength and encouragement and we were able to relate to it in a very powerful way. Because as I said, I believe it was written for us, given for us. Awesome!

Let's turn over there to Judges 6 and look at this again and go through this particular story, one that we're very familiar with, but one we need. I think of what God gave to Joshua. I think of what God gave to Gideon. You know, when God told Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage," He's helping us to become stronger. Because, you see, it's not something you work up on your own. You can't just determine, "Well, I'm going to be strong now." It's something you grow in. It's something that comes from God. And the courage and the strength comes from those things that God gives to us. Just like this story and just like our history and seeing things fit together and how God works with us. Those are the things that encourage and give us courage to press forward, to hold fast... to hold fast and *fight*! That's what this sermon's entitled!

Judges 6:1—And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and the Eternal delivered them into the hand of Midian, a word meaning "strife." ...delivered them into the

hand of strife seven years. Incredible. Incredible! Incredible! Incredible! Examples of things we can learn from.

Now, what happened to the Israelites up to this point and following in some of the verses forward parallels more closely with our history in the Church that led up to 2008.

Nevertheless, jumping forward, we come to when God begins to work directly with Gideon.

Let's notice **Judges 6:12—And the angel of the Eternal appeared unto him, Gideon, meaning "hewer" as in a cutter of wood or stone.** Isn't that incredible all these words we've been seeing? Zerubbabel. Awesome, some of the things and what they mean. The plummet. The word "plummet" in Zechariah "in the hands of Zerubbabel." And now this word for Gideon meaning "'a hewer' as in a cutter of wood or stone," **and said to him, So God uses things that are oftentimes on a physical plane to give us understanding of something that's taking place on a spiritual plane and how God is working with us. And it's inspiring! He went on to say, The Eternal is with you, you mighty man of valor, meaning "strength." Now again, strength that comes from God. It has to come from God when it's on a spiritual plane. And Gideon said to Him, Oh my LORD, if the Eternal is with us, why then has all this fallen on us?** You know, sometimes we can look at things and say, "Why have we gone through all this? If You're with us why have we gone through all this? Why have we had to experience all these things?" Well, God gives us answers. He's given us answers for some of the things we had to go through after 2008; He let us see that in Chapter 6 of the book - and what we had to go through as a Church to be prepared for what would happen, what would take place. (I believe I said that correctly.)

Judges 6:14—And the Eternal looked upon Him (Gideon) and said, Go in this your might, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: haven't I sent you? You know, if God sends someone, if He sends us to do something, you know what? It's going to get done! God's going to do it! God's going to work with and make sure that it happens! **And he said to him, Oh my LORD, how shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least of my father's house. And the Eternal said unto him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall strike, meaning, "to destroy/to conquer" the Midianites as one man.** As one. That's... I love that! Spiritually, to be one, to be united, to be together in spirit in every way, at-one with God, focused as we need to be and then in agreement. That's why there's been such a push for so long here that we be in agreement with the 57 Truths, that we be at one, that we be in unity and harmony. And for those who have not been, where are they? They're not around. They're not around. **And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in your sight, then show me a sign that you talk with me.** You know, God has blessed me over and over and over again to see and understand those things, things that He's blessed to be written, things that have happened, things that have come to pass, things that God has

inspired to be seen in scripture that have not been seen in times past that are so clear, they're so incredibly clear - all the truths that we've been given. Talk about signs. Talk about encouragement.

Verse 18—I pray that you do not depart from here, until I come to you and bring forth my offering and set it before you. And he said, I will wait until you come. And Gideon went in and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour and meat that he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said to him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon the rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the Eternal put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Eternal departed out of his sight. Now, you would think that that's all that would be needed to give strength and encouragement. And I think of things that have happened. I think of things that God has given. But thankfully, He didn't stop. He's continued to give more and more - more and more truths. But one, really, is all that's necessary. If we hold fast to just one truth that God gives... and I think of all those that have been given. Just one. How much more do we need? But so often we are so weak as physical human beings and all of us working together, that God gives more and more and more and we are without excuse, indeed, on a spiritual plane.

Verse 22—And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Eternal, Gideon said, Alas, O LORD Eternal! For because I have seen an angel of the Eternal face to face. And the Eternal said unto him, Peace *be* to you; do not fear: you shall not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Eternal, and he called it Yahweh-shalom, the Eternal send peace. Unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. I'm sure I'm mispronouncing that.

Anyway, **verse 36**—And Gideon said to God, If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew is on the fleece only, and it is dry upon the earth beside it, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said. So, sometimes, how much do we need? How much do we need? But, sadly, as human beings we do need more, and because He's given more it gives greater *strength*. God has given us greater and greater *strength* because of all those... that's why we have focused upon, that's why so often God has moved me, inspired me to relay to you the importance of reviewing those things from time to time, of going through them time to time, of thinking how awesome they are. And as also, He has also given to make a distinction then of thinking back, of what it was like when we didn't have those. That we actually go back in history sometimes and think about what it was like when we didn't have those things that we can tend to take for granted now. We didn't have that knowledge. Now, those who have gone

through the Apostasy, they know that full well. But others of you that have been brought along since 2006-'07, especially, and '08, well, you haven't known these. They are just things that have been given to you that you just accept as that's the way it's always been. But it hasn't. But for those of us who *know* that it hasn't, who have *experienced* when it wasn't and then we *see* when He gives us the truth, *it is indeed most profound*, the change, the growth, the revelation of things on a greater plane. And we are without excuse! But how many of those who have been awakened, who have gone away again? How many? A lot! So many! Hundreds and hundreds.

Verse 38. That's why we are to hold fast and to fight! How often have you heard me say in the last several months to fight? If you want this, if you want what God is offering to you, you have to fight for it! And a lot of that fight is *fighting against your own human nature*, is fighting against the *pulls of your flesh*, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life!" That we would do anything, raise up *anything* against God's way, of something that is wrong in our behavior, of something that is wrong in how we talk. That individuals can curse and swear in God's Church is inexcusable! That people can get into fights and arguments! That *husbands and wives* can get upset with each other and fight with each other and say *ugly* things to one another is *inexcusable* in God's Church! Incredible, the things that happen. Incredible that individuals can come along and think that they know a better way than what's being given to them in sermons. Incredible that such things can happen! On and on and on it has gone. Sad. Sad.

Verse 38—And it was so: for he rose up early in the morning, and thrust the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said to God, Let not Your anger be hot against me, and I will speak once more: let me prove, I pray you, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. Now, why did he do that? Sometimes the way our minds work, it's like, well, maybe there's something about the fleece. Human reasoning that can go on. Maybe somehow something that happened, somehow the dew could maybe be attracted to fleece where it wouldn't be clear on the ground, and maybe it collected there, so let's reverse this. Let it be wet on the ground and this time let the fleece be dry. *Then...then... then* I'll know. It's amazing how our human nature is. And that's why I just love what God has given to us - more and more and *more* to strengthen us as a people, to strengthen us as a Body. It's incredible how much God has given to us to strengthen us, and it's incredible how much stronger we become, and those who fight and those who push forward, and those who continue on, those who respond in the way that God has given become so strong, indeed.

God has prepared an army to go through what's ahead of us, and He's about to bring many more in to share with this. Now, they won't be able to share in the same way that those of

you hearing my voice right *now* are going to be able to share, because *greater* has been given to you and you've experienced and you've had time to address many things, to make many changes that you know now can take years and years and years. And you know now that you, so many of you that live on into the Millennium, know that you have many more years that you need so that you can grow more! But you're years ahead of those getting ready to be drawn right now - except for one bunch, and that would be those for whenever they begin to have opportunity to be awakened, who were a part of Worldwide because they're going to grow very, very fast and become strong very quickly. That's exciting to me! You'll be able to share with them. They'll be able to share with you. And you'll have a bond that will be quite incredible, of sharing, because both can learn from one another and be strengthened spiritually through that process.

Well, I've made comments before that the first two books were like the fleece for me. They really were. Not only the truths, but even the fleece as I saw what God was giving. And the two books were written in a completely different manner, as I have also explained. They came to me in a different way. These gave me more of the confidence, the courage, and the strength I have needed in order to continue forward with boldness and determination. And you know what? When God molds and fashions us it's just a simple truth. It's not a matter of how great anyone is, it's a matter of what God gives and makes great. We have an opportunity to share with God, to be made *greater*, but the greatness and the power comes from God. He is the source. *How incredible* is that, brethren? The kind of boldness and the kind of determination He can mold and fashion in lives, and we are blessed to share in it and give. And so I think of those things that God has given in order to be given to the Church. Because *YOU* have needed that! *WE* have needed that as a body.

Look what three years did. Look what can happen so quickly if that intensity that comes through of specific jobs that God gives, as an example, to an apostle that are different. You know, what God gives to an evangelist is different than senior elders. What God gives to a prophet is different than evangelists. And what God *gives* to an apostle is different from all the rest *for purpose!* Because of God's great design and purpose and what needs to be given to His Church, to His people! And He blesses us with those things. Just as He gave to Gideon to lead and to help the people of Israel at that time and what needed to take place that could be written for us today. Incredible!

Now a third book that was written so exceptionally fast it goes way, way beyond the fleece. I guess it'd be more akin, maybe, to the dream that followed, a final great encouragement, a final great focus. This is where you're going. This is what's going to be done. What a beautiful message. If you will listen, God will listen. I'm thankful for that. Don't know that people will, so many won't.

Judges 7:1—Then Jerubbaal, again, "Baal" here in part of the word here, but Jerubbaal, "let Baal contend," is what it means. **Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people who were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod.** So again here, it was like this pushing forward and this challenge, as it were, toward all those who followed Baal. And that's exactly what Gideon began to do, began to challenge in very powerful ways. Again, doesn't go by me at all, some of the things that are meant by things that are stated. Look how this world, look where it is now and what being told to it in a very powerful, and going to be in a far more powerful way when Thunders become far more powerful, when Trumpets begin to be manifest and this message is given great power and strength because of that.

And so again here it says, **they pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.** And in Judges 8:10 it says, basically, there were 135,000 there.

And the Eternal said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel lift themselves up against Me, saying, I have saved myself by my own hand. I think of the era of Philadelphia and on into Laodicea and what happened in Laodicea. We were rich and increased with goods, were, "Look how great we are." And people can tend to look to themselves then. It's not good. It's not good when people don't look to God anymore and God is first and realize that everything that happens and everything that is given that we're able to share in comes from God. And so He said, "You're too many! And if you're too many then what's going to happen? They'll take it to themselves and it will not be a matter of recognizing that *I* have done it, the Great, the Almighty God!" And so the Church was *far too big*. The *exact same thing has happened on a spiritual plane*, in that respect, for the same kind of reason that it did back then. Written for later. Written for us.

And so the numbers that we had were far, far too many. Far too many. So we had an Apostasy. Two-thirds went by the wayside. God allowed it for a purpose, to show what He would do at the end, in the end-time, with a prophesied remnant, a very, very small portion of what would be left over.

So He said to him, **Now, therefore, go and proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And of the people there were twenty-two thousand who returned; and there were ten thousand who remained.** Only about a third. Only about a third remained. So does this escape you? Do things like this escape us when we think about what took place? Two-thirds, around that area, returned, went, scattered, as it were? And only 10,000 remained, about a third? Incredible! *Absolutely incredible!*

And the Eternal said to Gideon, **There are still too many people; bring them down to the water, and I will try them for you there.** Try them? What did we go through after the Apostasy? A third? A third that was scattered but still seeking to hold on to the Sabbath and the Holy Days and scattered into many different groups? So He said, **and I will try you there.** You think we weren't tried? That people weren't tried during the following 3½ years, the first 1260 days that followed the Apostasy?

And so in **Judges 7:4** it says, **And the Eternal said to Gideon, There are still too many people. Bring them down to the water and I will try them for you there. And it shall be, *that* of whom I say to you, These shall go with you, the same shall go with you, and of whomsoever I say to you, These shall not go with you, the same shall not go.** Does that escape you? God has to give those, especially when we understand the Church and that it's by God's spirit that people are able to "see" what is true, that people are able to be brought to a point of God determining who is to go forward and who isn't and who shouldn't through a period of time?

Verse 5—So he brought the people down to the water: and the Eternal said to Gideon, Everyone who laps the water with the tongue like a dog laps, him shall you set by himself; likewise everyone who bows down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them who lapped, *putting* their hands to the mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon the knees to drink water. You know, even that on a physical plane is very reflective of what happens on a spiritual plane. It's basically about those who are still on guard. There are a 135,000 down in that particular area ready to come up against them. There is a *war* about to take place! You don't know when the enemy is coming; you have to be on guard. So if you get around the water as a soldier, as one who is in an army, and you get down on your knees and stick your head down all the way down to the water to drink, that's not smart. But if you, still striving to be somewhat alert, in that respect, and looking around and quickly with your hand bring water up to your mouth, you can still look around you and see what's taking place around you and then drink the water. That says something different about that kind of mindset. And that's what God inspired to happen. That's what God *inspired* to be written. We are always to be on guard, ready to battle, ready, and always ready to fight. And if we understand it spiritually, we are fighting. But we always have to be alert, on guard, watchful as those words mean. To me, how can these things escape us, brethren, for what they are saying? For what they mean for us now at this time?

And then **Judges 7:7** it says, **And the Eternal said to Gideon, By the three hundred men who lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.** And so we've been going through a lot here recently where more and more we are whittled down to size, because we were too large, and because

people are tried. But we've actually gone through, even in 2008 and even in this period of time now, the numbers so close in so many cases, shouldn't escape us. Now, some wonder, does that mean we're going to have exactly 300 here? No. But it's given to this time now. It's given, candidly, in many respects, for this sermon right now so we can be moved and motivated, and inspired by what is being said, so that we can recognize through these examples that He has given how He works in our lives on a spiritual plane, how He's working with us now and why He has done what He has done. Because we were too many. That's the lesson. That's the story. Whether we were 500, 600, or 700 that began this process. Now, we're not counting all those who are about ready to come, but this is for now as we're getting ready to run down the hill and fight and press forward again. Before, it was with the second book - and well could have been leading up to the end except for what happened in the mid period of 2008. And now once again we're poised and ready to run down the hill. And that's what we're starting to do, right now at this time here, candidly, moving forward in this following year, to press forward and to do what we can do, to whatever doors that God opens up for us because we're together in this. And we're together in this in many ways.

And sometimes people don't grasp the importance of what God has called us to. He's called us to participate and a lot of that participation is what we do week by week because we're able to contribute, because God commands a system. God established a system whereby we can share together. It's called tithes and offerings, and that's how we share in this together. And then we share on a spiritual plane too in our minds and in our being.

Verse 9—And it came to pass the same night, that the Eternal said unto him, Arise, and go down unto the host/army; for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you fear to go down, go down to the host with Phurah your servant: And you shall hear what they are saying; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then he went down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that *were* in the host. So they were outside on the edges of the camp and they snuck down through there and, both of them, and it says, **And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude. That's what they looked like there were so many. 135,000. Incredible! ...and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. So again here, incredible! This is what they saw! They saw something so vast that you couldn't count them. It's like the 144,000; especially if we understand it's through 6,000 years you can't count them because you don't know who they are, who they were and generally who God worked with. And that's why it gives that "an innumerable multitude." You can't count it. And here it is like all the camels are out there. Well, how many are out there? Well, you don't know! How many were used to bring, to carry supplies and weaponry and all the things they had to have as an army? They were vast! Vast numbers!**

Verse 13—And when Gideon had arrived, behold, *there was* a man who was telling about a dream to his comrade, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, all of the sudden a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and went into a tent, and struck it so that it fell, and overturned it, and the tent remained flattened. And his fellow answered and said, This *is* nothing else except the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: *for* into his hand has God delivered Midian, and all the host. So they were afraid. 135,000 getting ready to go up against a much smaller number of people because they had their scouts. They had different ones out there. And they very likely even *saw* the two-thirds who left and went away. But there are things that God does through His power, through His spirit in the minds of men that people don't grasp and comprehend.

Verse 15—And it was *so*, when Gideon had heard the dream that was told, and the interpretation of it, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Eternal has delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

So, brethren, we have a work in front of us. We know that. We have gone through a period where we've had, almost as it were, a trial run. It's kind of like preparing for a race. We've had that preparation. We lived it. We have prepared for this! And now we're going to be able to do this *far easier*, in that respect. It's like strengthening your muscles and your mind for what you're getting ready to go through. And now we're in it. We're already in it. We're already well into this. But we're in it; we're in the race. We're in this final race. We started that a while back here back in November. And so we're already in this final seventh period of a great race that's in front of us. And we've already started running. And we're doing it in a manner that we have already exercised. We've prepared for it and we're moving along quite well. Awesome!

Verse 16—It says, And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches with the pitchers. And he said to them, Look on me, and do likewise, you know, follow, follow what's set before you that God has given. So what we do we do in an orderly, unified fashion with the same purpose and focus - that's what we're doing - all the way to the end! That's what this is about. And it goes on and says, and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall you do. And when I blow with a trumpet, I and all who *are* with me shall then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the Eternal, and of Gideon. Incredible! God lets us share in what He is doing. He is the one that does it, but we share in it. And we have to do our part. That's what this shows in a very powerful way. We all have our part and we share in it together. How beautiful is that? That's inspiring to understand.

Verse 19. I think about this. I think about when this was given, when we went through some of these things in times past here as we were going into the period of time for the second book and talking about examples like this of Gideon, and even of Joshua, but especially this example of Gideon and the group being made smaller so that it'd be very clear that God is doing this. "Not by might, nor by power, but *by my spirit*," God says. And so it's not done by us, but we have our work to do. And we share in it because God has called us to share in it. And so we have that opportunity. How blessed are we to be able to share with the Great Almighty God, what's in front of us? We have no grasp yet, because we haven't yet experienced it, what this is going to mean for people throughout the Millennium and in the Great White Throne that will speak of *this time* in profound ways that you cannot yet begin to grasp.

Verse 19—So Gideon, and the hundred men who *were* with him, came to the outside of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch; and they had just set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers that *were* in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers that held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow with, and they cried, The sword of the Eternal, and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. They fled from before them. They were scared! Incredible what took place.

And this world is going to be made afraid. This world is going to be made afraid even before you for what's coming on it, except in this case there are going to be those that God's going to be drawing out and working with and helping to make change and see the need for change in their life, who are going to embrace what really is coming - Jesus Christ and 144,000. And they're going to begin embracing those things as they see this world *torn apart*, everything that man has built that begins to crumble. And we witness those things. We will see those things.

And so there is so much that can be said here. There are some interesting statements that follow what God inspired to be written about the Apostasy in 2 Thessalonians 2 that very much apply right now to us. I think it'd be good to turn over there. We have the story of Gideon, but let's be reminded of what is written over there in 2 Thessalonians. I don't have time to go through all of this, but I think of some of the things - we'll skim through a part of it here, again, talking about 2 Thessalonians 2, talking about the coming of Christ and what was to be accomplished toward the end-time that would be a sign for God's people that the end was here. And we know that it's about the Apostasy, the Falling Away, or the Great Falling Away and talking about the son of man that was to be revealed, that the things were being held back.

It talks about here, notice **2 Thessalonians 2:7—For the mystery of iniquity is already at work: only he who now lets, the word means "holds back" will until he is taken out of the way.** And so all through the Church of the past 2,000 years, every era of people, they've been wanting, they've been looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. They have believed the coming of Jesus Christ, that he'll return, that he is the *Messiah* prophesied in the Old Testament to come and to establish God's Kingdom on this earth. And so what was holding it all back was this, the son of man. I mean, I'm sorry, "the man of sin," the "son of perdition" that had to be revealed before the Son of Man could return. So what was holding back and keeping back the coming of Christ, the Son of God to come back to this earth was this.

And it says, **And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the LORD shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his (Christ's) coming. Whose coming, again, speaking of the man of sin that will be destroyed, is after the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them who perish, because to live that way, to turn against God, they perish. They won't be given opportunity. Not now. ...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, it says, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.** It's incredible what can happen and what happens to people when they begin to go off course, when they begin to believe something different than what God has given in the end-time through His apostle, and what happens in the mind that they can believe a lie and lies and evil.

It goes on to say, **that they all might be damned,** in other words, be brought into judgment, who **believed not the truth.** And we've been given the truth and we believe it and we're stronger than ever before in the Church. And God has made us so. "Be strong and of good courage." It's God who gives that! Isn't that awesome!

And so it goes on to say, **But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning, notice this, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit...** It's God's spirit that sets us apart. God's spirit is the only way that we know and see the things we do. And it's by His power that we have what we have. **...and the belief of the truth,** the ability to believe the truth, it comes from God Almighty. Thank God for it. Thank God! **Whereunto He called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** And just as you have been called, and just as you have been awakened, whoever you are, because of this good news that God has given through what He's inspired to be given to an apostle at the end of an age. It's just what it is. It's just the truth. It's just the way it is. Things have been added to give us a complete number of 57 Truths.

Therefore, brethren, STAND FAST, and that's the message for us today, very powerfully so. That's what is needed that followed the Apostasy, the need to stand fast. How many have? There are several hundred, a few thousand who have gone by the wayside. ...**and hold the traditions**, it's a word in the Greek that means, "that which has been handed down/handed over." So God has handed down a lot to us beginning with the truths that went beyond what Mr. Armstrong gave, that went beyond 21 Truths, counting the three that were in Sardis, and then the 18 that God gave to Mr. Armstrong. And then all the others from 21 on to 57 Truths. Awesome! So it says, hold fast to those things, **stand fast**, stand fast in those truths and hold fast to what God has given, **which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.**

And then it goes on to say in other scriptures here... But you know, there's so much here, brethren, there is so much that we can go into that have to do with an end of an age. And I think that would really be a good place to end here because we can go on and talk about some of the other things here, but there are admonitions over and over again in scripture about holding fast, about being strong, and of being of good courage. And that's where we are in time. We are to hold fast and to fight!

God has made an army, given an army of people, a remnant, and we have an opportunity to do this together. Because an army fights together, it really does. We're in this together. And we need to see that, we need to grasp this that we need each other. And what an awesome blessing that God has given it to us in the form of a family. We are a family. I am so thankful to be a part of such a family that God has given at the end of an age that's called a remnant, and yet having brought others into it, into that family. Because it's not just the remnant who have been spun out of, if you will, out of Worldwide who have come through all this, but others who have been brought into this as well, who are able to share with a remnant.

So, brethren, we've had an awesome Feast of Tabernacles, a great Last Great Day, and we go back into this world again, we go back to our homes and back to our church areas, but let's be focused. Let's be ever so keenly focused and determined to *hold fast what God has given to us*, to not deviate to the left or to the right, but to stay on course and to *fight* for this way of life that God has given us that is just about to be ushered into this earth. Because we have to stand. We have to stand fast, indeed. That is much of what it means "to hold fast." To take the stand of this way of life regardless of what anybody else says or does around us. We hold fast to what God has given us and we *fight* for what He's offered us.