

Welcome, everyone, to this particular Sabbath. We've been on the road for about 4 or 5 days travelling. So far, so good. The adjustment in time has been a bit of a struggle. Normally when Ron gives a live sermon at 2:30 in EST, you're over here, yes? It's 6:30am in the morning in Australia, so we normally get up and listen to that live broadcast. So the time difference has been a bit of a struggle this time. I think it's because my wife's getting older, so.... It's me. It's definitely me. It's the only place in the world where you drive on the wrong side of the road, which is the right side. Most people won't understand that you can be right and wrong at the same time! But we *are* in America! My age is catching up, you can tell.

Today we are so blessed that we do not have to suffer the effects of a spiritual famine, which is a famine of the word of God. Now, there are a lot here that have actually been through a famine, which is a spiritual famine. We're going to look today at a lot of the aspects of what a famine is. And we understand what a physical famine is, which is no water; things start to die. There are many here that have actually lived through a spiritual famine. And today we don't have to live through a spiritual famine. We have an apostle. We have a prophet. And therefore, the word of God is given to us. We have excess. We have that much, it's ridiculous, really, we can't take it all on board. But to live through a spiritual famine or a drought is a horrendous thing. It really is a terrible thing.

Now, in this congregation there are some that have lived through it and know what it's like and experienced it. Well, those of you that haven't actually experienced a famine of the word of God, it is difficult to comprehend what it's like. Now, one aspect of it is the fact that it comes into three areas. The first one is that the famine can happen within an individual. It can happen within the ministry. Or it can happen to both.

And the apostasy was exactly that. There were people that the famine started for them. In other words, the word of God was not being *heard* by them, yet it was being given. What can happen is a minister can preach the truth, but it can't be "heard." Or a minister can preach the truth without God's spirit. Or the minister won't preach the truth. Now, those that have been through the famine, the Apostasy, know what it's like.

Well, what happened within the congregations of the Church of God, the Worldwide Church of God at that time, was that the famine of the word started to affect many people, which means God's spirit was not active and flowing in their life, therefore, they can't hear. People can't hear the truth. They'll hear words, they'll know aspects, but they can't hear spiritually because the famine has started to starve them to death. And what happens is that eventually when you're in a famine you die. And that's what happened to the whole Church. It died. It died a spiritual death.

God's spirit wasn't flowing. There was a drought of the word of God, and therefore, people starved to death.

Then we had the Apostasy, which was really triggered by ministers. So a minister can get up, like I could today, and preach to you about the Sabbath, which is the truth, but doesn't mean that I've got God's spirit. Now, we know there's millions of people, mainly in the Jewish congregations, where the Sabbath is taught, which is the truth. I must just verify that - an aspect of the truth because they don't really understand the Sabbath. But the keeping of the Sabbath from sunset to sunset is the truth. It's taught. But it's taught without God's holy spirit. So the truth can be taught without God's holy spirit.

Now, within a congregation there can be people that can "hear" the truth because they have God's spirit. So I may not have God's spirit and talk to you about the Sabbath and you will "hear" and believe the truth, because you're not in drought, you're not in a famine, you're alive, God's spirit's in you. But God's spirit may not be with me. I hope you're staying with me with this because it can be quite complicated. Because somebody can have God's spirit in a congregation and *hear* the truth and no error, which is, this is important, they know there's something wrong, there's an error to be heard.

Then during the Apostasy, or leading up the Apostasy where the drought was starting to take effect we had ministry that didn't have the truth and they started to teach some aspects of error. Now, there were people there that knew things were wrong but couldn't put their finger on it because they were already in famine and the minister was in famine. Then there were other ministers that didn't have God's spirit that taught the truth, but nobody could "hear" it and they really were just going through the repetition of what they had heard. Just like going to an academic school today where something is taught, and therefore, it's truth. Like a lot of people would say, "In Australia, Captain Cook found Australia." Well, that's the answer in the academic books, but 300 years before them there was the Dutch. But if you put down, "The Dutch found Australia," you'd get "*wrong*." But it's right! Just like America here, you're wrong, but you're right.

So when you talk about God's word or the truth it's very complicated. And do you know what? Famine, famine of the word can strike any one of us at any time. Just because we have an apostle that is preaching the word of God, giving the truth by the power of God's holy spirit, what does that mean to us? Means food, spiritual food, the word of God *is* being given, but we can move into spiritual famine. Scary thing. Scary thing. And we won't hear the spiritual aspect of that.

It's like reading the new book. A person can read it on an academic level and go, "Oh yeah, that's all wonderful. This is going to happen. That's going to happen." But what does it really mean? The spiritual intent of all of it and what it's really all about - salvation - can be missed because it's just academic. So people can read the book and what does that prove? They've read a book. So it requires God's holy spirit to understand it, to "see" it, to know it.

We're going to go through aspects of a drought and a famine so that some level of comprehension can be understood in it.

I remember when the Apostasy started because in Australia it was slightly different; we heard the Apostasy sermon in the first week of January, and it was the edited version, and it was under two hours. But it had been edited. Playing golf on the Sabbath had been taken out. A lot of things had been taken out. Prior to that there were rumblings and, like disgruntled, disgruntled brethren were there. Personally, I think I'd gone to sleep before the Apostasy well and truly. I knew things weren't quite right. And one of the things that shocked us, as we were sort of out of the loop. There was a loop and just before the Apostasy, three, I don't know how many years it was, maybe two or three years before, some of the Australian brethren in Worldwide Church of God were in contact with American brethren and it was going around that they were going to change the Sabbath. Well, we weren't in that loop, so to speak, and it was to do with Gerald Flurry and that group. Well, we went to Sabbath services like we normally would, sat down in the congregation - there was 450 odd people there - and one of the ministers got up and gave a sermonette and said, "Because they're going to change the Sabbath and the Holy Days we're leaving." Changing the Sabbath and Holy Days!? I knew nothing about the changing the Sabbath and the Holy Days! And it was about 25 percent of the congregation got up and walked out. Now, this is years before the actual Apostasy! And, of course, we were sitting there, "*What is going on?!*" You know, like this was a... "What do you mean?!" Ministers and brethren and some of our best friends, would you believe, got up and walked out on that day. And we thought, "What?!" We didn't know what was going on so we knew then there was something's wrong. We're out of the loop!

Well, as time went on and the Apostasy took place I remember very clearly being on a particular beach and there was a deacon and a few other people there and we're looking out at the ocean and he was saying, "They're not changing the Sabbath." This is after. "They're not changing the Sabbath. They're not going to change the Holy Days. It's all okay. Everything's fine." I'm going, "Well, I'm confused. I'm not sure. What are they really saying?" It was a difficult period because I was already in famine so I wasn't "hearing" much other than the academic part is they're doing away with the Sabbath and Holy Days and clean and unclean foods. And others were there saying, "Oh, no. It's okay. It's all done away. You can go shopping on the Sabbath. You can do all this stuff." So it was confusing.

So the next Sabbath we went to services and the deacon who had stood there and said, "They're not doing away with anything," guess where he was? He was working because he was a builder, and more confusion.

So we walked into congregations where the famine had hit, starvation had taken place, and we were breaking up into groups. Well, what did people believe? Who knows what's going on? Nobody knew. And it got smaller and smaller. And as the ministers were teaching error it became confusing. And we could see aspects of things and in the end we were just slammed. You could hear the Bibles. We used to, in the end, sit at the very back of the hall, at the back, and it was a

small group of us. And in the end what you would hear was, half way through a sermon you'd hear "smack," "smack," Bibles being closed and people getting up and walking out. And this is after the Apostasy sermon, because it went on for a period of time. So it was a terrible time, to go into a famine.

The title of today's sermon is *Spiritual Famine*.

We're going to look at John 6:22-40 which covers an aspect of famine, or how we "hear." Because, really, it's all based on God's holy spirit. Whether we "hear" or whether we don't is all based on God's holy spirit. And if we don't have God's holy spirit we can't hear spiritually. It's like an analogy. When you're dealing with somebody that has a mental illness or has a mental problem and you go up (thinking you're normal), and you go up and say, "Do you know what? You've got a mental problem." Do you think they can "hear" you? They can't understand a word that you're saying. It's the same thing when it comes to God's holy spirit. Because you can say things but what's heard is totally different. It can't be recognized. So it requires God's holy spirit.

Now, the reading of the new book is *exactly* the same. It requires God's holy spirit because you can go through the first chapter, and if we're not careful, because we've been around in the Church for a while, we can skim through that first chapter alone saying, "Oh, I know that. I know that. I know that." That's what we can do. But if we were to stop with spiritual eyes and just meditate on each time a paragraph is written there is so much meat in there that only we can consume it. Isn't that incredible? Because it requires God's spirit.

So going forward it's the same thing. The book is going to require God's holy spirit to be able to understand aspects of it. And we're all at different levels about different things we "see." And different things mean something different when something is spoken or given.

John 6:22—On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, and this is because Jesus Christ had already left and the disciples had left as well and there was no boats actually there for the people, except that one that his disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but his disciples had gone away alone. So here they are on the wrong side of the sea and they're looking for Jesus Christ. And of course they are still very physically orientated. And the miracle of the loaves and the fishes had taken place, bread had been provided for them, and they were seeking more bread, basically.

Verse 23—However, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks, which is what Jesus Christ had done and that's where a miracle had taken place. God had worked a miracle through Jesus Christ.

Verse 24—when the people, therefore, saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they also got into boats, these ones that were coming past, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Rabbi
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(Teacher), **when did you come here?** So this is still all still physical things that they're looking at and they're looking at everything physically.

Jesus answered and said to them... Now, when you look at this and say, "How did you come here?" And then you look at the answer that Jesus Christ gave, which is spiritual in nature, they're going to struggle because he's talking in, it's like riddles to them. So they ask a question, "Well, when did you come here?" And this is the answer, **Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs,** which was the miracles that had taken place, **but because you ate loaves and were filled.** So it was physical. Now, they didn't... They said, "Well, when did you come here," and he comes and says, "Well, you're only here because you're up to something physical." Well, that wasn't the question they asked him, but now they're into a different topic.

Verse 27—Christ says, **Do not labor/Do not work for food which perishes,** in other words, it's all physical. Because we're to *strive* for physical things, which is we are to work physically, but, he's saying, that's not the main focus in life. The main focus in life is something spiritual. **...but for food which endures to everlasting life.** Now, this is the key, because really a famine is a famine of the word, the famine of the word of God, the famine of food. There's no food, no spiritual food. So when you go into a church where there's no food you walk out hungry still. You're looking for something. It doesn't exist. And it's over time you go to sleep and become complacent. Been there, know exactly what it's like to become lukewarm, complacent, and go to sleep. Well, we should have been striving "for food that endures to everlasting life," which is spiritual food, which we have *plenty*. And we have God's spirit so we "hear" and we "see." Where there was a period, and there are some in this room that know that period, where we couldn't "see" and couldn't "hear." And you know, it's a terrible thing when you go through that because nothing sort of made sense and God's spirit wasn't active in our life. We weren't in a state of ongoing repentance.

I was saying to Johnny it's difficult to comprehend sometimes unless you've been through things, unless you've lived it. Well, one of the things that Chris and myself lived is in 1982 when we were first called, in 1983 we were baptized, well, Mr. Armstrong was around and there was plenty of food. But the focus, generally, of what we were in, our focus, was more knowledge. We had a lot of knowledge. We believed in Petra, places, all that. It was just all knowledge about what river, where they went through in the Red Sea. Everything was knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. Working on self never entered my mind. It didn't enter my mind. I was doing *okay*, as you all know. And therefore, I never really worked on self. I never understood that. Prayer, study, and did all that. Correspondence Course, did all that. We used to have Bible Study's on a Wednesday night, packed the kids up; no matter what age we pack them up Wednesday night, we go to Bible Study and there were hundreds at Bible Study. Because we were in a country town, in the mornings we used to get up and leave at 8:00 in the morning to go set up the P.A. system and we'd often have a Bible Study in the morning there or get together with the brethren, and we'd have services, and then we'd have Spokesman's Club that night and we might get home at 11:00

that night. You know, the Church was our life! Sunday was events where everyone turned up and the brethren... It was fellowship, the whole thing. But it was more physically orientated.

Then when the Apostasy happened and we were confused and asleep we remained asleep and we ended up on a particular day, we got a phone call saying... Because we actually... the Apostasy... We came to the conclusion sitting up in bed in Western Australia and we had the Bible open - that was in Melbourne at that time - had the Bible and I was going through saying, "The Sabbath is there!" And we came to the conclusion that night that no matter what happens, if it's only Chris and myself, we would stay at home and keep the Sabbath. Because the whole thing was a mess. It had gone astray. So we thought, well, we're just going to stay at home and keep it. Now, the reality is we wouldn't have survived. We were already in famine and we would have eventually eroded that and we wouldn't have survived. We would be in the world like everybody else that leaves, goes back to the world. And that's what would have happened to us.

We were fortunate. We got a phone call from somebody that said, "There's a Sabbath meeting, and then this Pentecost of '95," and we went to that particular service and there was forty people there, would you believe. And the minister there was somebody that was from Worldwide and he was the most bitter person that I have ever seen as a minister. His bitterness and hurt was *so deep* that he couldn't overcome it. And the reason was that he'd been a minister in the Church for many a year and he was basically sacked and had no benefits, nothing. In other words, he had nothing. And he funded this Sabbath meeting and Pentecost meeting from his own funds that he had left.

Anyway, from that United Church of God, Australia was virtually started. Well, the United Church of God, Australia which we were in for around about ten years, in that period we were in a deep famine, only I never knew it. You know, there was a spark there for a while where they started to reprint the truth, but we were in a famine - never knew it. And in the end, the last two years of that period that we were there, working on self never came into it. This was the easiest Church I've ever been in because we didn't do anything. We sort of drifted because we were cut off from the flow of God's holy spirit. We just went along and almost back to the world, but still kept the Sabbath, Holy Days, tithing. Did all those things. So you can do all that on a physical level without God's spirit. I'm evidence. I'm proof. I know exactly you can do all those things from knowledge. Well, we did that for a period.

And one thing that happened was we never knew that God was awakening us. We never knew that. And we went through two and a half to three years of... I've got to be careful. There's certain words that you have in America that don't mean the same thing in Australia. And we use that word and American's go, "gasp!" So I've got to remember not to use that word. Starts with an "h." But in Australia it doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean anything. It's just a hole in the ground; no one cares. But here I know it means something different. Well, we went through a period that was very difficult. And the difficulty was that we were being awakened and we were

starting to "see" things on a spiritual level that others couldn't, and therefore, "two can't walk together unless you agree." So we couldn't walk together.

So going to Sabbath services we were coming out of famine, they were all in famine. Well, we were getting food because we were looking and God was opening our minds. And in a particular year of 2005 at the Feast in Queensland - we used to go into bookshops and second hand shops - and I came across this book, and I turned it around and it was the black book. And I looked at it. Chris was running around and I used to look at books for looking at different things and I read the back of it and I read a bit and I flicked through bits of it, and I said to Chris, "Oh," I think it was \$9.00 or something and I wouldn't buy it, being cheapskate. I wasn't going to buy it because on the back it said it was free! So I thought, I'll get it free. So I read it and I said to Chris, "This guy believes what we do!" Oh dear, little did I know! So God's apostle had written something and I, "See, he believes what I do." Little did I... I hadn't read the book yet but I'd read the back and I knew basically what it was. Well, we were being awakened.

So life was difficult and I now know why life was difficult. And it was all about the ministry, would you believe? We were having battles with the ministry for two or three years in United Church of God. We were having really strong difficulties. So much so that they'd, really were isolating us.

I've got to tell you this. We're not going to get far, but anyway. There was one particular sermonette, because we were sort of isolated, there was about 4 or 5 of us in a large group of a hundred or so - we were quite isolated because we were being awakened and "seeing" things and we were disagreeing with what they were doing. And they didn't like the fact that we were disagreeing because it was the "United" Church of God and we weren't united at all. There was no unity at all. Well, there was a sermonette given and it was about basically when the spies went in the promised land and Rahab, was it, I think it was, Rahab lied, remember, and said that they weren't there and they were. Well, the sermonette said that she was justified by lying. That by lying that was okay. And of course, we're sitting there going, "This is wrong!" But everyone was in famine. They're all asleep and everyone sort of said, "Oh," you know, "Obviously you can lie."

So the minister at that time, he knew that we weren't sort of in unity with them and he was standing up on the back wall and I could see him looking around. He could see... and he saw my wife. And of course, my wife's heading towards him and you can see the look on his face. He's going, "Oh, no! Here we go!" Because there was so much we were disagreeing with. And Chris went up and said, "You know what, it is so fantastic that I can now lie." And he sort of said, "Well..." They didn't know the answer to all this because no one was really correcting things. So we said, "Well, are you going to correct it in a sermon? This has got to be handled straight away." Well, it went on for weeks, wasn't it? Weeks. No one would do anything. And we'd say, "When are you going to address this issue about this sermonette?" And they wouldn't do it, wouldn't do it. And in the end it was a half-hearted sort of redirection in these matters.

It was... When you're in famine, it's difficult. The world's in famine. True? People that leave the Church, guess what they're in? They're in famine. They can't "hear." And it's all physical and they can't "hear" the truth. They might hear sermons about truth but they can't "hear" because the bitterness generally enters in and they don't want to hear. And when you get into that state of mind, which I've been in that state of mind, because I had it when I was in United, you get into a state of mind where you don't listen for the truth. Guess what you listen for? Error. You're listening to find fault. So you can listen all the way and think, "Oh, there you go! That proves it! They're wrong!" Because you're not listening for anything, you're just listening for error. That's what you do.

We'll continue on in **verse 27**. So the food is spiritual food. We have ample of spiritual food in the Body of Christ, the Church of God now. We probably don't recognize the feast table that's set up for us. We simply don't. Those, I believe, that have been through the Apostasy, that have been through famine understand more - not that they're better or anything - they just understand more what it's like to go without food, to be in famine where the ministry are teaching rubbish and lies. They've experienced it. They know what it's like to be in a drought. And it's a shocking thing. It is a shocking thing. Whereas people that are in the Church today don't know what it's like to be... You know, having a minister get up and saying things to you and you're going, "Hang on a minute. Maybe that's right. Maybe that's wrong." You don't know. How would you know? Ministry is supposed to be the teachers and they're teaching error and you've got to work it out for yourself? Which you can't because it requires God's spirit to work it all out.

Verse 27, continuing on, **which the Son of Man will give you**. So this bread, which is spiritual in nature, **because God the Father has set His seal on him**, on Jesus Christ, which is the Word of God, the Logos of God made flesh.

Verse 28—Then they said to him, **What shall we do...** It's interesting, this question. **What shall we do that we may work the works of God?** So they're not really still into this food. They want the works. What are the works? They wanted the miracle. So "How do we provide for ourselves?" is probably another way to look at it. "How do we do the works, the works of God? And how can we have the bread multiplied?" Still physical. They wanted to do it themselves. They don't want Jesus Christ; they want to do it themselves.

Verse 29—Jesus answered and said to them, **This is the work of God**, so it's not about miracles, **that you believe in him**, in Jesus Christ, **whom He (God the Father) sent**. So the secret to this is spiritual, because you can only believe the word of God or what Jesus Christ said if you are called and receive God's holy spirit.

So we are different. And it's interesting working with the world and being in the world that we are different. And we should never, ever forget it. If we look at what our accountability and responsibility is, our accountability and our responsibility is firstly, to believe God, believe what Jesus Christ said, then to live it.

Now, after I came out of United - so we were physical knowledge, United we did nothing, we were virtually in the world, asleep, in famine - then to be awakened and come into God's true Church, it requires something different. This is the hardest Church to be in in the world! It *is*! And it's best that it is. Because to come to understand the most important thing of all of this - this is not about knowledge. This is not about reading a book and going, "Ah, yes. This is what's going to happen and it's going to be an explosion in the air and there's going to be electronics, and we've got to save all this food and..." That is all, actually, *irrelevant* if we haven't got God's spirit. And if we're not *living* God's way of life in our life every single day, or striving to fight the mind (which is difficult, is difficult), we're not really *in* God's Church. It requires that. It requires a fight, a fight against self. Now, it *is* the most difficult Church to be in.

How many people...? We were at the Feast and I was talking about this. How many people do you think, if we got a stadium and said, "You're all... It's all free. Free meal. Free drinks. Turn up and you're going to hear a sermon from a true servant of God," and he gets up and tells you, "You are all selfish!" Now, how many do you think are going to survive the whole two hours? People don't want to know they're selfish! They can't "see" they're selfish. But we turn up to hear about our nature, who we really are, what we really are. Yes, and it is a battle. It's hard work. And the longer you're in God's Church and the more food that you're given spiritually, it's actually harder. It doesn't get easier. There's no easy road. There's no easy road. And this is about overcoming self.

So being in three different groups at three different times, this is the most difficult. It is hard. It's hard work. But we're so blessed. We are *so blessed* when you consider how many people know what we know. And how we have to respond to people, it's incredible. And to come to understand that God is for us and that God is working with us, providing us spiritual food is an incredible thing.

I'll relate something to you because during the different periods of time I've made many a mistake in financial situations. So if anyone in the Church asks me for financial advice you're coming to the *wrong person*, because mine's pretty bad. So, really, every time I've had something, I've lost it all, done something stupid. So in the end I came to realize that when Ron said two or three months worth of food supply, well, in Wayne's mind two or three months is self-sufficient for a year, literally. That's because I go extreme. I'm an extreme sort of person. Anyway, did that. And of course, the dates expire and you try to eat it and you throw it, you go through this cycle.

Well, it wasn't until a period of time where I really had to come to understand to trust God, what it really means to wait and trust on God - really. We've got a renovators delight, I'd like to call it, and we bought this property and it needs a lot of work. It's a renovators delight if you're a renovator. Most other people think it's a dump, but it's a delight. But we're quite happy. And what happened was that we're working away there and one day this person knocks on the door and says, "Hi! My name is 'such and such.' My grandfather used to own this property and my son used to run his sheep on the property. And we'd like to fix up the fencing." And I said, "Look, I haven't got any money and it'll be a while before I get to do the fencing at all, because I just don't have

any money for that." He said, "Oh, no, no. It's not a problem. I'll fix it and I'll do it all." And I said to him, "Well...." He said, "No, no. I'll do it. You're going to have the sheep on there for free so..." I said, "Well, keep the grass, so, okay," reluctantly, because it's harder to receive sometimes than it is to give. And I thought, "Oh, okay."

So guess what day he turns up? Sabbath. 8:00 in the morning, we're in the middle of listening to a sermon - knock, knock. "Hey," he said, "I'm here with the tractor to do the fencing." And I said, "Well, there's something you've got to know." I said, "I'm a Sabbath keeper and I don't work Friday night and Saturday and I'm not going to be able to help you. I'd love to help you, but it'll have to be Sunday." He said, "Oh, that's not a problem. I've got an uncle that is weird like you," you know, like. And he was really nice about it. Said he's got an uncle and he started going through, he says, "Oh, he doesn't work Friday night, Saturday. He won't watch TV. He won't..." He's going through all this list of things. I was going... Oh, he's got this view of me already, all these things I don't do! I said, "Oh, yeah, but," I said, "this is never going..." He said, "Not a problem." So he turns up on Sunday with a tractor and posts. He bought all the posts, the fence. He fenced the whole property.

And then I realize that, you know what, if God wants to inspire somebody to help us during the difficult period that's ahead, self-sufficiency is not the answer. Trusting and waiting on God's the answer. Because God can put into a person's mind anything and they will do it. Because God puts it in there to *benefit* His people, which we are. We are *His* people. The Creator of the Universe can inspire anybody to do anything. And we won't get to this today, but we were going to look at aspects of this, that these things can happen and you don't have to worry. Basically, you don't have to worry. Put our trust, and wait on God and He will provide.

And the other day...? We used to have these big trees at the back of the property, quite massive trees, but they'd fallen down and there's the stumps. There's about twenty big stumps in the ground. And I've sat there looking at these stumps and think, "What am I ever going to do with these stumps?" I'll never dig them out. I'd be here for thirty years trying to dig them out. He pulls up with a truck with a big digger and he says, "I'm here to dig up those stumps for you." I said, "Oh, I don't have the money to dig up the stumps." He said, "Oh, don't worry about the money, " the heart of it. He says, "This is what I do for a job." I said, "Well, you're going to tell the boss to send the bill." He said, "Nah, don't worry about it. The boss won't care." He get there and he digs up these stumps in about two hours and rips them all out of the ground and puts them all in a pile to get them burned. And he just drives off as if nothing's happened. And I'm sitting there going, "There's hundreds of dollars that would cost me and God's inspired him to do it."

And we've got what's called two slurry pits, or what... You might call them dams but this used to be a dairy and they used to wash all the slurry, the manure with the water into these big pits. And he turned us and said, "Oh, by the way," he says, "throw all your rubbish in the pit because I'm going to come and fill them in." And I said, "I don't have the money to be filling in the pits." He said, "Don't worry about it." He says... I said, "I might have some, enough, maybe January,

February." "Don't worry about it," he said, "I'll pay for it." And I said, "Well, I don't like to take..." I said, "Well, not really." He said, "No, no. Don't worry, I'll come in and I'll get my boss to give you a quote and while we're here we'll do this. And by the way we were talking about putting in a sewage." Don't worry, I'll dig the hole for the sewage for you." And I'm going, "Um..... "

We don't have to worry about *anything*, honestly. We might think we have nothing. We have everything. Because God can inspire anything! He controls everything. He's the Author of Life and Death. He can take life. He can give life. That's nothing to God compared to filling in a dam or a pit or being provided food by others. So we shouldn't worry about these things because we have the most important food of all, the bread of life. Incredible. Something that we should really hang on to. And we're given it every Sabbath as far as the truth, new truths. And within the 57 Truths there's so much truth that we haven't even understood yet within those truths, yet alone implement it into a person's life and live it.

Because hearing something's quite easy, you know. "Men and woman are equal." Rolls off pretty easy doesn't it? Living it? When you've been brought up with prejudices and biases? It all sounds easy, but living it is different. It takes years to implement this change of thinking into our life. Well, we have that opportunity. We have the power, the power of God to change the way we think. Isn't that incredible? Absolutely incredible.

Well, here we see that they are now required to believe God, which is what he said as the Word of God, as the Passover. Now, they don't understand anything of this. This is the bread of life. They are in famine because? They don't have God's spirit. That's why they can't understand it. We, with God's spirit, can "hear" what's being said. Isn't that incredible? And Jesus Christ is talking to them; they are *all* in famine like the *world* is in *famine* - complete famine. They're in *drought*. There is some truth but they can't understand it. Even if they read it, they won't understand it. Whereas we have the opportunity like when Mr. Armstrong was around, and now where God's spirit dwells in His people and God's spirit dwells in the ministry. Isn't that incredible? What an opportunity. What an opportunity we have.

Well, in the Millennium what an opportunity they're going to have. They're going to read some of these things and go, "Unbelievable! These people were around and they weren't in famine and I was in famine?" Because from the Apostasy, everybody that lived through the Apostasy, went to sleep, everybody went into famine. There was not one single person that didn't go into a spiritual famine, where they couldn't "hear" or couldn't preach the truth.

It became very difficult for certain ministers, as some of them were trying to hang on to aspects of the truth, and yet the majority weren't. The majority were going against them. So it was a difficult time for everybody. Confusion. Famine causes confusion. Starvation causes confusion because you're not sure where your next meal is going to come from. And who is it that is going to provide the food? The same spiritually. Who is going to provide the food? Where is it? And as Ron said in a sermon recently, "looking to where God is," It's not as simple as what it is to be called or

awakened, to come to where God is. That's wonderful, beautiful process. It's incredible. But when you've been called and then God's no longer there in the ministry? It's difficult. It is very difficult to find a person's way.

And you know what? We shouldn't look down on any of the brethren that are out there as far as those that are asleep. Because they're asleep, like I was, only God in His mercy awakened Chris and myself at the same time, fortunately. But there's thousands out there that would love a calling or an awakening. They will. And they're going to be given that opportunity. And whether some of them take it or all of them take it, that's an individual choice.

Verse 30—Therefore, they said to him, What sign will you perform then? So, here they're still going, "What physical sign will you now do?" "Are you going to show us who you really are by doing this miracle again?" ...**that we may see it...** They want to see it physically. And if they see it physically they'll then believe. **What work will you do?** So it's all physical. And that's what can happen when people read the book - it's all physical. But doesn't mean to say they're going to believe, because it requires God's holy spirit.

We are here today because of God's holy spirit. And we can only "hear" what's being said because of God's holy spirit, which is the bread of life, which is life, that's where it comes from. True manna.

Verse 31—Our fathers ate manna in the desert; as it is written, He (God) gave them bread from heaven to eat. Physical manna was given to them to keep them alive physically. Jesus Christ is talking to them about spiritual things, but they can't "hear" it. **Then Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you true bread from heaven.** They're not understanding anything of this. We understand it: the Logos, the Word, the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ being given to us. Through Passover we understand it. Incredible thing that we have. So we have true bread, brethren, every Sabbath. Whether we consume it or not is a personal, individual choice. It's an individual choice whether we really want to listen spiritually, to work on ourselves, because sermons are given for the purpose of personal, individual growth. And a person's growth is based on how much bread they consume and what they do with it. The energy that's given by God's spirit, whether we'll fight or whether we don't, that hidden sin that we almost refuse to want to work on because everyone's got one. I've got one. I've got two or three. And, you know, in the order of things they do go up and down. But there's certain things that really take a strong battle. Well, we have to pull that sin to the front and acknowledge it and then wait on God and work with God. He wants to change us, to change the way we think, because He wants to give us food that endures to everlasting life. And when a person's in Elohim they no longer require food, physically or spiritual food. Because God's dwelling in the person, it'll be there always. Always. Always the ability.

Now, I've often thought about what it would be like to not sin. My mind can't go there! Imagine just being yourself with no sin, like, having a personality and interacting with people and never

saying the wrong thing. Wouldn't that be incredible? That's a miracle! It's got to be! Because we have to get to that point where we're working so hard on ourselves that God'll change us and then we don't have to work on self because there's no self involved, we'll be who we are and no sin. Never to be able to say anything wrong or say evil or do evil. That's an incredible thing. I've tried to dwell on what it would be like and my mind struggles to get there, because sooner or later I'm wandering off somewhere in my mind.

Verse 33—For the bread of God is it which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world, which is the Word, the Logos. Then they said to him (Jesus Christ), Lord, give us this bread always. Now, they're looking physically. Well, this should be ours. Because one of the things that I've come to see, the most fearful thing (and I think I've mentioned it before), the most fearful thing that could *ever* happen to me, that I *fear* the most - because being in God's Church is a fearful thing - the most fearful thing that I fear is the loss of God's spirit. It almost terrifies me. You know, I think, "Boy..." And I thought, "It's happened to me *before* and I didn't know it!" That's how tragic it is; I didn't know it.

But, fortunately, now I know there are some keys to understanding whether or not the flow of God's holy spirit is in me or not. And one of the keys we've already covered. It's when we look to disagree. That should be the biggest alarm bell in our minds, with God's spirit. If we disagree on anything to do with the truth that God is giving through His apostle, alarm bells should ring off. This is... You're walking on the most *dangerous territory* a person can walk on. But we find that being in God's true Church is a fearful thing. This is a dangerous place.

I was telling to Johnny, "The Church of God—PKG, it's a *dangerous* place!" And why do we think that way? Because we *know* this is God's true Church, we *know* about God's spirit, we *know* the truth, and it's such a fearful thing to think that we would ever want to disagree or go against God. It's a *terrifying* thing. I do understand the day I'm not terrified is the day that I probably haven't got God's spirit. Because I *should* be worried about my thoughts. I *should* be worried about disagreeing with God. I *should* be worried about those things.

So we have the bread of life now. We have the bread, the truth given to us. Whether we consume it and what we do with it, whether it provides that energy (God's spirit), to work on ourselves, well, that's about our choice, what we want to do with that bread that we're consuming.

Verse 34 again, **And they said to him, Give us this bread always.** So they wanted it physically. **And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life.** He is the Word of God. He is the thinking of God. **He who comes to me**, and that "comes" is a continuous action. Because we have to come to God continuously for the bread of life, and it's based on one key thing, which is repentance. So the day we stop repenting of things that we've said, thought, or done, we've got a problem. Because we *are* by nature against God. Now, to come to "see" that takes time. In Worldwide I never saw it, never understood it. In United, wasn't even mentioned. Now I "see" it and I know it's true, and it is a fearful thing. It's a fearful thing when you "see" it and understand it.

He who comes to me, this continual action, **shall never hunger**. Why? Because spiritual food is given by the power of God's holy spirit. So when we hear the truth it's God communicating with our minds, and if we have God's spirit and we're not in famine we'll absorb it and God will live and dwell in us. And the day it's not happening, it means we've got a sin we haven't repented of.

Now, what I've found in life is that the sin, unrepented of, is a habitual sin, for me personally. And to overcome it is not that simple, because it starts in the mind and it's about knowing that it's going on and wanting to fight it and thinking you've fought it, and then it's there again within 10 seconds. It's a battle. It's a fight. But that's what God's interested in. God is interested in the fight! Whether you win or lose that battle at different times is not the key issue, actually. The key issue is: Will a person continue to fight? In other words, repent, you know, I've said, "Ah, done it again." And then keep going on and try to change the way we think by the power of God's holy spirit. That's the key. Never giving up. So being in God's true Church is about spiritual food and never ever giving up.

I don't know whether you've seen that cartoon about the bird swallowing the frog and the frogs got his hands around the neck so it can't swallow. That's the same as being in God's Church! You've got to have the hand around our own neck, not willing to give up against ourselves. We've got to hold tight and go, "Nah, you've got to fight! And no way am I going down the tube in this time. I'm not going to give up. I'm going to keep fighting." No matter what happens in our life. And we're all going to go through different battles, those moments in time.

Ron had mentioned the moment in time when Abraham was tested, when God turned around and said, "Now I know you," because of a thought process. Personally, I believe I've had about five of those. That's what it feels like! But you get to a point where it is almost too hard. Like it's just really difficult. It's tough going. And there's that urge to say, well, you know, I don't know whether I can keep going with this. But then you turn to God and you keep going. You just keep going and the sin often is still there hidden away. There's different degrees of that sin. Well, you get to the point where you've got to make a decision, and the decision is, "I'm going to keep fighting no matter what." No different than when Chris and I sat up in bed that day and we said, "We know the Sabbath and Holy Days are true. If everybody abandons that truth we're just going to continue on." We were a bit deluded in some ways to think that we could without a Church, without an apostle. We wouldn't have done. But that's what was in our mind, to know we're going to keep going. And if people leave, people leave. There's not much you can do for people. People make choices in life and we're not accountable for what people choose. We're accountable for ourselves and what we choose every day, every minute; it's a continual thing.

So we have access to the bread of life. We have access to the truth. And the world is in famine and those in the scattered Churches are in famine and they don't know it. I know what it's like to be in a famine. The first thing is you don't really realize you're in one. You don't really know that things aren't right. You just sort of go along with what you think is right because you're leaning on your own understanding.

Verse 35—And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me, this continual action, shall never hunger. So spiritual food will always be provided powered by God's holy spirit. **And he who believes in me, believes what is said, believes the truth coming through God's apostle, shall never thirst.** God's spirit will flow through that person.

Verse 36—But I say to you that you have seen me, which is the works and the word of God, they saw him in action, **and yet you do not believe.** Because they wanted more evidence. "Do 'this.'" "Do 'that.'" All physical. **All that the Father gives me will come to me,** which is, requires a calling. Now, out of all the world, brethren, how blessed are we that this scripture applies to us. "All that the Father gives me." We've been given, called by God the Father. And you think, the Creator of the universe with all that power to do anything, to inspire someone to come up and dig up my yard and build a fence, He decided for some reason that I don't fully understand, and nor do any of you, that Chris and myself were both called at the same time. And you think, "Well, how incredible is that?" And yes, we *are* different. And you know what? We rejoice in the fact we are different. It's a great blessing to be different, to be part of God's Church. And we've been given the opportunity; we've been given over to Jesus Christ. That's what it's virtually saying. God the Father's called you, me, and we've been given over to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. That's what's happened. Fact. Reality. People in the world would think we're all crazy. "That guys crazy to say all that stuff. God the Father called *him* and he's been given over to Jesus Christ? Sure...!" But that's true! That's the truth of it. Isn't that incredible? That's amazing! It's just amazing that it's applying to you and me, this scripture.

...and the ones who comes to me, which we have, **I will by no means cast out.** So Jesus Christ won't reject us *unless* what? We reject him. God the Father called us for a purpose - which we don't always see all aspects of it, but it is about salvation, but there's much in the middle as well - been given to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church who is leading us to salvation through an apostle, through the truth, through spiritual food. And Jesus Christ says, "Well, I'm not going to reject what God the Father's given me." *But* there is a problem. It's us. We reject the spiritual food. That's the problem. We put ourselves into spiritual hunger by non-repentance, basically. We just live with our sin. We tolerate our sin. We don't work on our sin so we go into a famine, a famine of the word. We no longer can "hear" it.

Verse 38. So going back on that scripture. The problem is our choice. That's the problem. The problem is never God. The problem is never Jesus Christ. The problem's not the truth. The problem's not the apostle or the prophets. It's us, individually. I know the biggest problem is me. In my life, the biggest problem is me. It's the way I think. It's the way I react. It's the way I respond.

I know at different times.... I think some of the brethren in Australia know the answer they're going to get when they ask for some guidance and some counseling. And they may right up and say these different things and I listen patiently, as I should, and they say, you know, "What advice can you give?" And I say, "Well, all's I can tell you is you're the problem." Because in the end, guess

what? *We're* the problem! It's the way we think. It's the way we respond. It's not the other person in the marriage or in the relationship, whatever it is. No, you're the problem. They say.... There's one particular person, she will know who I'm talking about, she's, "Well, thanks Wayne, for reminding me." Cause they know the answer before they ring up. "Oh, the problem's you." It's the way you think. And the problem is me, the way I think. And if there's a problem, it's me; it's my problem. So the problem is always our choice. If we are in a famine it's because of our choices. We refuse to repent.

Verse 38—For I have come down from heaven, out from God the Father because it's God's thinking in Jesus Christ, not to do my own will, but the will of Him, God the Father, who sent me. This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all He has given me, that's everybody that is being called, I will lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. Which is about a time order. So we have been placed in the care of Jesus Christ. Isn't that incredible? If we just stop and think about it, we're under the care and guidance of Jesus Christ, who is in full unity with God the Father - thinks like God the Father. And in a time order God has promised that He will raise us up. Jesus Christ has made this promise: "I will raise him up." Because we're going to be nurtured by Jesus Christ through an apostle to the end of our life, that last breath, and in a time order we will be resurrected to spirit.

Now, that's a promise. It's not a throw-away phrase, "Be raised up at the last day." We're in a time order for us. Now, that's why we're here. And how great is it?

I know in a conversation I had with someone, I know people that aren't called and I believe that when they are called they *are* going to do a lot better than me, just because of their disposition and their zeal for things that they think are right now. But their disposition and behaviors, they're going to *love* the truth. Sometimes you'd love to give it to them, but no point. They can't "hear" anything you're saying because they're in famine. And you think, "Oh, it's going to be so exciting when they are either live into the Millennium or they're resurrected in that Hundred-Year period. How exciting is it when they get this spiritual food that we have!" And I believe that there's going to be a lot of them turn around to some and say, "You what?! You put yourself into a famine, into a drought? You *rejected* God's... He called you. God the Father calls you, placed you under Jesus Christ, and you're given all this spiritual food and you *what?! You left?* You walked away in bitterness?" People are going to go, "How did you do that?!" But they'll come to see it's quite easy. Personal choices of neglect, laziness.

Well, there's going to be a lot, brethren, that are going to love to hear what we have. And they're going to be given so much more, so much more food, so much more food for them.

For I have come down out of heaven. That is verse 39 we'll go to. **This is the will of the Father who sent me, that all He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees, spiritual sight.** It requires God's holy spirit. ...the Son and believes him/believes in him, what he said about

Sabbath keeping, Holy Day keeping, about not murdering, not having ill will. Which is not about stabbing people or shooting people. It's up here. Ill will is in the mind. That's where it all starts, what you'd *like* to do to somebody else, in the mind. And we have to nip it in the bud and stop it and stop and think who we really are. We're the most blessed people that have probably ever existed, we really are, at this time, the amount of food that we have. There's been thousands that have gone before us - basically, almost 144,000 - that have knowledge, have had God's spirit, have had a lot of truth, but they've had nothing compared to what's on our table. Nothing compared to what's on our table.

Verse 40—And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees, spiritually, the Son and believes in him, or believes him, what he said, may have everlasting life, the purpose of life. Isn't this incredible? The only reason we are here is for salvation. In the end, if you boil it all down, the reason is to be saved from what we are, because if we're not saved, we will die. It'll be forever. ...and I will raise him up at the last day.

The majority of the Church of God—PKG, the majority, have never known a spiritual drought or famine, a famine of the word. It's hard for a person to comprehend what it's like to go without, to have nothing. But it kills you in the end, spiritually will kill you.

A famine of the word is when the truth is no longer taught powered by God's holy spirit. Because somebody can preach the truth, like the Sabbath, but not have God's holy spirit. They don't understand it, in other words, to the degree that God has given. Aspects of the truth can be taught but it does not have God's holy spirit. There are others who know what it's like to be in a spiritual drought or famine and know the pain and suffering. And that's those that have been awakened. They know the pain and suffering that goes with it. And it is distressful.

There has never been a spiritual drought or famine in God's Church while there has been an apostle of God leading His Church. So the main famine took place when the Apostasy happened, because we never had an apostle. And when that took place there was a lead up period, and that lead up period was this lukewarm attitude that developed. And everybody thought, basically, they had the truth, and knowledge was powerful.

One of the things that used to come up - I'll diverse a little bit. One of the things that used to come up, in Australia in particular, because we are an island, about three percent smaller than America in total, but we're an island. And people used to say, "When we go to Petra, how are we going to get there?" Think, "I don't know. How are we going to get..." because it's all physical. "We're going to go to Petra. How are we going to get there?" Well, we can't walk. There's an ocean. And the jet liners, with the tribulation being 3½ years and with all the jets will be down it was a real worry. How are we going to walk to Petra? And then we found out, of course, there were only so many caves! And how are we all going to fit in? And of course we always used to think we were in the bottom cave and all the people on the top one would sweep all the dirt down and we'd be just covered in dirt all the time! All physical knowledge! That's what we were

worried about, really. It was how are we going to save ourselves? How are we going to save ourselves?

We cannot save ourselves. God has to do it. God's power has to do it. God has to look after you individually and personally through Jesus Christ. Has to. That's the only way. What's coming, not going to survive it if we're by ourselves. And people that leave the Church are going back to something they have no idea what they're really going back to. They're handed over to a different power.

We're going to look at a principle here, Proverbs 19:15. It's a physical proverb, in one hand, but it has a spiritual application. And this is something that we can take on board because it is about famine. It's about no food. And this is what happens. **Proverbs 19:15—Laziness casts one into a deep sleep**, because it's spiritual. So being spiritually lazy, which is not fighting against self. That is being lazy. Not fighting's being lazy. We're watching on the sidelines. We're not fighting. We have to be in the fight. We have to be in the fight. And if we're not in the fight we're being lazy. And what will it do? It will cast us into a deep sleep spiritually. Well, it's the same physical principle. Laziness, what happens, folding of the hands, a little slumber, nothing happens. Well, spiritually it's the same. **And an idle person**, someone who's not fighting themselves, are placing themselves in a position of famine, they're starving to death, **will suffer hunger**. Because if we're not willing to fight ourselves, if we want to be lazy and idle and not battle every day, not check and monitor words, thoughts, and actions, we will suffer hunger. What happens when you suffer hunger? Famine. There's nothing to eat, and therefore, because of our own laziness, because of a personal choice we move into a famine. And although God's Church has food the choice of whether or not we want to eat it or not is ours. And we can blame nobody, nobody but ourselves. No one. There is no one else to blame. No one can make us do anything. No one can make us angry. No one can make us anything. We choose to respond or we choose not to work.

We are required to work physically and spiritually. And being in the Church of God, the true Church of God, God the Father's called us, Jesus Christ is looking after us, we are required to work. The moment we don't work we've got problems in our own life. A spiritual drought or famine happens when God's holy spirit is not flowing within a person or within the ministry. Or it can be both. So we've looked at those ways.

We're going to just drop over to a particular scripture in Ezekiel, I think it is. Got lots of notes of course, as usual, over-prepare and talk too much. Ezekiel 34:1-10, which is covering the Apostasy, what happened. And I thought it was good to go over this because a lot of people don't understand what actually happened and why it happened. Well, this actually explains. God actually explains to His people what happened.

Ezekiel 34:1-10—And it's about the shepherds, which is about the ministry. The word of the Eternal came to me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, the ministers of God's Church. That's what it's about, the ministers of God's Church, the shepherds.

They were supposed to be feeding the sheep. That's what it was about. But it required God's spirit. **Prophecy and say to them, Thus says the Eternal God to the shepherds...** Now, this is the Creator of the universe who called them, placed them into the Body of Christ, He is now communicating to them. They've been given roles of responsibility *by* God the Father. All ordinations are by God the Father. He inspires this to happen for a reason. We don't always understand all the reasons why people are ordained. We just don't. We think we do, of course, naturally, but we don't. But God is now saying to them, "Well, I've done this with you, placed you in this position of authority within the body to *teach My word*, teach the truth." Well, this is what's happened!

So now God's talking to them. **Thus says the Eternal to the shepherds, Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves!** Isn't that incredible? I actually know what this is like because I have witnessed it and I've felt it. I know what it's like when the shepherd feeds themselves. What's that about? Well, they were in it, in the end, for the money. Because when things started to take place and they were required to stand the people didn't have a hope because the ministers didn't stand. They did not stand. Because they were faced with a choice - keep the Sabbath and Holy Days and tithing, and all those things, or not. And if you go "or not," you'll keep your salary and you'll keep your job. And yet for years Chris and myself, different ministers had been up on the podiums, banging on the podium, "*That if you have to lose your job because of the Sabbath you should lose your job because of the Sabbath!*" It was, like, horrendous. We were all, boy, terrified to go against God. And the minister was telling us. And when the crunch came they fed themselves. There was very few that... There was a group, there was some that sort of tried to continue on, but they were in famine. But they were feeding themselves. They were in it for the money. They weren't in it for the truth. And God's spirit had left them.

Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? So what chance does, if you just take it on a physical thing, you've got all the sheep in the paddock or out in the field and the shepherd who's supposed to be guarding them and making sure that they're taken to green pastures to be fed. If the shepherds lazy and he stands there and he says, "No, we're just going to stay in this one place where all the rocks and the ground are," what's going to happen to the sheep? They're all going to die. They're all going to starve to death.

Well, that's literally what happens spiritually. The truth wasn't being taught anymore, and therefore, the ministers weren't teaching the truth powered by God's holy spirit. Because there was some truth being taught still. There were some ministers that were teaching Sabbath and Holy Days, but God's spirit wasn't there anymore so the brethren withered up and died. As you know, it went a third, a third, a third. And that was a difficult, distressful time. Because there were people that we knew well that just left and, you know, they were... We have football, what you call it here. We call it "footie." You call it "football." It's like your gridiron, type of thing, but we have it Australian rules, and it's on a Saturday. And there were people who rejoiced because they could go to the footie on Saturday. And it boggled the mind that you could think like that.

But they were in the congregation all those years. You know, some of them had been around 20-30 years, and the next Sabbath after that sermon were at the football barracking. And it boggles the mind that you could be like... Others gave up completely, absolutely walked away because the shepherds had stopped feeding the sheep. And the sheep really didn't have much chance because the shepherds were looking after themselves.

Verse 3—You shall eat fat and clothe yourselves with wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. In other words, look after yourself, self-interest, make sure that you've got your income, your salary, and, you know, you're in charge. This shepherding was "in charge." It was about control and looking after them. Well, God's saying, "This is a problem. That's not what you were ordained for. You were ordained to feed the flock, *My people.*" That's what an ordinations' about. It's a responsibility to be an example to brethren. It's not about going off and doing your own thing, so to speak, as far as an ordination is concerned.

The weak you have not strengthened, by your example, the way you're living you're not showing a good example to them. You're weakening the brethren, because they look out and the standard is expected to be higher for a minister. It is expected to be higher because brethren, new people in particular, looked for example.

I've got to say this. When we were first called I was into race horses and I'd given them away or sold them all because I knew that was wrong. And my wife was a smoker and she had given up smoking. But we were still very casually dressed. And so we looked for the Church, we were called in. There was no Church in the area we were so I went to my boss and said, "I'm leaving. I'm going to keep the Sabbath." It shocked him! He just didn't have a clue, you know. It shocked him. And so now we're packing up and I said to my wife, "We'll sell everything because I'll buy all new stuff." My financial management. So Chris believed me, for the last time. And I said, "We're going to go to Perth," it was. We drove for about 4-5 hours. I bought a caravan, put the caravan on the back of the car, this zeal when we're called, our first love, and we drove that caravan with the two kids in it and I backed it up into the caravan park and then we thought we'll go looking for the Church. And then we got in the car and we drove around. We couldn't find the Church of God anywhere! Because we were looking for a building, and there was nothing. So then we found, "Oh, they meet in a small place in Dardanup, which is 20 km out of where we were. So we thought, "Oh, well, Sabbath we know where they are." We found out from one of the ministers where they were.

Well, the first day we went there the children were bare feet, Chris had thongs on, I had my red racing shirt on, my favorite one, my lucky shirt. And I walked in the room the first time and there's all these men, in the main, they were all in these dark Mormon-looking suits, and I thought, "There's something wrong here." Like, I was *bright* and they're all *dark*! And we were the first people to be called for, something like, twenty years, and they were *all excited* and, you know, and I knew there was something wrong. Anyway, we got through that there and we're sitting in the back of the hall and trying to keep the kids quiet and all the other things. We were

worldly, because this was our first service. We didn't have a clue what they were talking about and they're all there... It was like 42°C and they all had their suits on and everyone is sweating, and I'm here with my racing shirt. This is all, you know. After services everyone's on us and talking to us. They were so excited! It was a new world for us! We get in the car and we're driving home and I said to Chris, "Did you notice anything different?" Because, I think you had, I can't remember now what...? You had jeans on, blue jeans on. I said, "Do you notice anything different?" She said, "No, not really." And I said, "Did you notice that all the women had dresses on?" We're wearing jeans and the kids were barefoot. "And all the men had suits." Like, you know. And I thought, "Ah, it's different."

So that experience has taken us through, where at that point in Worldwide the shepherds were teaching the truth. But there was a love, like a brotherly love, where nobody said anything to us. Do you know that? The ministers never came up and said, "By the way, Wayne, you've got to dress up. And by the way, your kids should have shoes on." Nobody said anything because that was a love that was there. God's spirit was there at that point. God's spirit was there and there was an allowance... an allowance. Which is something we have to learn to do, which is to make that allowance.

Verse 4 again, The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who are sick, nor bound up the broken, talking about something spiritual, nor brought back what was driven away. So there was no real care for the brethren at this point. Whereas when we were first called and brought into the Church, before we were baptized, there was a care. Because if you go to an organization where you're wearing the wrong clothes, someone will pull you aside and let you know. "Hey, you know...?" But we were given that sight to "see" that, fortunately. Well, here the care is gone because the ministry at that point were worried about themselves. They were worried about their jobs. They weren't worried about what people were doing and what was going to happen. And at that point, of course, it had been announced, I believe, Johnny will probably remember it, it had been announced that tithing was done away. And of course, human nature, when somebody turns around and says, "Tithing's done away," *what* did they really think was going to happen? Human nature says, "Hang on a minute - 10%, 20% - tithing's done away..." Guess what, the income of the Church is going to crash! That's what happened. And it wasn't long after, matter of weeks, they came around and said, "Well..." I can't remember what they used now, that you don't have to tithe but if you love God you'd tithe. So, anyway, that was all about income because the shepherds were starving to death! There's no money coming into the church, you know, what are we going to do? Well, you reverse it.

There were times during that period when certain books were written. After the Apostasy there was one called *God Is...* I think it was. And it's difficult unless you go through it, honestly. That there's an attitude of being spiritually inferior that came out. Because they wrote this book, and I couldn't understand it. And Chris and myself, we don't understand this book, the *God Is...* book. It was like God was a blob in the air, and when I read it, I said, "I don't understand this." And so I

went to the ministers, "Look, I'm struggling here," cause I was worried about my spiritual condition - not that I had God's spirit at that time. I was well and truly asleep. But I still worried that I didn't understand something that they wrote a book about, therefore, obviously, I've got a spiritual problem. I thought, "I've got a spiritual problem. I can't understand what's..." Up to this point I was doing quite well. I was doing alright. So we got told, it was like a pat on the top of the head, "Don't worry, you'll understand eventually." And it made you feel like... Oh, it's hard to describe it. But that's what was told. There wasn't love and compassion or explanations, just, "Don't worry about it, Wayne and Chris, you'll understand eventually." In other words, "You know, you're just a little uneducated person down here." And that's what was going on. That attitude was within the ministry, that if you didn't understand, well, you're the problem, "Just don't worry about it." It's a shocking thing to have to experience those things. It was one of the books I never read twice, fortunately.

Continuing on in **verse 4 ...nor brought back what was driven away, no care, nor sought what was lost.** In other words, people were losing their direction. There was no care for that as long as there was an income. **...but...** what has happened, **with force and cruelty you have ruled them.** Because there's a controlling factor that takes place, this shuffling that Ron's talked about. There's a controlling factor about what people are doing and how you're doing it and when you're doing it. And there was a fear at different times within the Church because of this controlling aspect of the ministry. There were counts done. There were counts done in the Church at times where numbers were counted and you were on a register. And the deacons would walk around and tick pages. And if you missed three of them you got a phone call, "Where are you?" It wasn't, you know, "We really love you and worried about you." "Where are you!" Like...! It was. It wasn't... Love had gone, you know. There was a brotherly type love but God's true love, of *true* concern for the spiritual welfare of another person. Because really, when you look at love, it's about the spiritual concern. Not just the physical concern, the spiritual concern for someone else.

We've had conversations in times past about people that have... It's to do with money. Because it's difficult for the natural mind to come to understand that sometimes giving money to other brethren is a bad thing. It's actually a bad thing. And the reason for that can be, is that God is working with a person's mind and they're going through this test and trial for spiritual growth, and we, in our love and mercy, go and give them a heap of money. We interfere with what God is doing, but we take, you know, like...

So one of the principles that came up, that if anyone was ever to give money to another brethren you'd always check with the ministry because the ministry know what's going on in a person's life. And sometimes, you know what, it's better the person puts their hand on the fire. It's best to let them do it. It's best not to stop it. Just let it happen. And don't get involved; let it happen, because from that the person may grow spiritually. It's not a physical thing at all. It's not about money. It's a spiritual thing that a person can learn. So in the end people would come up and say, "Ah, I was thinking about giving money to this particular person." You'd say, "Not a wise thing to

do. Better you don't." Or if it was going to be given, "Don't *you* give it." You give it to the ministry and the ministry will give it to the person anonymously, because then there's no credit to self. Correct?

So there's ways to do things within the Body of Christ that are better spiritually for people, because it's about a person's spiritual health. Well, here during this time in Ezekiel 34, God is criticizing the ministry because there is no care for the brethren, there's no love for the brethren, and they're ruling on a physical level about control. It's not about spiritual growth or spiritual welfare. It's not about spiritual food.

So they were scattered because *there was no shepherd*. This is exactly what's happened. ...and **they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.** Well, people look at that physically and think, "Ah, yes, you're all scattered and the animals will kill you." "The beasts of the field," people going back to Satan and the demons. There's devouring that is taking place. People that leave the Body of Christ, that willingly make a choice to go back into spiritual famine go back to "the beasts of the field," you know, "the prince and power of the air" that is controlling all those in famine. They move to famine. They've made a choice to go back into famine. Well, they are then highlighted! If you were a spirit being that was out to destroy God's plan and you knew that there was people that had a relationship with members of the Body, with Jesus Christ and God the Father, what (just thinking carnally), what would you do? I know what I'd do! You'd go to sort them out! People don't understand what they're going back to. When people leave the Body of Christ they have no real understanding of what they're going back to.

Verse 6—My sheep, because we are God's sheep. We belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ. We are members of the Body of Christ, the *Body* of Christ. We are *one* body, knitly joined together. What are we joined together with? The word of God, truth. That's what holds us together, the bread of life. Bread, spiritual food is what holds us together. And the moment we no longer take on that bread, the truth, what happens? We move into famine because we disagree with something, one little aspect of God's Church.

My sheep wandering through all the mountains, and on every high hill. Because that's what happened; they all scattered. We were scattered. To know everyone went somewhere different because didn't know what to do. Some did stay in that, you know, confusion that was there. **My flock was scattered all over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching after them.** Because God gave a protection, as we know, for 1260 days and *then* God raised up His Church in Pentecost 1998, where again an apostle was appointed to feed God's Church. Incredible things that we understand, that the world would think we're all crazy. You know, the way we talk, like I'm talking now, "What do you mean somebody... Apostasy... and the shepherds are greedy... and everyone's starving?" They wouldn't understand anything. But we understand it. And those that have lived it and felt it know more about it than we even imagine. And a lot of these things are deep back in the mind. They're hidden away and the pain is gone

because of it. And it's only when we talk about it that you realize all the different experiences that people have had. "And no one was searching, or seeking/searching for them."

Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Eternal. As I live, says the LORD God, surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, which is to do with the scattering, because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock—therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Eternal! Thus says the LORD God, Behold, I *am* against the shepherds! Isn't that an incredible statement! Imagine having God turn around to your face and say, "I am against you!" That should create *enormous* fear, *enormous* fear. The Creator of the universe says and decides - you know, when you look at blessings and cursings - that, "Now I am against you." In other words, "All the curses are going to come on you because I'm against you because of what you have done." Now, that should cause *fear* within us deep down to go against God, to go against God's servants. Really should. Should cause great fear within us. But there was no fear here. There was no fear of God. No obedience. They were in it for a different reason.

Behold, I am against the shepherds and I will require My flock at their hand. "You're going to pay a price." Now, we understand one of the truths with regards to the ministry, you know, that aren't going to be given that opportunity. They're going to have to wait for the Hundred Years, the majority, not all of them. They're going to have to wait.

There's no opportunity for those shepherds that made a decision. Because as Ron's mentioned in the sermons just recently, there comes a time when a decision has to be made, like those two he talks about. A decision has to be made. Well, the shepherds all were faced with a decision. When the Apostasy sermon was given the ministry had to make a decision, "What am I going to do?" Now, naturally, because God's spirit was gone, what's the first thought that takes place in a person's mind when God's spirit goes and if you're in the ministry? "How am I going to earn a living? I've done this job since Ambassador College. I've been out for 32 years, or something, 25 years and I don't know anything about the world. I can't get a job. *What will I do?*" Well, we know the answer, what most did. Most were in it for the job and a third or more stayed with what was taught, because, "How am I going to earn a living? No money. No income tomorrow. And if I go against it, guess what, the Church is not going to be giving us a redundancy pay or a payout. You're getting nothing!" That was the choice.

That in itself should tell us a lot, brethren, about what was going on within the Church at that time, the shepherds. Because when a shepherd decides to leave, if God's spirit was there, guess what, should be a generous offer. True? A generous offer of more should have been given - because God's love would say, "Well, you want to leave? Here's more for you. Here's your salary. You've worked for thirty years, here's your salary. Here is your payout." Well, the opposite happened in most cases.

I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep. And that's what happened. God withdrew His holy spirit from the ministry and the people and the people could no longer be fed. Although things were being said about certain aspects of truths, the reality was God's spirit wasn't there anymore. God *withheld* His spirit from the ministry. God withheld His spirit from the people because of unrepentant sin, because of that proverb that we read, the laziness will lead to famine. It'll lead to famine of the word.

God called a remnant out of that spiritual sleep. Now, those that are of the awakening, it's sometimes difficult to explain what it's like to be in a wilderness, in confusion and be starving to death and then to be awakened to "see" truth. The very first sermon... What had happened, when I got the book (and I wrote away for it because I wasn't going to buy it), about this guy that believes the same as me, we ended up... Ron wrote an email and at that time they sent, they had a disc. It was on CD's, I think, wasn't it? It was three CD's? And I think there was 42 sermons on each CD. We'd gone past tapes at that point. And we would sit down and listen to three sermons because, it was like, we starved. We were starving to death.

When you're on a famine and you're starving to death and you come out of the wilderness and someone hands you a glass of water and some food, you gulp it. There's no just calmly eating it. It's, jam it in! So Chris and myself were jamming it in. So we looked at all these. There was 120 odd sermons or something. We thought, "What are we going to choose to read?" Now, remember, we'd been battling with the ministry for some 2½, 3 years. We didn't know why, but we were being drawn out slowly. Or we might have been being drawn out but I was slow in responding.

And in the end we got to one tape and we thought we'd listen to it. And it was Ron's sermon on Ezekiel 34, *A Witness Against the Ministry*. That was the very first sermon. And at that time we were still attending Sabbath services with United. But when we heard that it was instant. Instant! We knew *exactly* what this was about because we lived it. That one sermon out of 120. It wasn't number 1, it was well into it, we listened to that one. And God had brought us through a battle with the ministry, and here's the witness against the ministry, and we knew from that point. December 2005, wasn't it? Unbelievable!

Okay, I normally only do an hour and a half but I'll go a bit longer because there's some expectations now and again that we should try to cover as much time as possible.

Psalm 33. Get a bit emotional because if you've been awakened and you understand what's happened to you, it's an emotional thing. For me it is.

Psalm 33:1—Rejoice in the Eternal, O you righteous! Well, we can only be righteous if God's holy spirit is living and dwelling in us. If God's not in us we're not righteous. We're of and by ourselves. We're natural, carnal, lust of the flesh, pride of life. All those things exist. So to be righteous means we have God's holy spirit, therefore, we can actually rejoice. And hopefully from this sermon we will go away rejoicing about either a calling or an awakening because it's an

incredible thing, and we underestimate it so often. And people that leave the Body of Christ, often they've forgotten their calling.

I remember *exactly* the day I was called. I remember *exactly* the day I was baptized. I remember what happened to Chris and myself. I remember the mornings that I used to go, because we were being called and we were looking for the Church of God. So Chris wrote a letter to the Church. We wanted to know the name of the Church. The Worldwide Church of God, but what's its name. We know it's a Church of God, and we know it's worldwide, but what's it called?! We couldn't "see." And of course I knew about tithing and I was still going to the Catholic church. So I was earning reasonably good money so I'd take all the money and go to the Catholic church and sit and they'd pass that plate around and I'd get all this money and jam it in. Baby steps. We learned slowly. And then we realized, "Ah, that's right. We're supposed to be tithing to God's true Church, not to Satan's church." Learn, slowly. Learning slowly.

And we went through all the experiences of our first Sabbath's observance at home by ourselves. And the first one we sat around all day eating. And at the end of it we were exhausted because we'd eaten so much and done nothing, "Oh, this is crazy!" The next Sabbath we decided we were going to go for a walk on the beach. We went for a walk on the beach; we came back exhausted. You know, five hours of walking on the beach is too much. We've learned over time what the Sabbath's about, and yet, we had this knowledge. The Sabbath is about God feeding. It's not about time off or resting, really. Anyone can rest. Stop working. Some people do it on Friday. Some people do it on Monday. Some people do it Sunday's. Not many, but some do. It's about God feeding us spiritual food so that we don't go into famine.

God does not want a famine of the word in His Church. And there is no famine while there is an apostle. It's a great comfort. I know that those who have been through it can understand this probably more than those that haven't, because it's an incredible thing when you have access to the truth. It's an incredible thing.

So we are the righteous and we *can* rejoice because of an awakening and a calling. So we should rejoice, thank God for His great mercy to us. **For praise from the upright**, someone with God's spirit, is **beautiful**. It's a wonderful thing! It's what God requires of us, to understand who we really are. Because if we don't understand who we really are we won't rejoice, we won't be thankful. We'll become unthankful. But if we really "see" who we really are without God's spirit, the most fearful thing that can happen to anyone in this room is the removal of God's spirit because of unrepented sin. It is the most fearful thing that could happen. To be cast back to those beasts, to go back into the world, it's a terrifying thing, you know, and happened to me once. It's happened to everybody that was awakened once. You don't really know it and you don't understand it. But we should have this respect and awe for God, this true fear of losing God's spirit.

So God requires us to be thankful, and it's a beautiful thing when we're thankful for our calling and thankful for our awakening, when we're thankful for the truth, we're thankful for having an apostle, we're thankful for the calling at the end-time. We should be really thankful for it. Because there's *billions* out there that know nothing at all and are in total famine, total famine, know nothing at all.

Verse 2—Praise the Eternal with a harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy, a rejoicing before God. **For the word of the Eternal is right,** it is correct. The truth is correct. If we've got God's spirit we understand it. It's about the spiritual intent of a matter.

So men and women are equal. What does that mean? What does that mean if we don't look at the intent? Because I know a lot of people that treat women with more respect than a lot of men in God's Church. They do it because of their upbringing. So what does that mean? It's meaningless if God's spirit's not involved. If we're not working on self and disciplining self and trying to work out what God is really communicating to us, that we're equal in His sight, we're all going to enter... have the opportunity to enter Elohim. That's the opportunity. So how we treat others is what it's about.

Well, we should thank God that we understand it, because out there they don't. If anyone does treat someone else with respect the motive behind it is selfish. They don't know it, can't see it, it's not obvious all the time, but it's selfish. They're getting something back from it. In other word, the wife is probably not going to nag him. That's why he's being better to her. There's always those things. There's a motive behind it. It's easier for the man because he's not going to be in so much trouble, "Yes, dear." Or vice versa. There's been those situations. Because there's a motive in it. Whereas our motive is Godly. Our motive is we're willing to sacrifice to the benefit of another person and sacrificing hurts. And if the sacrificing isn't hurting, cause the natural carnal mind, it's probably not sacrificing. It's probably not sacrificing at all. We're probably still giving to get, which is what it is. Which, some of these scriptures may get to if we get that time, get that far.

For the word of the Eternal if correct, and all His work is done in truth. There is no deception in God. It doesn't exist! Satan is the deceiver. He's the author of it. But not in God. God is not out to deceive. God is not deceiving us by calling us or giving us an awakening or placing truth in the Church. It's not about deception. God loves us and wants to give us something. It's a marvelous thing when you think about it. God, in all His being, wants to give you and me something! He wants to give us Elohim, to be in His Family. Whew! You can't measure those things. We have access to it. Incredible things! So there's no error or deception in God's nature. He does nothing to deceive or to trick or to get. He wants to give us something. Something... What are we really? Just dust of the earth. We're nothing. Yet God wants to give us something, to be spirit beings. From nothing to something. Incredible. Where we won't have sin. And we were made this way for that reason. We were made selfish so that we will learn to fight it, to understand who we really are,

to make a decision in life. At a point in time we're going to have to make a decision, "This is what I want no matter what." No matter what it is. Who rejects us? Who cares who rejects us? Who cares what other people think. You know, they think all sorts of things about us. Does it matter? We should care about what God thinks of us. That's what we should care about. That's the most important thing.

He loves righteousness and justice, which is our way of thinking if God lives and dwells in us. **The earth is full of the goodness of the Eternal. By the word of the Eternal the heavens were made.** Now, this reveals God's great power, which *we limit*. We limit God. We really do. Just by nature we limit God. Because we're physical, we like to see physical things. Just like they wanted to see physical bread, they wanted to see manna. But we, by nature, do limit God. God can do anything. God can change anything. God can provide in times of distress, anything.

By the word of the Eternal, words that He spoke, **the heavens were made. And all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth**, what He spoke. What He thought, what He spoke, it was done. **He gathered the waters of the sea together as a heap. He lays up the depth in storehouses**, which is like having a storage place for water, which is the poles of the earth, the ice. And up in the heavens, as we know at the end time, there's going to be hail a hundred kilo's in weight smashing things. Well, God stores those things. He has that power. He has the power to do all those things and He can release it at any time He wants to. It's *nothing* to God.

The most difficult thing God is doing at the moment is working with me and you. That's the most difficult thing! Something that resists Him. The physical creation doesn't resist God. God can take an animal and change its personality or its nature like that. It's *nothing* to God. Just like He changes a person's language. One minute everyone's talking the same language. Next minute, there's seventy languages or so. How did that happen? It's nothing to God. But dealing with a human is different, because we by nature resist Him.

We think we know better than God's apostle. As much as anyone would like to deny they've never thought those things, everybody thinks different things. Because we're natural. It's natural to think certain things. But it's about what we do with those thoughts, whether we jump on to them straight away or we don't.

Now, God has the power to do anything on a physical level. It's nothing to change the animal's personality. Or, for example, lions eating grass, it's nothing to God to change the intestinal system. It's like a healing. It's nothing to God if God desires it. We're His creation. He can do anything He wants.

He lays up the depths of the storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Eternal. Let all the earth honor God, respect and honor Him. The *only* people on this earth that respect and honor God is those members of the Body of Christ in the Church of God in the temple. That's it. Few. The rest

of the earth does not fear God. They actually don't want God in their life, in the main. They don't. They're going to require a calling.

Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. That time is coming. You know, we're so close to this actually being fulfilled. "Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of God," because that's what's coming. It's going to happen during the Millennium. It's going to happen during the Hundred Years. And people will *fear* to lose God's spirit. Some. Not all. They will fear to do the wrong thing, to have God against you. Imagine having God against you. What a terrifying thing.

For He spoke, and it was *done*. It's no big deal for God. **He commanded, and it stood fast.** **The Eternal brings the counsel of the nations to nothing.** Now, how many people believe that? How many people believe that? The politicians of the world do not believe that God is the one who raises up and pulls down. They believe they won the election. It's true. That's what they believe. Because of what they said or what they did. But, and you know what, in the reality, American politics, for the first time really in Australia, has dominated because you had a person that was basically going against the established bureaucracy of politics and most of the media were calling him all things. We had politicians even calling American politicians things, and out of control things! But what people don't understand is these scriptures, that "God brings the counsel of nations to nothing." It's God's power to achieve anything. He will allow it or disallow it.

Now, ever who is in charge of America or Germany or China, in the end it won't make a lot of difference, will it? Because God will place into the mind things to be achieved. If God wants things to happen He'll place it in the mind and people will do those things. Similar to like Pharaoh, to a degree, that God said He'd raise Pharaoh up... for a purpose - to demonstrate *His* great power. God's power! To show that if someone resists You, God's in control. It doesn't matter what Pharaoh does. Doesn't matter whether he says yes or no. If God wants the people to leave Egypt on the 15th day, the day after Passover, at night, guess what? *Nothing* is going to stop it. Israel will leave on that day!

So why do we fear, brethren? Why do we fear anything? If God's will will be done, God's will will be done. If for some reason a person has to lose their life from the Body of Christ, really, is it a big drama? Like, really? It's disappointing for family, but really, deep down, God can do anything. God can do anything. So it's God that controls things. It's God that will bring things. God allows things to happen. But the day that God wants to intervene, to have something happen, it will happen *exactly* as God has planned it *exactly* when He's ready for it to happen.

He makes the plans and the peoples of no effect. People can plan, "We're going to do this." "We're going to do that." "We're going to go up to Mars." "You know, we're going to fly (for how many years) to Mars." And people have volunteered to go, with no return flight, but they're going. If people... You know, people want to have these plans. But if God decides that no one's going to Mars, no one's going to Mars. So plans of men. And people want to build things and want to

change this and build walls to keep the Mexican's out. You can have all those plans. It's all wonderful, you know, if you.... not the sense that I agree with that. But it's all wonderful to have plans, these plans of men. But they're plans of men. There will be no wall around Mexico if God doesn't want one. If He decides that it's not the right thing for the end-time, for certain peoples, that we don't know how God's going to work with those nations, it isn't going to happen. So the plans of men are only plans of men. Our plans, often, if they're physical, we're not sure whether they're actually going to be fulfilled, do we? I've planned to be wealthy. The plans of men don't stand. They're of no effect.

The counsel of the Eternal stands forever, because God will achieve His plan. There is going to be a family of Elohim. Whether you and me are in it - different matter. But there is going to be a family. There is going to be 144,000. There is going to be a Millennium. There is going to be a Hundred Years. There is going to be an end to Satan. Those things are going to happen. They're real. They're going to happen! Nothing will stand in those ways of what God has said, because His counsel stands. We just have an opportunity, an *incredible* opportunity. But whether we're there in the end there's nobody to blame but individual. If I'm not there, it's *my* fault. It's not God's, it's mine, because of stupid things that I've decided to do.

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart (His thinking) to all generations. Doesn't matter what time period it is, God is the one will raise up and pull down accordingly.

When you look back at Daniel and the statue - incredible! Incredible prophesies, the way that God put it, the different kingdoms. Because *God* did it! It wasn't mankind that did it. God said, "This is what's going to happen," and if things are going in a direction God will influence the outcome of that. Incredible. But man underestimates God's glory and God's power.

Verse 12—Blessed is the nation whose God is the Eternal. What's that talking about? What nation do you know where God is the Eternal? I've got my hands up - zero! There's none. It's talking about the true Church of God, Church of God—PKG. "Blessed is the Church of God—PKG whose God is the Eternal!" We're the *only ones* who know God, the Eternal, Yahweh Elohim. We're the only ones! Incredible! We underestimate God and what we've been given. We really do, brethren. I know I do at times. And when I give these sermons often I'm talking to myself, so don't take it the wrong way.

The people He has chosen... Where are they? Well, here we are, and those that eventually might hear this. They're the ones this is talking to. **Blessed is the Church of God whose God is the Eternal, the people He (God the Father) has chosen as His own inheritance.** There's nobody that can refer to that scripture but us. It's talking about us. And every time we read it we should be thankful that this is who God is referring to in Psalms. Is amazing.

The Eternal looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. Yes, if we ever think that we have a sin that we're getting away with we are deluded to the degree that we have got... well, I don't know where we are. God sees everything! Every *thought*! But it's not about the thought; it's about what we do with the thought. Because if we're battling it, it's not a problem. God's merciful, He says that He will forgive *if* we are willing to forgive others, if we're willing to fight. So it's not a problem. When a person has a bad thought in a mind - which I agree, I have them. I put my hand up for that - that's not the issue. The issue is what do I do with it? That's the issue. And I've got to jump on it quickly and not want to be that way. I don't want to think that way. That's the key. And God, that's what God's looking for. That's what He wants. And He has chosen me, He called me, He's chosen me from the point of view that I will inherit His inheritance at some point in time. When that is, that's God's will and purpose. It's not mine. I can't influence any of that. But God has made a choice.

The Eternal looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. Nothing is hidden, brethren. Anybody that thinks they're getting away with things, nothing is hidden from God. **From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashions their minds individually.** So that, now, you could say, "What's that about?" Well, the purpose of life is that God is going to fashion your mind and my mind individually. There's not a collective thing; it's individual. And we're all at different levels and everyone's gone through different experiences for different purposes to end up in the temple of God in a set location perfect for what God is achieving, of which we don't "see" a lot yet. We really don't "see" it but it's going to be fascinating.

So God will fashion our minds if we're willing to give in and want to be fashioned. The big thing there is we want to be fashioned. We've got to *want* this. We've got to want it with all our being, willing to give up everything. And I mean, everything. Life. Every single thing's got to go.

He fashions their minds individually. And that can happen to individuals that we know nothing about, that haven't been called into the Body of Christ yet. God can be working in their minds right now. We know nothing about God's power. He could be working with millions and we don't know anything about it, bringing them to a point of understanding or thinking. **He considers/ understands all their works.**

No king/government is saved by the multitude of an army. So it's not by our own power. We're not going to get through the end period by our own strength, by having an army, by having six months supply of water and food. That will not get us through it. It's God and His power is what's going to get us through it. Nothing else. That's why we have to wait on God and trust God.

Now, they're throwaway words, if we're not careful. Like, "waiting on God." And you go, "Boy, He's taking His time." After ten minutes, "It's taking a long time." Well, waiting on God is something totally different. It's a spiritual principle, spiritual matter. And "trusting in God." It's easy to say, "I trust in God." Well, we're going to learn what it's like to trust in God. If we haven't already

learned it and don't know it, wait around, it's coming. Cause we're really going to have to trust on God, on God' word. We have to know what we know, the truth, and being part of God's true Church.

A mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope of safety. Anything physical is an empty... You know, if we're relying on self or trusting in things that are outside what God has directed us to do, it's foolishness. **Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.**

Behold, the eye of the Eternal is on those who fear Him. Who's that? To fear God is to respect God. It is to obey God. So who is it on? God's eye, God is caring and cares for us. God is with us. He's not with others in the world; He's with us. **On those who hope in His mercy.** Now, when do we hope on His mercy? Repentance. We hope in His mercy because of repentance. If we're not repenting we're not hoping in His mercy because we're not wanting it, we're not repenting. **To deliver their life from death, physically and spiritually, and to keep them alive in famine.**

Now, we, brethren, are fortunate we don't have to go through a famine. And all indications are there is no future famines of the word of God. But there is a famine that's possible within our life because of our choice, whereas, a famine of the word within the ministry won't happen again. All indications are that that's not going to be the case. When you get 144,000 there is no famine. And when you have God's true apostle preaching, there is no famine. But that does not mean to say there cannot be a famine in us because of our stupid choices.

Verse 20—Our life waits on the Eternal; He is our help and our shield. He is our provider physically and spiritually. **For our heart will rejoice in Him because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Eternal, be upon us, just as we hope in You.**

So in conclusion, brethren, I'll finish up by just quickly saying a couple of things with regards to a spiritual famine. There has been a famine of the word in the Church previously, and some have experienced it. A spiritual famine still can take place within our life individually, but it isn't coming from God's true Church because of the preaching of the word that happens, which is the Logos. Because God has raised up an apostle to teach us, a faithful ministry that is teaching the power and the glory of God. So it's not going to happen to the Church, but that *does not mean* it can't happen to us. Everybody that has left the Church is now in spiritual famine - every single person. But they don't know it.