

This Feast of Tabernacles should be exceedingly exciting for us as we are so very close now to the establishment of what these days foreshadow, the Kingdom of God being established on this earth for the next 1,100 years of mankind's existence. This is the time that the temple of God becomes manifest and the Kingdom of God in Mount Zion in the new spiritual city of Jerusalem.

This sermon today is entitled, *God's Temple Established*.

It's good that we begin by focusing upon some of the most important revelation that God began to give regarding this spiritual temple. This is back in 1 Kings, back in 1 Kings and the occasion where Solomon was dedicating the temple and speaking about those things. So let's turn back to 1 Kings 8 and we'll begin reading this here in verse 12. So it's good at this point here that we really just begin establishing, again, by focusing upon some of the most important revelation that God gave here about His spiritual temple and it's right here.

1 Kings 8:12—Then Solomon spoke, The Eternal said that He would dwell in thick darkness. I have surely built You a house to dwell in, and the word here in the Hebrew means "as a habitation," **an established place for You to abide in forever.** Now, before we go on hold your place here, but there are a couple of other places it would be good to be reminded of to think about at this point in time because all this fits together and the depth of what they grasped and what they understood, certainly Solomon repeating some of the things that were given to David, and himself inspired in some of the things he had to say and had to record, but the depth of what they really comprehended was really kind of shallow in many respects. But that's where they were at that present time; that was the present truth at that time and it was still very physical mixed with a great deal of that which is physical because there are things that just had not been given yet as to that which would become spiritual later on. So much of that was simply just revealed later to the Church. So this is his account and he's going back and forth.

But first, again here, picking it up in Isaiah 66. I'll just read this verse to you; you don't need to turn there, but we'll be going to Acts in a moment here. There are a few more verses there that I do want to read. But let me just read this one here in **Isaiah 66:1: Thus says the Eternal, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that you build for Me? And where is the place of My rest?** Basically here He is making it clear that no one can give God such a thing. No one can give such a thing to God as a place to dwell in. These are given by God to show and to reveal to mankind His greatness, His great power, and putting it in a perspective. It's not literally meaning that the earth is His footstool, but it's using physical terms to portray, to get across a major point here that, "What you build is not something that can contain Me; it's not something that I can dwell in." God goes on to reveal something far, far greater as time goes

along as to His plan and His purpose, and not even a physical location, in that respect, but God does respond by giving something as a matter of a comparison here of something that individuals can look at and say, "Oh, we are small. God is so incredibly great! The heaven is His throne." Man didn't even comprehend at this point in time how great the heavens were and what this might mean. But He says, "The earth is My footstool," so the point being, "How are you going to build something for Me to dwell in?"

So again, it's a matter of dealing with mankind in such a way to continually put before mankind that, "What I have, what I am doing, what I have created is so vast and so great and so far beyond what you can comprehend," and so He uses terms even at this point in time of something they can somewhat grasp a hold of, but they still couldn't grasp the magnitude of what God's creation is. I think of the Hubble Telescope and all the incredible pictures it's bringing back and all the things that are taking place in scientific discovery, in that respect, as to looking out into space and seeing the vastness and how great it is. It's beyond human comprehension, so far beyond human comprehension. The more that is revealed, the more that is given just in the things of physical creation the smaller man becomes, the greater God becomes. So at that particular time this was able to get across to them, was able to communicate to them God is mighty and God is very great, far beyond what they can comprehend. Today it's more than that; it's far more vast than that. So there'll be different terms and different ways in which such things would be communicated to us. They have been and they are because of technology because of those things that God has given to us to grasp and comprehend. At the same time He reveals to us even greater things on a spiritual plane.

Acts 7:44—Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers who came afterward brought it in with Joshua into the land possessed by the gentiles. Now, in this particular case here it's interesting to note in my Bible, the King James that I use most often, this is translated as Jesus. And obviously it wasn't talking about Jesus; it was talking about Joshua, but the reason of some of the confusion here is because of how when they were translating into English they didn't pick this one up, and so they did what they normally were doing and that was whenever the word Joshua was popping up in the New Testament writings they were quoting it or translating it as Jesus. So they did here without thought here of the story flow. So a mistake that slipped through somehow or another, but again, it just shows here the confusion through time and how words have changed and the sounds of things from one language when something is translated from one language to another and used perhaps by a particular group of people for a period of time and it gains a foothold as it did. Then with so much being written in the Greek language and the sounds and things that changed through time this is one that changed.

Today now we're not going to go back and begin using the word Joshua, though that's the right word. It was Joshua the Messiah, Joshua the Christ, but we're not going to change those things

now. They will get straightened out in time because we are different enough from the world and it's not wise to make a big deal out of this right now, because to communicate people will know what you're saying when you refer to Jesus Christ. That's how he is known at this particular point in time and that identifies what is written in scripture and people know that, as far as the world is concerned, so we strive to communicate with and tell about God's way of life and it's a minor thing in that respect. But again here, it will be changed and corrected in time. So amongst ourselves we still refer to the words that are being used in today's language. It's a matter of communication and communicating thought and identity and so forth. So today it's still Jesus Christ, but this is an interesting one in the King James then because they messed up here because they were changing the word in the first place and not using the word as it was in the Hebrew language and Aramaic and so forth.

But anyway, going on, it says, **which our fathers who came afterward brought it in with Joshua into the land possessed by the gentiles.** So again here, talking about the tabernacle and it being built and that was in the wilderness, the tents and so forth and how things were constructed. ... **whom God drove out before the face of our fathers,** speaking of the gentiles, **unto the days of David who found favour before God.** So in other words, they were still using this tabernacle all the way up to the days of David and through the time of David, and yet David had it in his heart to do and build something different. It says, **who found favor before God and requested to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.** So he wanted to build something, he had a desire to build a house, a tabernacle for God far greater than that which was the tent and the place of worship and the place of the offerings and so forth for the Levitical system. So these are the things being discussed here, but God used something very physical as time went along to teach what is true, what is more meaningful, what is the purpose of these things that point toward something in the future that is fully on a spirit plane in a spirit world.

Verse 47—But Solomon built Him an house. Howbeit the most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophets said. So it's referring back to these verses here again in the Old Testament and just what we read in Isaiah. So here it's making it very clear in the book of Acts that God doesn't dwell in such a place. That's not His dwelling place. There is more to God's plan. There is more to what God is revealing as to where His true dwelling place is and what His great desire is in His temple and building of His temple and tabernacle.

Verse 49—Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: what house will you build for Me? said the Lord: and what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things? Again God magnifying how great He is: "My hand has made everything you see, everything that you see into the stars." They didn't grasp it all even back then, even in the time that this was recorded and written in the book of Acts here by Luke. They didn't know much about the universe, very little. They didn't know there was a universe. They could see stars and things of that nature, but they had no comprehension of how vast it was, that there were things beyond the Milky Way Galaxy, which they didn't even understand, didn't even know what that was. So

again, God revealing His great power and His great might and revealing here that there is something far greater to come, far greater to come.

Now back to 1 Kings here. Again 1 Kings 8:13—I have surely built You a house to dwell in, as a habitation, as it is here, an established place for You to abide in forever. And the king turned his face around and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood); and he said, Blessed is the Eternal God of Israel, who spoke by His mouth unto David my father, and has with His hand fulfilled *it*, saying, Since the day that I brought forth My people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that My name might be therein; but I chose David to be over My people Israel. So He's saying here, "This isn't what My focus was. This is not what I did. This is not what it's all about, but I did choose David." So again here, this is important because in the real building of His house, His temple, it was going to begin through David. There were promises that were going to go from the time of David to the time of a seed that would follow in time that would become the Messiah, who would become the Messiah, the Christ. So that had to do with the building, the establishing of a temple, not something physical. So it wasn't about building something physical.

So God's just showing here that there is something far greater beyond that which is a building, beyond that which is built here on earth where people may go and offer up offerings and sacrifices and so forth.

Verse 17—And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the Eternal God of Israel. And the Eternal said unto David my father, Whereas it was in your heart to build an house unto My name, You did well that it was in Your heart. Nevertheless, you shall not build the house; but your son who shall come forth out of your loins, he shall build the house unto My name. Now, they didn't grasp fully what this was all about and what was being said. So they could only see it in that respect in a physical way, and God honored that because He was allowing something to be done on a physical plane, but always foreshadowing something that was going to happen later. So there's a kind of duality here then of something that would happen physically, but the real purpose is that which would happen on a spiritual plane for a spiritual purpose because it wasn't about Solomon as much as it was about Jesus Christ. That which happened with Solomon building something physical is only a type and that which was going to follow is the meaning, is the purpose, is the focus of it all.

Verse 20—And the Eternal has performed His word that He spoke, and I have risen up in the place of David my father, to sit on the throne of Israel, as the Eternal promised. So there again is duality here, one being a type of something else. So he said here that God has fulfilled His promise because here is his son who has built the house. So indeed God allowed and used something very physical. The next one, the one that came out of the loins of David, Solomon here literally at this point in time in other words, that was going to fulfill the building of this physical house that was in the heart of David to build. But God's purpose is way, way beyond that because there is one going to come out of the loins, that would be one to come out of the loins of David

through time that would be born who would be the Messiah who would be the main part of the structure of the temple, of the tabernacle that was going to be built. That's talking about something that is spiritual.

So again here, **and I have risen up in the place of David my father to sit on the throne of Israel as the Lord promised; and have built an house for the name of the Eternal God of Israel.** So incredible story here as you go through some of these things, but you realize there's something far, far greater that God is giving, that God is revealing.

So again here, this expression back in verse 19: "Nevertheless, you shall not build a house, but your son who shall come forth out of your loins." This is what God gave to David. This is what God was working toward. So what was allowed and what was given here as a physical type of something built physically pictured that which is going to come that is totally spiritual: "He shall build the house unto My name." So it begins, candidly, with the Church of God; it begins there in embryo. I love those examples that Mr. Armstrong gave, that the Church of God is in embryo, that it is not yet in the Kingdom of God. That it is not yet the temple, but it's in the construction phase of preparing things for the temple. The whole story then of those things that are coming about and what this Feast season pictures, the Feast of Tabernacles, when things of that temple are going to be made manifest. It's an awesome time we live when Jesus Christ returns.

Zechariah 6, again, speaking about some of these things written by other prophets. Here in **Zechariah 6:12** it says, **Speak unto him, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH...** And this word meaning "to bud forth; to spring forth; to grow forth," that which would come forth in time that God was going to bring about and to accomplish and fulfill His plan because everything centers in and around and through Jesus Christ. **...he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Eternal.** So this is long after the time of Solomon here. This is long after that period of time when the physical temple had been built, and we're looking at a totally different period of time and God making it very clear here then through Zechariah that there is one to spring forth. There is one to come forth and that it's going to be upon him and through him that God is going to build the temple of the Eternal. **...even he shall build the temple of the Eternal (verse 13), and he shall bear the glory,** awesome, the things that God has to say about the glory given to Jesus Christ, **and shall sit and rule upon His throne,** upon God's throne because God gives rulership to him. God, who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, as we have looked at in past sermons, very clearly throughout the Old Testament, has given that honor and that glory to His Son, to sit upon His throne over all of mankind and over His Kingdom on this earth. When that Kingdom and that temple begins to be made manifest, in the sense becoming a reality, when it is established then we're talking about these things here that come to pass.

It says here, "he shall bear the glory." So he is to be the King of kings over all the earth and the Lord of lords. **...and shall sit and rule upon His throne,** upon God's throne, **and he shall be a priest upon His throne,** upon God's throne. He's the High Priest. **...and the counsel of peace,** you

know, the completeness, the harmony, as in "purpose of unity," **shall be upon them both**. So again here, beautiful verses here, prophecies that were given long, long ago.

A little later in 1 Kings, Solomon went on to make a statement that revealed there was much more to what was happening there physically in the dedicating of a physical temple of God. Again here there were things that they grasped and understood to a degree, but only to a certain degree in their present truth.

1 Kings 8:27. And so the question is asked, **But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens, as it says here, cannot contain You; how much less this house I have built?** So what they grasped, what they deeply understood is not fully known. It was limited but he was inspired to say these things. He was moved to say these things whether he comprehended it all or not. There are things that are given to us that we are able to marvel at, but to fully grasp them, sometimes we don't fully grasp certain things that are said and certain things that are given until later on. Then God begins to reveal to us the greater meaning of what was there. So it doesn't mean we fully understand the things that we're inspired to give. So God reveals those things as time goes along.

So as we're going through this there is something that we need to keep very much in mind. It's similar, again, to what Herbert W. Armstrong said when he explained that the Church is not the Kingdom of God and those in the Church are not yet in the Kingdom of God. We are not yet born into God's family. Again, this thing of an embryo is that example that he gave; it is a beautiful, perfect type of example here to give of what stage the Church is in life because it's not in the Kingdom of God. It is not yet the Kingdom of God. It's like the Kingdom of God in embryo that is not yet born. Let's read about some of these things over here in Ephesians 2, of what God gives and what God continued to give as time went along that became the present truth after the Church was established, of things that had never been fully grasped nor understood yet God just continues to give more and more the farther along in time we go. He gives more. He reveals more and builds upon those things. There's a building process that takes place.

Ephesians 2:18—For through him, speaking of Jesus Christ, we both have access by one spirit unto the Father. Therefore, you are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. That's an awesome thing to understand, the thing of family, the thing of a uniqueness of oneness of spirit that God brings us to as we all, to the degree, I should say as well that people do work together to be able to be unified in spirit, endeavoring to keep the unity of the peace, of the truth, of the way of life that God has given to us. So that is dependent upon each individual within the body to work toward those things. So the more that everyone does, the more that each individual does, the more that we are blessed and the more we're able to have a unique fellowship and to be a part of, as it says here, "but fellow citizens," together. That's what this is about. It's like the word "fellowship," that we're able to have a unique relationship with one another because of what God is doing because of what God is building. God makes it all possible.

That's why I feel for people who make some of the stupidest mistakes when they cut themselves off from that fellowship because they're not at peace after that. There is almost like a war in their mind and they long for, they want something that they can no longer have and it's kind of like what happened after the Apostasy. People wanted this same thing that they had experienced in times past through all the numbers of those that they were able to share with and the vast family that God had given, but when those things were broken up it could no longer be; it just wasn't there. And people were willing to do almost anything—build bridges—in order to get back something that they had experienced in times past, but you can't compromise with God's way of life. You can't do such things. A lot of people in the Church don't grasp, or to the degree that they need to, when someone is disfellowshipped from the Body it's made very clear in scripture they're turned over to Satan. Now, that's a horrible thing, but it's true, if they turn their back on God, if, for whatever reasons, if for whatever reasons they turn away. Sometimes it's a matter of relationships with someone else in the world, sex, the draw of those things. Sometimes it's a matter of drugs. Sometimes it's a matter of wealth or materialism, whatever it might be. People are drawn to those things and they begin to let up and give up God's way of life. Anyone who makes those kinds of decisions to leave, to run away from, to leave behind what they had been given when they have been brought into be a part with the remnant Church, they don't realize what they're doing. They don't really believe what the Church teaches about that, that they're going to turn themselves over to Satan.

People really should fear such a thing, that all of a sudden their life is turned over to a being to have influence over them and around them. That's a horrifying thing. I've seen that over and over again, where people's lives, people who aren't even baptized in the Church, young people when they make wrong decisions, their life becomes exceedingly worse than what it was. It doesn't become better. The confusion, the suffering in their lives becomes far greater. People who are in the Church who were baptized, what happens in their lives, again, is a horrible thing, a horrifying thing. There is anguish and torment in their minds. They don't grasp that but it exists. They go through many things and they don't grasp what they have done to themselves. There's something they long for and they don't even understand that. That's something that people should deeply fear because every year, every year that I've been in God's Church people leave; from one Feast to another some are going to leave. Every year it's always been that way. Some pull, something that people give into, some offence, something and people quit the fight. They give up the fight. There's something they're drawn to and they just quit fighting. They give up the fight. They don't recognize the value of fighting for God's way of life. That's a horrible thing.

So anyway, this verse and what it's saying is so awesome. **And are (verse 20) are being built up/ upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.** The temple isn't built except for him, upon him. He is the chief cornerstone of it all. This is how God had planned it before He ever began anything in any phase of creation. ...in **whom all the building**, all the building, speaking of the tabernacle, the temple, Mount Zion, new Jerusalem, **in whom all the building fitly framed together and growing in a holy temple in the**

Lord. That's how it's growing. We can only grow if God is in us, Jesus Christ is dwelling in us through the power of the holy spirit and we are in them and that means there can't be sin. Where there is sin it has to be repented of so that we can have that continuing relationship and that continual binding that takes place, that helps us to be at-one with God and to be able to continue to grow and be molded and fashioned into position, into place, whatever that might be as time goes along, wherever God places us and uses us, and in His purpose and plan where we will be so fulfilled in life by yielding to what God creates within us as we go through the process of transformation. So "fitly framed together," perfectly framed, fit together like in any kind of construction when it's finally brought there the piece fits perfectly. It's beautiful and every piece adds to the whole of what's being built. **...fitly framed together and growing into an holy temple in the Lord.** Ever growing because what God is building and construction, His family, Elohim. It's a continuing process and there are various phases of it.

Verse 22—in whom you also are being built together for an habitation of God. Here is the real dwelling place. Here's the real habitation. We know these things, but how inspiring, how exciting is it just to think about these things and to mediate upon them and to be reminded on a continuing basis what God is doing and what we have part in, the awesomeness of what we get to share in - fellowship - sharing together. It's a beautiful thing. **...being built together for an habitation of God through the spirit.** That's how it's accomplished. It's not a physical thing; it's a habitation through the holy spirit. It hasn't been very many years ago now, just not too long ago that God revealed to us, which we'll hear more about in the Feast here, about this process and about what it means and how great it is of God dwelling in us and we in Him. It's awesome! It's beautiful! It's inspiring! It's exciting, the things that God has before us and what we're working toward.

Our minds can't comprehend and grasp one time to another, of where we will be and what we will be doing and how great it will be to be a part to serve because it increases mightily as time goes on. For all those who become a part of God's family at the return of Jesus Christ who are a part of that temple, that tabernacle immediately at the coming of Jesus Christ, have no comprehension of what that's going to be like once we're given such power and such purpose in life, and such work and opportunities before us to serve in ways that our minds really can't grasp much of. We can only grasp just a little bit of it in a small way.

Those who live into the Millennium, I'm excited for those who are able to hold on to this way of life, young people especially, but all who are able to hold on to and continue on into the Millennium living during that period of time, to have opportunity. You just really have no comprehension if you yield yourself to this process, continue in the transformation, hear the things that are being spoken and given by God to the Church and seek to apply them to your life and the change through transformation that will take place in you. You really can't grasp where you're going to be a few years from now and the opportunities that lie before you. They are awesome indeed.

So again in all this, "Being built together for an habitation of God through the spirit." The point being concerning the temple is we are not yet the temple. Instead, at this time we are only able to worship in it. That's similar to understanding what Mr. Armstrong had to say that we're the Kingdom of God in embryo. We're not yet born into that family, into that Kingdom. We're not yet in the temple, a part of that temple, as far as the full construction. We're being molded and fashioned to fit into place, becoming fitly framed together as time goes along here so that when the time does come we'll be put in a position and a place that God has planned and prepared and it'll be awesome beyond any beginning of comprehension right now. It's important to understand this too, that we are not yet the temple in the truest sense of what's coming. We make up a temple, we are a part in that respect, of what God is building, but not everything, not every piece, as we have found out through time here, comes to this. Many are called and few are chosen. It's like in a lot of construction there are different pieces that are looked at and worked with and even stone and whatever might be prepared, and sometimes it doesn't work, sometimes things chip off and break and they can't be used later. So much of that, in reality, depends upon us then as to whether we yield to the process of the construction, of the building and yield our self to what needs to be chiselled out of our lives, what needs to be taken out of our lives and yield as we need to yield to what God is doing with us.

So again, it's important to understand this, a good phrase to think about: We are not yet the temple; instead, at this time we are only able to worship in it. That's why I've talked about so often here about those who are in the temple because it's a matter of worshipping in the temple. It doesn't mean we're the temple yet, but there are those in the courtyard wandering around in the courtyard still. There are still individuals out here observing this Feast of Tabernacles - not many, but there are a few - who are wandering around out in the courtyard, who are not fully committed yet, who are not deeply involved in their lives in a commitment to live this way of life and fighting for this way of life like they need to be. You can't do it in a lukewarm manner either. If you're doing it in a lukewarm manner you're out in the courtyard. That's not in the temple. God doesn't accept lukewarm worship. So we have to want this way of life and we have to fight for this way of life. So it's a desire to be in the temple. So what a blessing to be able to worship in the temple. So it's not a matter of being out in the courtyard and worshipping out there and going around and acting as though we're in the temple. So there's a big difference between being in the temple and being the temple, indeed.

So we live at a time, the time when the primary structure of the temple of God will fully be brought into place, that beginning phase of it, that beginning portion of it, when it will be placed together, fit into place to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth for 1,100 years. There's going to be a lot added to it during that period of time as well, but primarily this first great phase when it finally is established on earth happens at the beginning of the Millennium, that which we are picturing here at this Feast of Tabernacles, that which we are foreshadowing here at this Feast of Tabernacles.

So let's look more closely to that which brings about this incredible change in what God has been preparing for so very long now. Isaiah 66. So much said here in these verses. **Isaiah 66:1—Thus says the Eternal, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that you build for Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and all those things have been, says the Eternal: but to this one will I look, even to him that is of a poor and a contrite spirit,** or even to the one, because it's not just about a man or a woman and those words are added here, but it's an understanding of what God is saying here, to the kind of person that God looks to. So this has to do with the building, doesn't it? This is in a context, "Where is the house that you build for Me?" So God says, "This is where I will look." For what? For that which is going to be a part of building the house because He's building it. He is the one that is constructing it, him now and His Son. **For all these things has My hand made, and all these things have been, says the Eternal: But to this person will I look, to those who are of a poor and a contrite spirit,** or to them, **to all those who are of a poor and a contrite spirit and that tremble at My word.** It's to such a person that God looks at and so this "poor and of a contrite spirit" has to do with an attitude of mind, those who understand the importance of dwelling in the temple, those worshipping in the temple. So we're able to dwell in, in that respect, to worship in the temple in the sense that understanding that God the Father and Jesus Christ right now are that temple, the first part of that great temple. God Almighty is going to dwell in that temple and Jesus Christ the cornerstone of it, literally. So we understand these things on a spirit plane as far as that which is spiritual. So God's showing here how He builds and what He is going to do in building of that. So God will look to those when it comes time to work with them to mold and fashion them, to those who are yielded to this process of a poor and a contrite spirit, humble in attitude, teachable in spirit. You know, not thinking we have all the answers to things, but knowing that there is so much we don't grasp and comprehend, there is so much to learn. It's always a battle of getting rid of our ways, "my" ways, "my" ways of seeing this or that or interpreting what was said in a sermon or whatever in order to make it fit what I want it to fit, or what has been said to the ministry and making it fit to what I want it to fit rather than what is being said and what is being conveyed.

I think it's fair to share this with the Church. You know, there are things we're given that sometimes takes years. How often has it been, if you've been around for a long time now, have you heard a particular sermon and then maybe have gone back to hear it again, or this happens quite often, when people talk about how that they missed certain things. They didn't see it then or sometimes you go back over something, whatever it might be, and all of a sudden now you see it. There is something you grasp and comprehend because you've gone through the experiences that you needed to in order to get to where you needed to be in order to receive it, in order to have it as a part of your life. Sometimes then it takes time for it to become a part of our life. Then when we go through those things and we hear something we say, "Oh yeah, now I understand. Now I see it." So we're constantly in this process of construction, of growth, of development and being developed, if you will.

The reason I mention this now is because even within the ministry I marvel how so often individuals believe that they understand certain things that have been given to them as responsibilities, but they don't see it. It takes time. Some don't see it. They're given opportunity and later on they come to see it, maybe when they're still in the ministry and maybe when they're not, but they come to see certain things that have been given because they weren't ready yet. Yet we tend to think that we do see it and we see a responsibility and we think, "Well, that's not that big a deal. I'm not doing much of anything." They don't grasp what's there. That's just the way we are as human beings. We go through processes whereby we learn and grow.

I marvel about individuals, the more they do grow and the more responsibilities they have in certain areas, where God is using them for specific areas, and that same thing that takes place, individuals that are able to see things that a year, two years ago they couldn't see, they couldn't even begin to see it. And yet when I give some of the programs that I do, when I've given instruction in things recorded to be put on for even instruction for the ministry, people don't see it all. I'll just be candid. Sometimes people just don't come close to seeing it all, and can only see it in part, in measure, but we tend to think that we see it and we understand it all and we don't.

That's the way it is in the Church. So often we think that where we are at a moment in time we hear a sermon or hear something that we see it all, that we grasp it. No, we don't. There is so much more and there is so much more before it finally actually becomes a part of our life. It's an awesome process, it truly is.

Then it ends here by saying in this verse, **and trembles at My word**. I just mentioned that a moment ago, to tremble, what it would mean to be cut off from God's word, to be in awe of God's word, to be inspired by God's word, to recognize that we only see it in part and that there's so much more to continually learn just like the two trees. I think about that often and Mr. Armstrong going back there and I think about all that we have done and God's revealed to us since that time, in the garden there, of what took place, and that's the beginning of it all. Most everything that we have to come to see was given right there in the garden. Adam and Eve, the lessons that are there, it's all there, it's just that we can't see it all. I think of all the scriptures and everything that followed to help explain and expound what is right there, in a nutshell. But in time we learn.

So this reflects God's desire toward mankind, but such is not the true nature of people to be like this, to be of a poor and a contrite spirit and to tremble at God's word. Instead this is the way human beings tend to be because of our selfish human nature: **He who kills an ox as if he slew a man...** What's being said here? Well, He's reflecting here an attitude that so often as human beings we just don't have that kind of mind. God has to work with us. Sometimes before we can even be called we have to be knocked down a few pegs, and sometimes to continue to grow. Sometimes we have to go through some things in order to finally be able to see something else that God is doing and molding and fashioning in us because our spirit, our human spirit resists God. It says, "It's enmity with God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Our nature! So it's only through the power of God's spirit that we can battle that nature and choose to battle that

kind of thinking and that kind of mind, but when we understand that that's our mind then we want to be something different, we want to be transformed and more fully yielded to God. So we go through a great process of change that takes time.

He who kills an ox *as if* he slew a man; in other words, here is someone that's to have an offering before God—this is what it's about—going to offer up an ox. That's the greatest of sacrifice that you can give, the most expensive. You know, if it's a sheep or some fowl or something of that nature, that's one thing that was offered, and a goat or whatever it might be. But to offer an ox, that's expensive. There's a lot involved there and so the attitude being here God is saying it's done in such a frivolous way, that attitude, the mindset, the reasons, sometimes the matters of vanity: "Oh, I'm bringing an ox before God. Everyone's going to see me. People are going to be seeing what I brought. I have brought an ox." And you march up the very best of all your oxen, as it were, or cattle, bull in this case. You bring it before everyone to see. Sometimes it's a matter of vanity then. Service is not a matter of vanity. You know, that kind of an attitude God looks upon it and it's so revolting it's like one who can kill a person, you know. It's ugly; it's not right. I think of Cain and Abel and the difference there. It had to do with attitude and what was being offered to God. And what came out of that?

He who kills an ox *as if* he slew a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, *if* he cut off a dog's neck. Man, this is pretty strong language, isn't it? You know, going through that routine to offer up a lamb, not realizing the value, that it's not a matter of the value of the lamb and the ox and the ox being greater than the lamb and then when you offer the lamb it may not be as great as the ox, but what is the spirit and attitude in which you do it and the gratitude and thankfulness toward God and the motivation behind doing so and the reasons for doing so and the attitude then of service? Is it just this kind of walking through the motion, like being out in the courtyard and reflecting, trying to reflect something here that we're really not?

You know, I think of people who go through this. I think of individuals that sometimes don't realize how great this battle is in their life, that they have this thing of constantly dealing with trying to reflect something about themselves. They want to have this image of themselves to be seen by others, and work at that so hard that, well, they don't realize what they're doing. They so hurt themselves because there's always this protection thing going on, protecting their image and keeping certain things secret and certain things in the background and being secretive about things and only letting things come to a certain point and still hiding certain things because the reality is sometimes there's just certain things to hide that aren't right.

So again, God addresses things for what they are. So can you imagine someone offering up a lamb and then having the attitude of mind it'd be like actually like having a dog, an unclean animal there and cutting it's throat before God? That's how God see it, our offering, what we're giving. Is it genuine? Is it true? Is it because we're true? Or are we so hard at working at keeping something, an image of ourselves in such a way that we don't want people to see any flaws in us? We all have flaws! We all have weaknesses. Why can't we just be ourselves and be genuine in that respect?

That doesn't mean you have to go unload all your sins before someone, but where there are sins acknowledge them before God and cry out to God for help, but in other things in your life, to be so protective?

Anyway, going on, **and he who offers an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood.** You know, when blood is being offered of animals or whatever it might be and the things that take place here, to have such an attitude of mind in the kind of service that's being given, that it's not genuine and true and true in heart, those things are repulsive. God sees through them. What does God say He wants to worship Him? He wants those to worship Him in spirit and in truth. That's the only way to worship God, in spirit and in truth.

...**he who burns incense**, and we know what that is like, offering up prayer, symbolic of prayers in life, **as if he blessed an idol.** You know, the cheapening of prayer and its purpose, you know, and not understanding here what is being done. It's more of a routine. It's like kneeling down in a superstitious way before an idol or something and not really grasping what is there and the purpose of it, that it must be something that is of the heart. As Jesus Christ said, when you pray go into your closet and pray and be truthful and open with God. Again here, how we sometimes pray God says He wants us to do it in that manner and to be genuine, to be open, to be truthful, to be sincere. We can't cheapen prayer.

That's why even some of the things we've done as far as the Church is concerned we have pulled back in certain things because it's not about us, it's about the Church when prayers are given and various other things that if we're not careful it becomes a routine like praying to an idol. That's what it's giving the example here. That's what happens to so many prayers that are done every meal that people have; it begins to be meaningless. It's like spinning a wheel saying the same exact same thing each and every time. That isn't God's desire to receive that. It just becomes like worshipping an idol or having some other religious belief or whatever it might be. These are the examples being given here.

So, **Yes, they have chosen**, as it says here, **Yes, they have chosen their own ways.** That's the problem. We as human beings so often we choose our ways, we yield to our ways of doing things. There are things we're going to do regardless of anyone else, and we hold ourselves back. We don't participate and aren't a part of the fellowship as we should be, as we need to be, and treasure our family as we need to in how God molds and fashions us in such environments. So, so often we, people can pull back and choose their own ways, whatever that might be, the ways that pull us away from God, the ways that are sin and give into various kinds of sin. Then we can't have right fellowship.

So often I know, I can tell easily, my wife and I both very powerfully so because we've experienced this so much through God's Church of how people are around us as to how they are in their own lives. When people keep clear of us I know something's going on because they don't feel right, there is something wrong. They can't. They understand, they have this feeling, whether

they comprehend it or not, because it's true. God works in a very powerful way through His Church, through His ministry and, anyway, God is there indeed and can see through a lot of things. But if we don't fight the fight and strive to fight against the things that are wrong and strive to do what is right it'll eat us up inside.

Yes, they have chosen their own ways, as their soul delights in their abominations. So the enjoyment of sinful life that's the result of yielding to "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." Again here, God describing here about building His house and that man isn't going to build it for Him, but we can yield ourselves to a process if we will, when God is working with us, to humble ourselves, to be able to have a poor and a contrite spirit, to seek that in our life. Ask God for help to be of that kind of a mindset, to be of a teachable spirit, to want to learn, to want to grow, to have those attitudes, to be humble, not to be lifted up with pride and thereby resisting what God is doing in our life or what He feeds us in our life, what He gives us in our life.

So anyway, because of such attitudes of spirit that has existed in mankind, and it's even existed far too much within God's own Church, God reveals the timing and timeliness of His judgment upon mankind when He will bring an end to mankind's frivolous pursuit of his own ways.

Let's continue on, **Isaiah 66:4—I also will choose their delusions**, in the world and even in the Church, because the reality is in the world God is bringing it to a point in time of judgment at the end of 6,000 years, being brought to a point of judgment because it must take place to end the 6,000 years and to begin a new 1,100 years. Then there is even greater judgment beyond this. So He says, **I will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them.** So there are things that happen to people who become separated from the Body and horrifying, horrible things of life that they will go through as a result and do go through. I think about some of those situations and people who desire to pray for them, and sometimes it may be family members or whatever it might be, and they don't realize, no, they're separated from God, they're separated from the Church, they're separated from fellowship, and they've been given over to Satan. So that's why their life is not going well, so how do you pray for that? If they're not yielded to God, if they don't want this way of life the only thing you can pray about in that respect is that maybe they be humbled, that maybe by what they suffer and what they go through they'll be brought to humility so they will listen again.

Think of the book: If you will listen, God will listen. The reality is there are people who have left who just will not listen, even when they suffer out here in the world to the degree they suffer.

Verse 4—I also will choose their delusions and will bring their fears upon them because when I called, none did answer; and when I spoke, they did not listen. That's just the way of mankind. I think of that message again, over and over again in this final book to *Prophecy Against the Nations*, "If you will listen, God will listen." The problem is people won't listen. They just haven't listened so they have to be brought very low and have humility brought to their doorstep by

having to be brought down so that they can or will potentially begin to listen and sometimes even within the Church things have to happen, things have to happen to people in life so they can begin to learn some lessons that they haven't learned yet.

And when I spoke they did not listen, but they did evil before Mine eyes and chose *that* which I was not pleased. Hear the word of the Eternal, you who tremble at His word, in other words, those who are moved and take fully to heart what God says, who fear not to do so. That's the kind of mind God looks to and works with. **Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake,** as Revelation says, you know, we're cut off. That's what happens to us. Our lives change when we come into the Church. We're cut off. We're cut off from family relationships of people who just don't want that, friends of our past, they change. Because we change they don't want anything to do with us and we're cut off from them and the reality is we don't want anything to do with that way of life as a whole either.

I remember in the very beginning when I was called I had to leave a college town that I was in and go many miles away and find a job and be there for around six months to get my mind straight and get set well within the Church so that when I was able to go back it was no longer a temptation and a trial in those regions, in those areas, in those friends. They were no longer my friends because they continued on their course and I had changed mine. God blessed me in doing so. That's what we have to do sometimes; we have to flee, we have to run away from things of life, our lifestyles and the way of the world and the friendships we had in the world, otherwise, change won't come about if we continue in that same environment as a whole. So sometimes people still play around in those environments too much. The reality is you've got to make a distinction in those things.

Going on it says here, **Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out,** you know, cut you off **for My name's sake, said, Let the Eternal be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.** So again here, God will intervene; He'll strengthen and encourage His people but bring the rest to shame through His judgment. That's what it's talking about here. In the world and within those who have had part within the Church, who have left it behind.

Then going on, **verse 6—The sound,** noise and thunder as it's talking about here, **of uproar from the city, a sound,** again, the noise and thunder, **from the temple, a sound,** this word that means a noise, this noise and thunder as it were **of the Eternal that renders recompense to his enemies. Before she travailed...** So it's showing here before the temple comes what has to take place. This gets to a crescendo just before the temple is made manifest to man, to the world, if you will. Not that they can fully see and grasp that which is on a spiritual plane, but the fact that it's here, Jesus Christ is here, 144,000 are here and God's Kingdom comes to this earth to rule this earth, you know, big changes that take place. Before it comes this gets into greater intensity, if you will.

So it says here **this sound, the noise of the Eternal that renders recompense to his enemies. Before she labored**, before she went into labor, **she brought forth**, she gave birth. We talked about this in times past. It says, **before her pain, or, before her sorrow came, she was delivered of a man child**. So it goes on to ask, **Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things?** How can this happen? How can there be birth before labor? How can there be a birth? So it says here, "Before she labored she brought forth and gave birth." That just doesn't happen in the physical world. You know, someone give birth and then have labor? It doesn't happen that way. But for the Church and what happens at the end of the age it does happen. So again here, speaking of Jesus Christ.

Before her pain, before sorrow came, she was delivered of a man child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? So God shows here this is far greater than physical human birth. This is building, this is something that's going on that's taken 2,000 years since Jesus Christ became our Passover, and this building that continued to go on, and this nation, the Mount Zion that's being brought about, and being constructed. The Kingdom of God that's being built takes time, but before that comes then there will be the labor and there will be the pain before that's brought to pass. So this is what it's talking about.

Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion labored, was in pain, **she brought forth her children**. So there are things to come on this earth that we're going to see and that we're going to experience, and the shorter they are the better off we are by every measure indeed because it's going to be a lot worse than what we grasp and comprehend.

Verse 9—Shall I bring up to birth, you know, being prepared and preparing for it for some time, **and not cause to be brought forth?** In other words, bring to delivery. Am I going to work with all this and bring it up right to that point and there not be a birth and not deliver? Sometimes it may seem like that it's happening right then and then sometimes it happens that it doesn't happen right then and a little bit later and more pain and more travail as it talks about, more labor, if you will.

So it says, **Shall I bring up to birth and not bring forth? Says the Eternal. Shall I cause to be brought forth, and then shut the womb? says your God. Rejoice with Jerusalem**. It's going to happen. Rejoice, these things are coming; these things will be here in God's time for God's purpose and whatever God is doing because if we grasp the big picture there's a lot more here than just a few who are in the Church at this time, a remnant Church. There is that which was scattered into the thousands that God has plans and purpose for working with and for giving opportunity and then the world, nations and peoples and all these things being brought together. If we grasp and comprehend things about mankind that make this even far, far greater what God is doing, to grasp and comprehend what we're like as human beings, everything that God brought into creation came to being; it was there. It didn't resist God. But human beings do, and

especially with the nations and kingdoms today as around this earth and things that are taking place, but God's working with various things to bring everything together in perfect timing in ways that once we look back and even once we're shown various things that we can't see, that we're going to marvel. We're going to be dumbfounded by what God did.

Again here, **Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her, as you who love her.** That's what we love. We, as all others have in times past look for a city whose builder and maker is God. That longing. That desire. We are so unique because we live at that time that others have longed for and died waiting. **...rejoice with happiness with her, all you who mourn for her: that you may nurse and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that you may drink in all, you know, drink to the full, in other words, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.** That's what gives us strength, to realize what God is doing and that it's getting closer and God's going to bring it to pass, and what God says it is going to happen. It is going to take place for what God is going to deliver to this world and bring about in this world.

Everything we see going on around us right now, bringing things to the surface, that maybe we'll hear a little bit more about during this Feast, but it is amazing what you are watching and seeing. And candidly, because it's happening from day to day many of us don't comprehend and realize what is taking place. You are seeing the breakdown of this world. You are seeing the breakdown of everything as far as structures and nations and the things that are not held together as they should be, and they are going to come crumbling down. They're going to implode upon themselves. It's just gets bigger and bigger because the haughtiness of mankind is so great. But peace is being taken from this earth a little bit at a time and this fighting and this lack of agreement and the ability to agree. God is making manifest that man cannot rule himself.

So continuing **Isaiah 66:12—For thus says the Eternal, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the gentiles, the non believers, like a flowing stream: then shall you nurse and you shall be borne upon her sides, and bounced upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts so will I comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.** So it's getting closer and all the suffering that we go through in human life, all the things that we go through in being prepared, whether it be the continuation of the Church in the Millennium or for those who are going to be the finishing touches on the temple, on that new government that's coming to this earth, what we're going to receive, what's coming after that is so awesome and so great and makes all this look pretty puny, what we've had to go through in life because there's been a lot of human suffering, but a lot, lot worse than what we've had to experience. Sometimes in our minds we think it's great because we see things on a spiritual plane, and in the mind that's where the great battle is, so it's unique to us.

Verse 14—When you see this, the ushering in of the Millennium, the coming of God's Kingdom, Jesus Christ returning to this earth, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the green grass; and the hand of the Eternal shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies. Things are going to be turned right side up finally, the way that

they were intended to be from the very beginning, God's government and God's truth on this earth.

Verse 15—For, behold, the Eternal will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. God's going to change this earth and take away government out of the hands of man and out of the hands of Satan and give it to His Son. For by fire and by sword will the Eternal plead with all flesh. "If you will listen, I will listen," but even as they're going through all these things there aren't going to be that many who listen still. ...and the slain of the Eternal shall be many. So that's the time we live in. It's quite unique. It's quite incredible to grasp and comprehend.

Let's turn over to Revelation 15. It's at this point that an interesting scripture would be good to consider as we move forward to all that's revealed in this time period that's pictured by establishing, the establishing of the millennial reign of Christ and the 144,000 in the Kingdom of God. Here's what we're reading about now in **Revelation 15:8—And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no one was able to enter into the temple, until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.** So we know when those things are. "No one was able to enter into the temple." So this matter of not being able to enter into literally means not able to come into the temple. This word translated most often as "enter" comes from the same Greek word that Christ uses when he speaks in John and says, "I will come to you," "I am coming," present progressive, and so if we grasp what it's saying here, brethren, this is awesome. This is awesome!

As a reminder I'm going to read to you what was stated about the timing of Christ's coming to this earth. I'm just going to read it to you. **1 Thessalonians 4:16—For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then—then—we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.** What an awesome thing to know and to understand more fully what this is all about, of those who are resurrected at the time of Christ's coming and then the period of time of certain things that are going to happen on this earth, of plagues that are going to be poured out upon this earth, and then finally Jesus Christ returning and standing upon the Mount of Olives once again and the Kingdom of God being fully established on the earth. It's awesome. It's awesome what is being said here.

It says with the timing of the wave sheaf being at a specific time during the Days of Unleavened Bread and the very specific count of 50 days from that time to Pentecost, then it should be easier if we grasp these things; if we see these things then it should be easier to understand when the firstfruits are able to come into the temple. It's not a matter of worshipping in the temple, but being in the temple to be officially received of God and to begin partaking of the marriage of the Lamb and his bride, to have fully become married to Christ, to be made one with Christ and God. It's awesome if we understand.

I want to read this in Leviticus, **Leviticus 23:15—And you shall count unto you from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering**, so here is the wave offering. We understand its importance in its timing. God has revealed that more so in these past several years. **...seven Sabbaths shall be complete.** We've known of the timing very powerfully so since 1984, but to understand the great significance and how these things tie together we haven't fully grasped and comprehended the magnitude of it, especially in the timing of Christ's coming and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth with 144,000.

Verse 16—Even to the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meat offering unto the Eternal. You shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: and they shall be of fine flour; and they shall be baked with leaven. I love this because it shows that they had sin in their life all the way to the end, baked with leaven; there's always been sin there until finally the change comes. Forgiven of sin, yes, but not rid of it until a great change has fully taken place. **They are the firstfruits unto the Eternal.**

So it goes on here then to say, **verse 18—And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock...** I think of the things of concerning the Church and how God uses seven and the different times periods that God has worked with to bring about this period of time. Then it says, **one young bullock and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Eternal, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire.** So again here, it's reflecting upon that which has to do with the wave loaves and of that which all have to go through and learning to sacrifice, you know, what it means in how we sacrifice and that there's fire involved. It's not easy. We live in a world that resists God in every way and we learn how to sacrifice in the right ways before God. It goes on to say, **and a sweet savour unto the Eternal.** A relationship, a fellowship with God that is unique.

Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings. I love these things when it talks about an offering made by fire, that there's that which we have to go through, that it's not easy, and we go through fire, in that respect, to offer up offerings and sacrifice to God, the trials and hardships of life that we go through for the right reasons, not because of resisting God. Because sometimes, too often, frankly, we human beings simply suffer because of our own stupid mistakes and our own resisting of God and that battle that takes place in the human mind, but then as we're able to yield to more and recognize the value of that which we go through and that which helps to mold and fashion us we rejoice in those things.

And two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings. This is what it's all about, to come to be at-one with God, to be, to have a peace in our life that is true and right that comes from God, to live this way of life that is one of peace.

Anyway, **verse 20** it goes to say, **And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits, these loaves, for a wave offering before the Eternal, with the two lambs: and they**

shall be holy to the Eternal for the priest, the High Priest. They shall be holy to the Eternal for the priest. You know, the marriage supper of the Lamb, to become one, holy, you know, now at a point in time here once they're received. You know, so just like the wave sheaf was received of God the wave loaves are received by Almighty God as well. There is a point in time that is very specific as far as God is concerned.

So, then, finally let's look at what is stated toward the end of the book of Revelation as this so often is taken in so many different ways, and sometimes rather strangely so. Let's turn over there, **Revelation 21:1—And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away; and there was no more sea, no more vastness of humanity that's swallowed up in many nations, governments, and divisions of people on the earth. That's what this is about. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** So all in time are going to be able to become a part of this, whether it be those in this first great resurrection that comes at Christ's coming, the 144,000, and all others at different times who enter into, they're able to enter into the same oneness, into a marriage at different times, that which reflects that of marriage, a oneness, brought into becoming one with God.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle/temple of God is with mankind, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall, now working here for the next 1,100 years, wipe away all tears from their eyes, so it's a process but it leads to that which is final and complete, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. So these are things that go all the way up to the Last Great Day that are fulfilled totally, obviously, at that time.

But continuing here now in **verse 5—And He who sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.** Beautiful verses here, part of what we talked about in the other sermon here as we went through and talked about the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is what it's talking about, things of this nature, that which we are fed, that which we are nourished upon, that which we have forever from God Almighty, and not as we do as human beings now where there are times we're closer to God and times when we quench part of God's spirit in our life. But here it'll always be full—full—full of the mind, the way, the being of God in our lives and in our purpose for life.

Then on down in **verse 9—And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, so here we are again, seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was**

like a stone most precious, even like jasper stone, clear as crystal, things we can't comprehend because we can't see anything on a spiritual plane, but it gives that which is physical to help us to grasp some kind of understanding of the magnitude, the beauty, the awesomeness of such a thing. ...and had a wall great and high, *and* twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and the names written therein, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. So there's a place for all 144,000. There are 12,000 in each that will have one of the names assigned to them, that is given to them; order and structure that God gives in His temple.

Verse 21—And the twelve gates were twelve pearls. Beautiful! ...with each of the gates being of a single pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as if it were transparent glass. We can't comprehend those things when we hear things like this. And indeed, we should see the beauty, the magnitude, the wealth, the majesty of it all.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did fill it with light, and the Lamb is the light thereof. So here it's talking about the temple of God that is established. Here is when it's first established at the coming of the 144,000, and right at the end of the seven plagues that it speaks of here. So if we grasp and comprehend the timing of this though Jesus Christ was resurrected, right after, and so God has given us these things to comprehend. Jesus Christ was resurrected right at the end of a Sabbath day on the Sabbath still, but the wave sheaf didn't take place till the next morning. We understand that after sunrise the next morning on the first day of the week when the wave sheaf was always offered up before God.

So there's something here in what takes place that is important to God to follow through in an orderly way that we don't grasp nor comprehend, nor has been revealed on a spirit plane, but here, even though Christ was resurrected and a spirit being he was not fully received, in that respect, to be the wave sheaf until that took place, whatever that was and ever what occurred, things that haven't been fully revealed to us. So it is with the wave loaves; that not until they're on the earth, not until they're all there, because there are going to be some who have the opportunity of being changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye, when not even having to die a physical death they're going to be able to enter into and become a part of the 144,000, ever how many that is. We don't know. A dozen? Two dozen? Three dozen? Four dozen? I don't know! God knows and God has the number of who will be alive by that point in time because there will be some that will die during that period before that who will obviously have the opportunity of being resurrected, because when they're dead they're able to be resurrected together. So here this resurrection that takes place, these things that take place at this particular time, but then as far as what God receives, the 144,000 are received as the wave loaves at the timing that the wave loaves are to be offered up before God.

So whatever that consists of to God as a part of His purpose, as a part of the formality of it all, the order of it all, as with Christ being received as the wave sheaf, then on that particular day, on

the day of Pentecost, not before, though their resurrection is well before this, but on that particular day what an incredible thing to understand that the wave loaves are received of God officially so and in that respect very powerfully so then to go forward then to do the function and the job that was given to them. So things we don't fully grasp and comprehend yet in a spirit world.

Revelation 22:1 it goes on to say, **And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *there was* the tree of life, which made twelve *kinds of* fruit, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations.** Now, this is not a physical thing. It is fully spiritual. There is so much here, brethren, of what it's talking about, the tree of life. Where did we first hear about the tree of life? It's in Genesis. The tree of life.

Verse 10—And he, the angel, said to me, Do not seal the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

So let's just go back there and look at that. Genesis 2, because from the beginning it's clear that this has been God's desire and purpose to bring mankind to a time when they could indeed take part of the tree of life forever, but instead mankind in the very beginning had to be cut off from that, from that access. So there are things given to us that have great, great meaning, and yet God reveals, again, back in **Genesis 2:9—And out of the ground the Eternal God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food, to grow out of the ground, but there's something else here it says, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.** So we're getting closer and closer to all the things that God is giving to us of the meaning of these things, of those things that are here. We tend to take it all very physically and yet the tree of life is fully about that which is of God's spirit and of what God has desired. He's revealing right here, as with so many things, everything was here at the beginning, of what was being offered to mankind. But mankind couldn't receive it because mankind was made physical for a purpose, made subject to vanity, made subject to things of the carnal flesh, of the carnal mind, of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." That's how we were created for a purpose. Then God's purpose was to bring this back to mankind.

So mankind couldn't just have access to eternal life without purpose, without design, without going through the things that needed to be gone through. It begins with the Passover. So again, another sermon that could come out just out of that, but this here is enough to feed upon, to feast upon at this Feast of Tabernacles. It's beautiful.

Genesis 3:22— And the Eternal God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. That's the way man is, chooses his own way. God is the only one that can show the right way of life, but human beings are lifted up with pride and haughtiness, reject God, reject

God as the authority in their life, and this is just the way of mankind. That's the battle for all of us even in God's Church, to fight against such thinking, to fight against such a mind, and to yield our self to what God gives to us and molds and fashions us in and the truth He gives to us. ...**the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil: and lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and live forever...** God wasn't going to allow that. Mr. Armstrong taught so much about this, that this is the very thing, that God is not going to allow anyone into His Kingdom who has not gone through the entire process, the transformation process of the mind becoming transformed and made anew to a point in time where God can say, "Now I know you," and the mind become set to a point where it can be changed to spirit, where it can be given spirit life, a beautiful thing.

Verse 23—Therefore, the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, cut him off, just like people in the Church have been cut off from the tree of life, cut off from the flow of God's spirit, cut off from having any access to God and the truth of God and the way of God. They're just going out to live their own way now and strive to make life in their own ways, their own means, but it's not going to be with God. ...and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. So all here of those things which are symbolic and real in life that God does because everything has to be done God's way. The process whereby we are able to be begotten and begin to be transformed and finally be born, it's all a matter of great order and truth.

So God has revealed this, again, I think of this in the first year of the Church, the Church of Ephesus, if you will. Revelation 2. I think it's good just to read these verses in closing here at the end of this sermon. **Revelation 2:1**, a few verses here in the book of Revelation. **Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus, so he told them right from the very beginning, write; These things are proclaimed by he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and I think of that which was given to Jesus Christ and the seven church eras which were to follow and the things that were to take place, that which is revealed to the various eras, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,** so that's what he's done and that which through time over the past 2,000 years especially as being our High Priest. He is the head of the Church.

And **verse 7**, to the Church of Ephesus it says, **He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the Churches; To him who overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life.** Remember the thing about the bride? The marriage supper of the Lamb? The supper? The feasting? The food that we have? The tree of life and the waters that proceed forth from the throne of God? It's about God's spirit. It's about the fruit and the things we have in our life that come into our life that we're able to eat upon and eat of and receive from God Almighty that He gives to us and nourishes us with on a continuing basis from then on through life—never to be cut off from God again.

To him that overcomes, who overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst—notice—of the paradise, it's the word for garden, in the midst of the garden of God. Beautiful. Things that are very symbolic of things that happen on a spiritual plane that are awesome.

Revelation 22 now. **Revelation 22** again, moving back over to the end of the Bible here. **Verse 13** —**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they who do His commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and might enter in through the gates of the city.** So it's about this desire we have. So we have access in the Church and we're able to worship in the temple and God gives us of His spirit and the flow of His spirit into our lives, but it's not something that's fully in us yet. We're not in that temple yet. It's a beautiful thing here to recognize here that we might have right to the tree of life for all time once we're changed.

Verse 16—I Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the Churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and the morning star. So again here, beautiful picture of those things that are given to us in life that we're able to receive in life and have a fellowship with in life in and through Jesus Christ.

And so **verse 20**, two more verses here, **He who testifies of these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**