

Leading up to this past Sabbath, and since, it's been made clear that this world is exceedingly stirred up, far more than usual. We need to grasp that as this world is being stirred up and that there are tremendous forces at work, forces that are in a spirit realm. We ought to know that anyway, and understand that, why that's the case. But we're drawing very close now to a complete change from one era of mankind in which mankind has ruled himself to another era for mankind where God will rule, speaking of the millennial reign of Joshua the Christ on this earth.

As we draw closer to that, the spirit world is going to begin exerting greater force upon this world, even forces and power that God grants. You need to understand that. There are powers and so forth that are taken away at various times; if we understand those prophecies in Revelation about Satan himself that he has been allowed to exert certain powers in the last six revivals of the Roman Empire, and after those are over that power is taken away. So there are times that God grants that spirit world greater powers for a purpose of doing what they're going to do regardless, and God lets them go ahead and do those things as a part of an execution of judgment on this world at various times as He has done anyway. We're about to enter another one here, obviously, but there are forces already at work.

There are things that we can read about in Revelation that are already in action and have been for some time now as things are being set up, as things are being prepared, as we talked about, the stage is already set, but there are still things moving forward between certain peoples and what has to be done as far as they're concerned. There is even that one prophecy that talks about a particular point in time where three foul spirits are released upon the earth. We need to understand that when that happens they're not allowed to do it until a certain time. They're not allowed to have certain power until a certain time to do what's going to be accomplished by them, what they're going to be granted to do. So much of it has to do with this changing from one period of time to another.

We're getting closer and closer to those things happening and they know. They know just by the fact of certain powers, that as they're being allowed to do certain things out here, they know that by the reality and their part in it as well. Because they have a part in it—these ten nations are going to come together—they have a part in all that. They have a part of what's taking place in Russia and China and Europe and this country and other places around the world. They're already experiencing greater power in those things because the okay, if you will, to a point, has been given to them. Now, they can't do more than what they've been granted to do, but they're going to be given more and more.

As they are they know that time is getting closer and closer and they're getting more stirred up, and so they're broadcasting more toward this world in a lot of things that even affect us. So we should not be surprised either because we're going to be bombarded—not necessarily even

ourselves—sometimes it's going to be things around us that are happening that affect us. Because, candidly, they don't have as great a power against us as they used to, and that's been written about and sermons have been given about that as well. So they try in any manner and means they can to add some drama to our lives. So again, we're aware of those things, but I wanted to go through it.

First of all here I need to give the title of the sermon today. This new series is entitled *Strengthened in Might* with this being *Part 1*.

Last week I read several news articles that focused on just how close the news is corresponding to prophecy of a final world war and a united military might in Europe that will consist of 10 nations. Whether it be the 10 that they're talking about right now or other 10, they're down to that point now of pressing this forward, and there are different possibilities there of different parts of the organization itself and European Union where they are going to do this no matter what. But it's awesome to be able to read some of those things now. It's incredible to be able to listen to news, to read news that speaks of those things that, depending on how long you've been in the Church, that you knew about because of what Mr. Armstrong was given about Europe.

Again, that should be a moving thing for us to realize that regardless of what time is before us time is closing in and getting shorter and shorter. So again, God blessed Mr. Armstrong to know the exact number of nations that would eventually become a focal point of a final world war as they, these 10 nations, fulfill the prophetic role of the seventh and final revival of the old Roman Empire or Europa, Europe.

Now, personally I like that expression better because the Roman Empire isn't specifically spoken of in that context throughout the prophecies; it's something that we recognized happened within the Roman Empire, and certainly the Roman Empire doesn't exist today. So it is more a matter of those things that were prophesied concerning Europe and the nations that would be involved in various revivals. It just so happened Rome was at the forefront of all this as it began. We have seen and all that God gave to us at that point of time was realizing a relationship there between a great church, a large church in this world and what was happening there. But again, Europa, really, in many respects, describes this power and these revivals a little more specifically as we've come through time to this point in time to understand this.

So again, I prefer to use that term. It's more explicit of what's taking place. That particular term, Europa, which is where the name of the continent finally emerged, Europe, finally emerged in 1824. I'm going to give a little bit of history of some of this and read some things as we go along here. That was when that name, that particular name was officially given to the continent.

But it's kind of interesting when you go back and look at some of this and its origins. So I'm going to go back and look a little bit at the etymology and how this progressed and the definition and the terms that were being used and where they came from, and a little bit of the effect it had on Europe.

The word “Europe” is a Latinized form of Greek which meant “wide-face or wide-eye,” but the meaning connected to it goes back even farther. In Greek mythology Europa was a Phoenician princess who was kidnapped and taken to Crete by Zeus as he disguised himself as a beautiful white bull. The story goes that Zeus was infatuated with her, with Europa, and as he changed himself temporarily into the form of the bull Europa was drawn to the bull and climbed upon it and he then kidnapped her, swam across the sea there to Crete where he revealed himself and took her as one of his many lovers. She later gave birth to Minos. Now, none of that really matters, Greek mythology, but it’s kind of interesting sometimes where you see where things come from and how people are swayed by them, how people think.

So the name Europa appears to go back even farther than the use of it in Greek mythology as it appears to have much of its beginning in Phoenician history, which originated more out of the regions of modern Syria and Lebanon where the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon were located. So we know those areas and some of the history involved with Phoenicia, the Phoenicians and that particular region of the world, and as even the Greek mythology points out she was looked at as a Phoenician princess. That’s what the mythology is about. So a lot of this really does originate farther back in time.

Although it’s not widely accepted there is also the belief that the name “Europa” is of Semitic origin, which makes sense because of where it came from, and was from the ancient Mesopotamian Akkadian word “gharob” or “erebu” which probably is pronounced “erevu,” because there is a word that we have looked at extensively in Hebrew that’s “ereb,” e-r-e-b, but it’s pronounced “erev,” and it has to do with sundown, the setting of the sun. That’s exactly where this comes from in the Semitic language. It simply means “do go down,” “the sunset,” or “to the west,” because that’s what they were looking to.

So from their perspective everything they were looking at this word “erevu” or “erebu,” or whatever it is, is a matter of their perspective from the areas of Lebanon and Syria where Phoenicia was located, and everything was to the setting of the sun west of them. That’s what that land was called. Basically, it had something to do then with the particular region that they were looking toward from them. It’s to the west, the people to the west, or whatever it is. So, again, Europa, “to the west,” or the lands to the west, or as the sun goes down from where they’re located.

Basically, that’s where Europe is. Everything that plotted from that particular southern region all the way north, and you look out that particular direction, that’s Europa. Then Rome came along later on and gained great power as that great church came about. So, again, that’s why I like, in some respects, the term Europa. It has, to me, far greater meaning and fits into these things in a far greater way because of what God prophesied of a kingdom that would arise in that particular part of the world and what they would do in ten revivals, if you will, when a specific time came. So again, no need to go back through all those prophecies but very interesting when you go back and read some of those things.

I think of that woman on a bull. Now, I had a hard time finding one of those statues. It's one in London by Hyde Park. I put different kind of search words in, they gave me all kinds of statues and a bull and a woman or a girl that was standing in front of it. But the one that I was looking for wouldn't pop up until I got even more specific and had to put down, which I hope I get this right, if I can remember it today, who the monument was to. It was a monument to Albert, King Albert. It was right beside Hyde Park and there are four corners to this area and they have various things. A matter of fact they have one that's a buffalo or a bison with a woman on it. Guess where that is over here. All these depicted something, but for Europe they had a bull and a woman on top of it because that's what Europa or Europe is known by.

Well, there's a statue too while I was going through that, there in Belgium, in the European section, that depicts a woman on a bull. Then the Greek coin that came out, the €2 coin that came out. Interesting when it came out, to see what was on it, the Greek coin, Greek, the history that's involved here; Europa that arose through that region, in many respects, because of some of the stories here that we're just talked about a little bit. But again, woman on a bull. So this history runs throughout Europe and when some of them go into it it has a lot of meaning to them.

But anyway, I wanted to go on here to a particular article, a news article that I didn't read last week. This is the heading of that particular article. It says: **Napoleon Reborn: We Need A "European Empire" To Challenge US And China, French Minister Says.**¹

Now, we read part of this, but I think it's interesting to see what people are thinking and why they're thinking this way. To me it's an awesome thing to see the thinking of people that's changing so quickly over here and what's coming into their mind and what they're writing about because they're getting closer and closer. That's why I can't help but think of the scriptures that talk about, "Who can but help prophesy?" What that means is that as prophecies begin to become closer and closer and begin to be fulfilled those things that they depict are the things they're speaking of and they can't help it because it's in front of them. That's what they're living. That's incredible, as far as I'm concerned.

Anyway, this article goes on. It says: "As increasingly unpopular French President Emmanuel Macron's calls for creating a 'Real European Army' have been met with ridicule from President Trump, who has insisted that Macron should first try meeting France's NATO commitments... ..Another senior French official upped the aggressive rhetoric in an interview published on Monday, saying that Europe shouldn't be afraid of using its power to become 'a peaceful empire...'"

Isn't that how people think? They're doing it for different reasons than what happened in WWII. This time they really think they're doing a good thing. This time they think that they have good motivations and good reasons for pursuing what they are. That's what's drawing them closer together for themselves as a continent - unlike a dictator that emerged in WWII.

¹ <https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2018-11-12/napoleon-reborn-we-need-european-empire-challenge-us-and-china-french-minister-says>

So again, “saying that Europe shouldn’t be afraid of using its power to become ‘a peaceful empire’ to help it stand up to China and the US. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire made the comments in an interview with Germany's Handelsblatt, which noted that Germany remains largely opposed to such a Continent-wide military alliance.” Interesting, too, because of their history, so there’s certain rhetoric that comes out of them because of what’s affected them for so long, but when the time comes they’ll have no problems, and some don’t already.

“To be sure, Le Maire insisted that **‘I am using this phrase because, in tomorrow’s world, it’s going to be all about power...technological power, economic, financial, monetary, cultural power - all will be decisive. Europe cannot be shy any longer about using its power.’**” And we know how far that’s going to go.

“Le Maire also hinted that there will be ‘decisions made’ about a Continent-wide fighting force during an upcoming EU summit.” And so this is the quote here: *“‘We have talked about it for a long time. Now it’s time for decisions. And there will be decisions made on December 4, at the next meeting of the economy and finance ministers. I cannot imagine anything else.’*” So you can see where their minds are, where their thinking is. It doesn’t take a whole lot, just a little trigger, to pull them closer together to do what they’re going to do.

Going on in that article, “In one recent example of European weakness, cited by Le Maire as justification for his imperial ambitions, Europe failed to stop the US from reimposing sanctions on Iran, and has instead opted for a passive alternative: The creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle to circumvent SWIFT...” It’s banking. It’s money. The movement of money. This thing with Iran, basically, has turned, in a very big way, Europe in a different direction toward themselves, toward their needs and away from looking at the United States any longer. On the contrary, even more so, in one respect, against the United States.

So again, “The creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle to circumvent SWIFT and allow European companies to trade with Iran. **While the workaround will suffice - for now - the broader problem is that Europe can’t allow the US to decide with whom it can and cannot trade.**” So this is a stickler to them and this affects people. This affects their thinking. To see this come together in the fashion that it is, it’s incredible for us to see it. I mean, we can see it; we understand it.

Going on: “Of course, it’s difficult to talk about the creation of a French empire without thinking about Napoleon, the 18th century tyrant who seized power and fought a bloody continent-wide war to spread his ‘revolutionary principles’ across Europe. Given the timing of the interview...”

So you’ve got to think about the perspective of this writer, too, why they’re writing in this vein because there is thinking in the U.S. that’s different than the European and the Europeans have their own and why they’re saying what they are. Easy to see.

“Given the timing of the interview we wonder if Le Maire was aware that Sunday was the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I...” That’s what’s been amazing about a lot of these major

statements have come out at times that are occasions for remembering things that happened during a war in times past, as I read about last week. "...the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I, **a horrific, bloody conflict that left some 16 million soldiers dead and ripped apart the continent. If nothing else, this anniversary certainly lent his remarks a hint of irony.**"

Getting closer and closer and people can't help but say some of the things they do. A lot of it rings true.

Before continuing I think it would be good to go back in time and look at an account back here in Daniel that we can learn from and apply to our own lives at this time. It's very much written for us. That's what's incredible sometimes, to go back and look at things that are written and then come to see what we're living through. It's like when we were going through the Apostasy, in the beginning we didn't know what was happening. We couldn't understand things. We didn't understand about the man of sin. We didn't grasp and comprehend what was happening to the Church, and yet as you begin to live certain things God began to have certain things in scripture slap us in the face, if you will, that became clearer and clearer, what's taking place, what's being fulfilled.

That's the way so much of our journey has been in the Church. We can see things that are taking place and then begin to learn as God begins to show us then what to focus upon. Again, these things are very inspiring. They help to mold and fashion us. They help us to have a certain focus in our lives, a certain vision that we need to have and it's very moving how God works with us, molds and fashions us.

Daniel 10:1—In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; the message was true, and the appointed time was... they say "long" here, but this, some of these translations sometimes are not the best because they don't understand what's taking place. They don't understand. You know, how do you interpret something that you try to take word by word, because that's all they could do, and try to give it the best from their vantage point, from what they could see? We understand that when we come to translating various things, it's more - especially from one language to another— it has to be about the intent and the thought of what's being said. You can't always do it word by word. You have to understand what's being said in order to convey a proper thought of what's written. That's basically what's happening here.

...the message was true and (not "but") the appointed time was about great conflict (hardship). Some translate it that way. They grasp part of what was really being said here. **And he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no desirable food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were fulfilled.** It's specifically focusing in here on various things. He had a focus. There were things that he was doing in his life, in his relationship toward God and praying to God, seeking God's help and guidance and direction and it doesn't state it here specifically about fasting, but fasting very well mingled in with all this,

obviously, but it's not saying that he was fasting that full period of time. It's just saying that there were certain things that one might normally desire and he was not allowing himself to get involved in, in that respect, of feeding himself for what we might normally want day by day. We decide what we want for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and he's saying, in essence, he wasn't doing that but just ate what it took to get by to continue his focus of what he was doing. That's what it's saying.

Now, on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was beside the great river that is the Tigris; I looked up and saw someone clothed in linen, and whose waist was a belt of gold of Uphaz, or this is pronounced so many different ways, "up-has." I oftentimes look up pronunciations, about how things are said, and basically I think it's just by whatever people think it says and then they put in a thing in YouTube and this is how you say it, and then you've got all these things and who is the authority anymore? You don't know.

Verse 6—his body was like beryl, it's just like saying a glistening gem is what it's saying. It was like a glistening gem; his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. Now, this was what he was given to see. This is what he could see from his appearance or from what was a part of a vision here, if you will, of things that he could see. But he wasn't actually seeing anything of the spiritual world. He can't. So that which was revealed to him, this is what it looked like to him.

Verse 7—And I Daniel alone saw the vision. For the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Sometimes we read things like this and it's hard for us to put ourselves in that environment, because if you hear certain things and you see Daniel responding in a certain way to something that's happening, speaking, whatever it might be, it was enough to shake the tar out of them, scare them, and they took off. So whatever stirred that up within them, for them it was scary. Daniel was able to see the vision so it wasn't to him.

Therefore, I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me as my energy was drained from me, therefore, I retained no strength. So he was just there explaining something that, "I had no strength." It was like a great weakness overtook his body and that's how he felt; he felt drained.

Verse 9—Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words, it was as though I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. His hand touched me, which made me tremble while on my knees and on the palms of my hands. So you can see the state he was in and the position he was in. That's what it's talking about here. **He said to me, Daniel, one who is greatly loved...** Awesome! "One who is greatly loved or desired, delightful." In other words, to God. So he knew what was being said. We know what's being said.

So again, the word here having to do with being desired or delighted in. You know, sometimes for us we live our lives with a calling of what we believe and the things that God has given us to see and understand, especially at this particular time, and sometimes I think it's difficult for people because of their physical lives to see God for what God is revealing to us, each one of us, and giving to us, though we should know it and though we should understand it because of a great calling we've been given and we see that the rest of the world hasn't been given that. In our lives it's as though God speaks to us because of a calling and works with us, "One greatly loved of God," one in which God's delighted and which is His pleasure because He chose you to be a part of something so great. He chose you to be at this time in a spiritual relationship and fellowship with Him and His Son and with others whom He has called.

It's difficult for us sometimes to keep that vision, to keep that kind of mindset, and to understand the great God, that the only reason we see what we do, the only reason we have all that we have in knowledge and insight and understanding and inspiration of life and fellowship that we have within the Church is because God loves us far more than we can grasp and comprehend. We really don't get it to that degree. We can't! We can't because it's of a spirit essence, if you will, a mind that is spirit, a mind that is the holy spirit, a mind that has such great desire for us, a desire that we grow in understanding, but it takes us a long, long time.

Because so often we equate, especially in the beginning of our calling, too often we equate our own personal experiences of family with God. Big mistake! But we can't help it because we're messed up, our minds are messed up. None of us are whole! None of us are complete! None of us! Not a one of us whose ever been called by God has a sound mind. On the contrary, God makes it very clear your minds aren't sound. You've got to change. You've got to repent. You've got to yield yourself to something different, to a way that there is only one of, one of love, one of God's love, one of God's kind of love, not man's kind of love.

So even when we hear the word "love" so often people are messed up, because just like we were in the Church, in one respect, because we hadn't grown to that point. We grasp and understood something that was on a brotherly level, philia, philadelphia. That's why the Church was called the Church of Philadelphia because it would have a great kind of brotherly love, which was more of a fraternal kind of love, if you understand it, within an organization. That's what it means, a fraternal kind of love. That's what the word means. We experience that and within that at times we could also experience godly love, but not as much as the other, not as much as the fraternal part. Sometimes people's minds stopped there.

That's why it was difficult for many, even ministers, to understand what Mr. Armstrong was saying when he talked about the greatest kind of love we can see as a human being, in one respect, was his example of that, was a mother's love for her child. That's not enough. But we can grasp that to a degree within human life. But to go beyond that you have to have God's spirit. God works with us within an environment, worked with Philadelphia within that environment of a fraternal kind of love and we had many good experiences in that, great friendships and closeness that was

incredible. There was God's love too, but what overshadowed it was the fraternal love because we're physical, carnal human beings and being called out of a period of time from Sardis where things were just totally gone, going into a period of Philadelphia where we could begin to grow and draw closer as an organization. As God worked with the Church and began to multiply it by tens of thousands of people we were exceedingly blessed.

But it's still a lot of healing that needed to take place in people's lives. God measured people by what they were able to receive and how they were able to respond to what was given to them. That's how we're judged. You know, there were people in Sardis getting close to the end there who were still judged according to what they had. Just like anyone through time.

Abraham. Abraham didn't have what Moses had. He didn't know the things of what Moses gave, the laws of God, the purpose of various things that were given through Moses, let alone what Christ gave later on in the spiritual intent of things. There is so much he didn't know. He was judged by what he was given, however, and God knows the spirit in the mind and how to work with it and how to mold and fashion it. That's an incredible thing.

So we learn as we grow along and go along through time. We have opportunities to learn, and again, it takes time. It takes time to get this in a more balanced way of thinking when we talk about God's love, because we're still physical human beings and so often we confuse that with things of love we have experienced or haven't experienced in the world.

We didn't really address all this, but driving up here today talking about certain things that have happened in some people's lives in times past especially and thinking about things that happen in people in the world and talking about some women who have stayed with certain men who have beat the crap out of them through their lives in their marriage life. Beat them! There was a way of thinking in times past even more so in society than it is today. Thankfully, today more people stand up to those kinds of things and have ways of escaping some of those kinds of things. But you think about how sick a world this is and those kinds of things that took place and why people don't just say, "Enough! I'm not going to take this!" But for whatever reason, candidly, there are things that happen sometimes in people's lives where they equate that with love, of being loved. It's hard for them. You're beaten but you're loved? What is this? Yet that's what's in the mind.

I've known some people that have - I'm just using this example I guess - a woman that's married a man and he's an alcoholic and abuses her and something happens, they finally divorce or he dies or whatever it might be and they equate love the next time around in the same manner. So often the same kind of person because something is wrong in the mind. You know, it just takes time, even when God calls us out of that kind of a world, to begin to be healed. So He heals all of us. We've all gone through different things in our lives, in our childhood, in our early adult life on into adult life where depending on when God calls us that our minds get messed up by this world. I've known of all kinds of things that people have experienced in God's Church—all kinds of things—and been called out of.

You don't overcome those things overnight. As a matter of fact, some things you never do. They're always there as a haunt and they do affect your thinking because healing is a process and the main thing is that God heals us and gives us understanding on a spiritual plane, but we're still very physical and we still have to deal with things in the mind. We can never become healed in this physical body, but we go through a process of it to where one day God says, "Now I know you," regardless of how and what your struggle is, regardless of what your weaknesses still are because you'll all have weaknesses. I'll have weaknesses; we all have weaknesses until the day we die or the day we change. That's just the way it is.

But what an incredible thing to understand that there is a kind of love that is so hard for us to grasp and comprehend that's from Almighty God that He desires for us. I wish we could see ourselves in this light clearly for what it is, but we just can't fully. We learn to appreciate it through scriptures like this, through things that God says and gives to us. But even by knowledge that should lead to greater understanding that should lead to wisdom. We should grow in this thing of understanding of God's love and what our desires are and the relationship that we're able to have with Him.

I've told the Church this before, but it took me twenty years, took me until I was ordained a minister, an elder in God's Church, to be able to say to God Almighty, "I love You." That's how screwed up I was. I carried that with me for nearly twenty years, okay? So we all go through various things until we can say it. Because I wasn't going to say it until I knew it, until it was absolute truth in my mind, if you will. I couldn't say something false or fake to God. What is that? People say fake things all the time to one another, you know, "I love you." "Do you really?" Well, anyway. Usually in human beings it's selfish love. But not with God.

So some people probably wonder, "How in the world? Why would God ever ordain you a minister and you couldn't even say you loved Him?" Well, He did.

So we're screwed up, our minds are. They really are. What an awesome thing that God is healing us over time. I don't care what your age is, you're still going through healing of things, of what you were, of what you experienced when you were younger to the point in time when God called you.

"Daniel, one who is greatly loved." And yes, the word has to do with desired or delighted in, but with God Almighty that is a love that is hard to grasp, truly. That's why we're able to have a relationship with God, because He gives us love. He pours out upon us love.

I want to throw something else out here while I'm thinking of this. I've got to mark my place because sure as the world I'm going to forget this spot because I'm going to go off here way out on a tangent and I'm going to try to make a circle and come right back in. Sometimes I'm not so good at that.

I'm talking about God gives us love. He pours out love upon us. He wants to give us of His love, but I think of certain situations here, and I just want to mention this on the side, that I think of someone (hasn't been too long now) of someone who was finding fault within the Church, within the ministry of the Church. It's kind of like that old thing that sometimes has popped up. I've seen it over and over in cycles in the Church where some when they get to a certain point in time or something comes out in their life and they become a little embittered and they begin to say, "Well, where is the love in the Church? Where is love in God's Church?" Or, "I don't see love any longer in God's Church." I've seen this so many times. In every instance that I've ever seen it the problem isn't the love in God's Church, the love is in the person themselves who find the accusation and find the fault or find the fault from the ministry.

Something was said here recently, and I hope they're listening today, about the 1 in 99, 1 in 100, 1 and 99. If there is one that's gone astray, if the rest are okay are you going to go after the one? It's like, "Are you really doing what you should be doing?" People have subtle ways sometimes of accusing others, of finding fault with others. I've been through this so many times I knew where it was coming from. I hope this person learns where it's coming from because it's coming from themselves, of their own inadequacies. But it has to do with finding love. What is love? Is love owed to us? Is love owed to us by God?

You know, if people choose to sin, if they choose to rob from God, if they choose to steal from Almighty God for years and years and years, do you think God is loving them regardless? Or are they cut off from God's love? The world is cut off from God's love right now. Anyone who is ever put out of God's Church or suspended from God's Church, they're cut off from the flow of God's love in their life, and they need to understand that. You are no longer a recipient of God's mercy. Love, grace, has a great deal to do then with God's mercy, and so we need to understand that.

I felt the need today because of some of this, what's being said here, to address this because some of this has just happened. And the reality is that it's hard sometimes for people to come to see themselves, that the sin is in themselves. No matter what the sin might be, whether it be a matter of robbing from God, yeah, you can bet on it, you're not 1 in the 99, you're just one of the sinners who hasn't repented of your sins so that you could be in right mercy and grace within God's Church, because the reality is we don't have to formally be disfellowshipped from God's Church. We disfellowship ourselves when we continue to sin without repenting.

I wish people could make that distinction in time when they get to that point in time, but the reality is they become so spiritually weak they can't. I thought about addressing it in a letter and decided what's the point? If I can't preach certain things and people hear it, that's a spiritual thing. What people are able to hear, it's a spiritual matter, because hearing is on a spiritual plane. So I did want to mention this because I didn't want to pass it up.

I hope we understand that, that we are able to receive God's grace, mercy, favor, help, love to the degree we want God, to the degree we want to change, to the degree we want His way of life, to the degree we're willing to look at ourselves and repent and change as God has drawn us.

The longer we've been in the Church the more that should be clear in our minds, that if we want to continue in His love we better be continuing, indeed living it in our lives in how we treat one another, how we think about one another, how we talk, and etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. So in time we'll probably get some of those scriptures.

But I had to make those comments because of that and because of others out there right now that think that they're still in the Church and they're way, way out in the courtyard. I think, "When will it ever end?" Well, it will.

So we're able to be loved, we're able to receive of God's love; we're able to receive of fellowship within the Church when we're seeking to be right with God. If we don't want those things, aren't doing those things then things aren't going to work for us in our life.

So, anyway, hopefully and prayerfully we can come to understand this more deeply. "Daniel, one who is greatly loved." Put your name in that. Do you believe that, whatever your name is, you've been called, "one greatly loved of God"? Do you grasp that you are? That's why you're allowed by the Great God to have opportunity now at this time in your life, why you're blessed to have the opportunity at this time in your life. God chose to pour out grace and mercy upon us, which means He chose to pour out upon us His love at this time. He's not pouring that out upon the world yet. They're going to have that opportunity as they begin to be brought into a millennial period. They're going to be able to have those choices and opportunities to choose, then, that love and mercy and grace, but we're the only ones now. That's so incredible to understand.

If you take anything away from this sermon today it be far better to take this than anything else - that God greatly loves each and every one of us. It's up to us to respond to that love, to that favor, to that mercy. To think that we can come before God and ask for forgiveness of our sin every day of our life, for wrong thinking, for wrong speech, for wrong actions, for whatever is wrong in our life and ask God to help us to change and become something different, more in unity and oneness with Him? How blessed are we? That's all about God's love, what He wants to give to us. He's called to give us these things.

Daniel, one who is greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand up: for I have now been sent to you. That's amazing how God has worked with people at different times, even as it talks about in Hebrews, how He had to work with Abraham in a very unique way, how God manifested Himself in a physical form even as a High Priest, Melchizedek. Incredible! How God manifested Himself before Daniel in other form to eat with him, to spend time with him, not as Melchizedek, and all the things that have happened with different ones at different times? How God chose to speak to Moses the first time. Boy, they'd lock you up right away. "Yep, God spoke to me out of a burning bush." "Right..." You know, some things that God does and works in our lives you can't tell people any of it because they think you're nuts anyway. But to understand how God works with us, how He communicates to the mind through spirit? You can't give these things to anyone. You can't give the truth to anyone. You can't give those experiences to anyone either, of how God works with you.

Some of those things when it comes to giving a sermon and things that work, I have tried to explain some of that in a different sort of way because they are unique in the end-time here. It's the same way He's worked with different ones at different times, it's in the mind. It doesn't have to be in a bush. It doesn't have to be in a form of a physical human being. There have been times I wish He would - "Make this really clear." It'd be so much easier if someone was standing there telling you, in some respects. But what an incredible thing to think that we've come to a point of 6,000 years where God can do it through the knowledge He's given to us, through the truth He's given to us over a time and we grow in that, and to grasp the incredible process of faith that works in our lives. It's a matter of faith in ways that they couldn't experience in times past.

Abraham didn't have a written record of things that he could read and work from. He had to be worked with more personally. Moses had to be worked with more directly, personally. There was nothing written there, especially for telling him the things he had to do, he needed to do: "You're going to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt," that had to be communicated. Today things that are written there, candidly, and from the time of the apostles on, it's for us and it has been for the Church for that past 2,000 years, but there's a lot of it that really is for the end-time. We live in an incredible time.

That's why I think of what God has brought the Church to. I think of this thing of this controversy over Zion. God is winning out hands down. The spirit world, the evil spirit world, doesn't comprehend that. But God's bringing to pass everything He has said and He's making those things more and more manifest the closer we get. We get to be a part of that.

...he said while he heard things speaking to him; stand up, he said: I stood trembling. Then he said to me, Do not fear, Daniel. For from the first day that you set your heart to understand.... Does that happen to us not just once but on a regular basis throughout our lives as we grow in the Church? When you set your heart to understand, don't you do that when you fast? You set your heart even more so to understand, to receive from God understanding, to receive from God help, guidance in your life. You're seeking that in your life. Don't you do that when you're praying, that you have prayer and you're petitioning God and you're seeking God's will in your life, more fully in your life? We do that on a regular basis and it shows how you have to do that as well here.

I love this. "...from the first day that you set your heart to understand." Was it just here at this point in time or was it from the first time as God began to work with Daniel as a young person? Well, it's both because he had a relationship with God, he was pleasing to God. So were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, teenagers when they were taken captive. Incredible stories here! They had set their heart to do what God had given to them, Daniel especially. But Daniel was even being drawn and called for a very special purpose above and beyond all to fulfill certain things that needed to be accomplished and written in throughout the book of Daniel because God was going to reveal certain things to be written through time. Some of those things, well, a lot of those things having to do with the Messiah, his first coming and his second coming and having to

do with the end of an age, having to do with all the remaining kingdoms - not the ones who preceded it, not talking about Egypt, because that was already done and gone. That was over with. So now it was the next four great Kingdoms that were going to rule the earth and so the statue was made to depict those things and that last part that we talked about last week, and even the feet of clay, and toes, you know, ten toes mixed in miry clay, of iron. Incredible meaning of the things that God does.

So he said **...from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God...** See, it takes humility. It takes humility when we pray to God, to speak to Him, to pray to Him in spirit and in truth. It takes humility of spirit to esteem God, to love God, to magnify God in your mind as a human being, to seek to glorify God far more greatly and to put yourself in its proper place. Because, see, the problem is with human beings is we try to esteem ourselves, we try to raise up ourselves in life, we try to magnify our own importance in life oftentimes. We are filled with pride and haughtiness. That's one of the great problems that we have to battle, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Powerful! It's something we always have to fight against. We have to humble ourselves.

That's why I love the expression of the things about fasting and what they teach. It's an exercise of physical humbling of yourself and abstaining from food and water to say something and that reflects in your mind and in your heart and in your spirit toward God that you want to set your heart and your mind to receiving His will and purpose in your life more fully, to be able to see yourself more clearly so that you can conquer and overcome the things that are in front of you, to know what your primary battles are and not to let up in them, and etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, on it goes.

...from the first day you set your heart to understand and humble yourself before Your God your words were heard. How can you find words to express how great that is? That the Great God of the universe, any time you will humble yourself and kneel down on your knees, if you're able to – and if you can't you don't have to be in that position to pray to God. I've done it driving. I've done it lying down. I've done it on my knees. You can pray to God at any time you choose but the expression or the example of things that I see in my mind that are the times of the greatest humbling before God is when one kneels down on their knees if they're able. Again, some people can't when you get older and your knees are shot, and etcetera, so you do what you can do, but it's an attitude of spirit. But sometimes the physical part of what we do reflects that attitude and so it's a matter of holding your arms above your head toward God, "Holy, Righteous, Eternal God," in praying to Him and seeking help in your life and stating the words that you seek to humble yourself, you want to be of a humble spirit toward Him, to know His will, to receive His will in your life, for help to exercise His will in your life.

Anyway, going on, **verse 13—But the prince of the kingdom of Persia stood against me for twenty-one days.** So Gabriel sent to talk to Daniel here and he talks about how the prince of Persia withstood him a certain period of time and why he was later in coming. So again, referring

literally here to the first day that he has sought God's will in his life even more so, but we realize that it goes back farther because those things are spiritual in nature as it is in ours, but it continues on throughout our life in our relationship with God.

So he said, **Michael, one of the chief princes**, in other words, the other archangel, **came to help me**. I don't understand that fully. There are things we can grasp to a limited scale of spirit wars in the angelic realm, spirit beings fighting, battling. How do they do that? I don't understand that. What does God allow in power and abilities? Because He could end it all but God chooses not to, just as He has with mankind for 6,000 years. He's let people fight battles and wars because in time we'll all learn from it. In the spirit realm, in many respects, the same is true. Those minds that are gone are gone but of the others, they've grown in strength and power and conviction over the past 6,000 years and they have faithfully fought, and here, those who were with Michael, Michael came to fight to help Gabriel. Again, I don't comprehend that on a spirit realm. But this is speaking of spiritual warfare, spiritual battles, and that for whatever was taking place here had power to keep him at bay so he couldn't go to Daniel.

Think, well, why didn't God just let him? Well, because there are other things going on in a spirit realm that God's working with. He isn't just working with human life; He's working with spirit life as well. Things haven't ended when Satan rebelled. No, they continued on in the angelic realm. They continue to learn. They continue to grow. Incredible! Just like when we continue on in God's family growing is never going to stop, learning is never going to come to an end. It's hard for the human mind to comprehend those things.

So he says, **Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days: for the vision is yet for the future**. So there are things he was going to be given, things he'd already been given, the statue and so forth, and now additional things. **When he had spoken these words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. Then the one who looked like the sons of men touched my lips**. See, the translations of some of these things isn't so swift. This is what it's saying: **When he had spoken these words to me I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless, and the one who looked like**, it's still the same person, same archangel, **like the sons of men touched my lips and then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me and I cannot keep any strength in me**. So he was addressing someone who was greater in power and might and he knew it, and he knew he was a messenger from God Almighty.

So he says, "I cannot keep any strength in me," or "I have retained no strength." In other words, do we feel that way at times in fighting the battles we fight and going through the things we go through? Do we feel drained? Have you ever felt drained? I pretty much let people know at the Feast of Tabernacles this year I feel drained. It's been a long battle, long road. Fine. As long as I can keep going down that road I'm going to keep going down that road. But the point is sometimes it can weigh on you, certain things can weigh on you. Well, we know where we are and

we want to get this done. Do you think others going before us haven't felt the same way throughout time?

But again, this is speaking of something in a unique way here because of what he was experiencing, but I think about us on a spiritual plane, how we sometimes feel this way spiritually and that's when you focus on God even more so. That's when you cry out even more so and seek God's guidance and help and strength to be strengthened in power, to be strengthened in might.

That's what this sermon series is about because even though there is a spirit world that's going to be strengthened as time goes along here, is in the process of already being strengthened in might and power, that they haven't experienced for some time to the same level as what they're getting ready to experience again, we in God's Church, we continue to have a great desire to be strengthened in might. God will pour out upon us greater help and greater strength as we go forward. There are going to be some things we go through where we're going to need that mightily so because we can't comprehend what's in front of us. We really don't comprehend it yet. There will be a closeness with God, a desire to be closer to God, a desire for God's intervention and God's help in our lives in a way that we have never experienced and we will grow and experience faith in a way that we haven't exercised it yet in our lives.

Verse 17—For how can this servant of my lord talk with you my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, in other words, again, "I am completely drained," **nor is any breath,** it's like as in life **left in me.** So again, this is how he felt and he's expressing some of that in what he's going through here.

Then again, the one having the appearance of a man touched me and gave me strength, and he said, You are one greatly loved. That's what it's saying. "You are one who is greatly loved," desired, delightful, again, that same expression, **so do not fear.** If we could just carry that with us. If that could be reinforced in our thinking and in our minds. Do we grasp what God is giving to us? Do we grasp what's in front of us? Do we grasp what we already have? There's a power and a strength just by what you know. People in the world, you can't share what you have and you can't give it to anyone. But God Almighty has given it to you. Because of His calling that He's given to you He's delighted in you, He loves you. That's hard for us to sometimes grab a hold of in reality, but it is reality.

"So do not fear." So when you go through some of the things you're getting ready to go through at whatever point in time that is, whether it maybe be December here, January or February, and if it doesn't then you're going to need strength as well to continue moving forward because you're going to realize, you're going to come to a point in time where this is another marker. And thank God He gave us markers! Because if God hadn't given us markers through time here in the last twelve or more years we wouldn't be here because it's in those markers that God gives to us that we can look at and keep fighting for it as we get closer and closer. That's what is unique. It's akin to what God gave to Mr. Armstrong, a constant sense of urgency. God has given that to us by markers, a sense of urgency, to keep running toward that marker and then the next marker. I

hope there's not another one beyond that because the next one would be 2020. If that's not it...well....

The world is speedily moving forward right now and there are certain things that fit into place more fully because of who is in place. See, the next ones in place that come along whether it be in France or Germany or the United States or China or Russia changes the scene completely. It takes time for things said and reputations to become established, for thoughts and mindsets to become established. We're so close. We are so close, thank God.

So we continue to move forward, and regardless of what happens we need strength, we need help, a kind of confidence, if you will, of God's love, of God's mercy, of God's desire toward us, and to understand we can stand strong. What do we have to fear? Are we going to allow certain things that come before us? Because you're going to be tried in some of that because what's coming is exceedingly fearful for this world. Though we know it, when you see it happen is a totally different thing.

So he said, Do not fear. Peace... Peace be to you. You can have peace in a time of incredible drama on the earth, in a time of great conflict on the earth. You can have a peace of mind. That's about a confidence you can have about where things are going.

Be strong; yes, be strong. It's amazing how often God has said that in one way or another throughout scripture to His people. Be strong. Then you have to look at that and realize where does that come from? It comes from God. Be strong in might, in power that is God's, because we can't do it. You can't work it up.

To have real peace, the opposite of the things of fear and so forth, is because it's a spiritual matter and it comes from God. It comes from His holy spirit in a relationship with Him. So He tells us over and over again to be strong. Well, that doesn't just happen. We need to understand that. Above and beyond everything it's about a relationship. How are you able to be strong? Well, one of them was about being humble before God, set your heart to understand. We can't stop doing that. We can't stop being humble. You can't stop praying. Because that's what it's about, it's about prayer and fasting and seeking to draw closer to God, seeking to become stronger. It's not about a physical strength; it's about a spiritual strength. It's about the mind and how you think.

So, be strong. Be strong. It's about the thinking. It's not about something physical there. When there was a time for, a need for physical strength God gave that to them. I think of the three hundred that ran down the hill. What an incredible story! Tens of thousands...tens and tens and tens and tens and tens of thousands in front of them far greater than they were, and they did things a specific way and God gave them incredible victory and strength. Now, they weren't any stronger than what they ever were physically. Of course, your adrenaline is going faster than it ever went in your whole life, but that's just a physical thing too. But it's a spiritual one because they had to have a confidence. Gideon had to have a confidence and a boldness, a strength in the mind to do what he had to do. God gives us those things.

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened and said, **Now you may speak, my Lord, for you have strengthened me.** Now, this happened to him physically. For us we understand far more so that it's a spiritual thing.

Verse 20—Then he said, Do you know why I have come? For soon I must return to fight the prince of Persia: and when I have gone forth, indeed, the prince of Greece will come. So again here, a transition of things in time and how things take place, battles that are fought. Undoubtedly spirit battles being fought now that we don't grasp and comprehend as certain kingdoms rise and certain kingdoms fall and certain things that are taking place out here and as certain beings are given even more strength and power to accomplish certain things. It's incredible how God works and what He does.

And then it goes on in **verse 21** to say, **But I will tell you what is noted/inscribed in the writing of truth.** So, an incredible thing here, what was said to Daniel in all this and things we can learn from on a spiritual plane and what was stated here.

Now, I want to repeat something that was stated in the introduction: Leading up to this past Sabbath, and since, it's been made clear that this world is exceedingly stirred up, far more than usual. We need to grasp that as the world is being stirred up that there are tremendous forces at work, forces that are in a spirit realm. We are drawing very close now to a complete change from one era of mankind in which mankind has ruled himself to another era for mankind where God will rule, speaking of the millennial reign of Joshua the Christ on this earth. As we draw closer to that the spirit world is going to begin exerting greater force upon this world, even forces and power that God grants which have been held back from them.

So we need to understand that as these beings will also try to force or use force and power against God's Church, not just the world; they're not going to give up on us. They're going to continue to try to come at us in whatever way they can and so every once in a while things around us are going to get stirred up.

I don't know about you but we've had some things stirred up around us in the past couple of weeks through various means of how sometimes things in the world, just, if you're not careful, they're going to affect you life, whether it be in family or on the job or community or whatever it might be. But so often it's about scattered family, your family, whatever, or things on a job and the like, and they'll try to get you wrapped up in it, try to get your mind off focus.

You've got to be careful that you don't get caught up in things and to understand here, indeed, that there is help that you need to be able to fight against those things, to have a right mind, a right thinking, and not let anything get to you, not get caught up in what's happening out there. It doesn't have to affect you because it can.

That's why I think of the series, all the things that have been said about drama. I marvel at listening to the news anymore because they openly speak about it. Drama, drama, drama. They

use the words over and over again! You can't help but hear it because it's everywhere around them. It's in politics, it's in nations. So if we're not careful the thing that spirit beings try to do is get your eyes away from, distracted from the focus you need to have. Don't let it happen. Because it's out there pulling at us, trying to pull at you, trying to get your mind off on to other things. We can't allow that to happen. You need to keep focused on what God has given to us in a very powerful way.

Let's go back here to Daniel 10 again. Ah, I've said enough there for that. We ought to get the picture, where these things are on a spiritual plane and what they mean to us, to appreciate, to be thankful for God's love, for God's mercy, to understand that we indeed are greatly loved and He wants to give us greater strength now more than ever. I hope we grasp that in God's Church because of what we're getting ready to go through whether it be in January, February or early March, whatever it is, if it be at this time, or the strength that we're going to need to continue to go on to the next marker, whatever that is. That's the way we are. That's the way we live our lives. We keep moving forward.

But you have to receive strength and help from God because this is going to get harder in the sense of things that are thrown your way, not easier. The things you confront, especially when this world starts to go through some of the things it's going to go through, it's not going to get easier out here, and we have to be very focused on what God is offering us and to understand above all things, brethren, God gives a message that we, each of us, is greatly loved. That is awesome to understand because there is great comfort in that. When you understand that the power of the universe is there to help you, to bring you through anything and everything, that His desire is to give you greater help, greater intervention, greater strength in your life, there is peace in that. That's basically what he told Daniel, the angel Gabriel.

Let's turn over to 2nd John. Understanding this thing about God loving us, again, should go without saying, but sometimes it's good to look at other areas as well of things that God has said. Again, it should be easy for us, but it isn't. The reason it isn't is because we tend to think in physical terms first. The word love is mentioned and we think in physical terms first because it requires something of spirit strength, spirit help, God's spirit, the holy spirit to see things the way God wants us to see them.

2 John 1:1—The elder, to the elect lady and her children, to the Church, selected, called, if you will, to become a part of a Body, to become a part of the Church. "...and her children," in other words, those who are going to be called later. So this is a message through time for God's people, for God's Church. **...whom I love in truth.** Where does that come from? It's from God. It's not just about what John is saying to them, it's that which is being told to the Church, that which is being reassured as far as the Church is concerned that we're all able to experience within the Church **"...whom I love in the truth."**

Remember what was said to Daniel? Well, I'll read it again here: **Daniel 10:20-21—So he said to him, Do you know why I have come? For as soon as I return to fight with the prince of Persia: Strengthened in Might, Pt. 1**

and when I am gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. That's an incredible thing that was said there.

The rest of that we have no idea what this means at this point in time. Not sure of some of the words as well that are used there and how it's translated at all.

But the message that was being given here, "I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth." How much has God blessed us with what is written that is the truth? That's what this is about. That's how God gives us power. That's really how God gives us guidance of where power comes from and the strength we can have in our lives. The more those things are a part of our thinking the more our thinking is in unity and oneness with God. All the truths that God has given to us, the greater unity and oneness we have in those things, the greater we understand them and all that goes with them—because there's a lot there—the more at one we become with God, the more strength we have, the more power of God's spirit that exists in our thinking and in our minds because that's what's important. It's not about a physical body; it's about a spirit mind and about a unity and a oneness with God.

So these things are written here for a purpose because they were written for things that were going to take place in the latter times. "Well, how can you say that?" It's what the message is. It's what the message here is in Chapter 10. Daniel was helped temporarily in a temporary account here of something that was going to be given to him as far as understanding the writing of various things, but what he was told was how these things are going to be realistic in his life in the sense of spiritually for those who come through time and those who are able to become strong. "Be strong." "Be strong." God says that over and over again and He did to Daniel here. It's the same message to us but in a greater way.

He says, "I will tell you what is noted in the writing of truth." That's how we're able to grow. That's how we've been blessed to grow. God has given us more at this particular moment in time, as I mentioned last Sabbath, than any other time in human history. It's hard for us to grasp that. And would to God we could! You would be so incredibly strong if you could grasp this to the depth of what is here. You are strong to the degree you're able to receive it and understand it because it's the truths that God has given to us that makes us strong on a spiritual plane. It's His mind to us! He's given us these things in our minds, the ability to see things and say, "I know it's true."

Just like the thing, I guess it's just going to remain as the plus 1. I'd say 58, but, you know, it's plus 1. It's one of the greatest ones that has ever been given to God's Church since things were messed up - Joshua the Messiah, Joshua the Christ. I think everyone in the Church, as a whole, feels this way to one degree or another. There is a freedom in that. There is a peace in that that. I am so thankful for that, that we are never equated with that again because it turns a final page in saying it's all wrong. Everything that that name speaks of - this season of the year, I hate the music. I hate it with all my being. These little jingling type of tunes that get in your mind and you fight to don't let them in, you know. You don't want to carry it with you. You don't want to find yourself in the car driving around.... I don't even want to start, you know. But to be freed of

that, of anything to do with that, in the sense of the name that's equated with it! We don't have that anymore.

I feel that way. I feel like people in the Church, by things that they've written and said, I feel like there's been a sense of freedom that's been given to us. I don't know how else to describe it. It's no longer us. We've been freed from something in a very powerful way. I love it. I love scriptures like this because it tells how we're able to be strong. It reveals the process by how we're able to be strong and what God's message was. It was written for a period, for something specific, and it was written for another time. That's what he told Daniel at the very beginning, "This is for the latter time." The things He's going to give, and the things He gave first were these right here, and how He's going to do it is through the truth He reveals, the truth He gives to us.

Mankind has never known the truths that we know now. Never known it. Never understood it. Never grasped it. Things about God Himself, how He works, things about the angelic realm, things about how God is going to end a certain part of that realm at one point in time, where real peace can be given then, where a being, he doesn't have to exist for eternity because he has no eternal life with him. To me that was an incredible revelation to God's Church because we didn't think that way before. Since he was spirit we thought he would live into eternity. Not so! To me that's an incredible thing, to have such things revealed to us, that God has the power to create, and whatever He creates He can end. He Himself alone has within Himself eternal life and He has that life to give to others within self, within the being itself. No spirit beings have ever been given that. They just were given spirit life. Anyway, to me those things are incredible, the things that have been revealed to us, the truths that have been given to us.

So again, **2 John 1:1— The elder, to the elect lady and her children whom I love in the truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth.** So I think of those through time who have known whatever God has revealed at that moment in time, what God revealed to Moses, and then what God revealed to different prophets through time, and then what God gave through Joshua the Christ to the Church, and then the disciples that came along, and then Paul, an apostle, added at the very beginning, and things written in scripture for us, some things that we haven't understood until the end-time. Things about an apostasy; they never knew what it was through the nearly 2,000 years that went before that. No one ever knew what that was about. They were just told it's not going to happen until this takes place. We've lived it. Some of us sitting here today lived through it. We experienced what it's like to have an apostasy, a falling away from all the truths of God, to go back into a Protestant world. It astounds the mind to think that could have happened to the level and degree it did, but we witnessed it, we experienced it. How incredible is that, to have lived that kind of life, to have experienced something that was prophesied for nearly 2,000 years and then happened that is a forerunner of his return, of Christ's coming? Incredible!

...but also to all who have known the truth. As time went along, from the time of the apostles, from the time of the last one to write, John, that we're reading about here, and to think of his

life and what he lived, no new truth came along. Truth had to be restored at a certain point in time, but truth began to go by the wayside as time went along. They went through the period of time of Thyatira, over a thousand years. Incredible what the Church experienced. But they never had what God gave to Mr. Armstrong, as a whole, on some of the things prophetic about the end-time and things that were going to happen in time. Certain things they had. But so much of those 18 Truths they never fully had to the same degree on a spiritual plane and then all the things that God has added since that time.

...because the truth which abides in us will be with us forever. Truth. Whatever comes from God can be in us, and it is. **Grace, mercy, and peace...** Grace, a willingness on God's part to grant us favor, a willingness on God's part because He has a purpose for us, to give us of His love, to begin revealing truth to us, to begin giving us forgiveness of our sins as He extends mercy to us as well, and gives us peace of mind as a result of that process we go through. So, **Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from our Lord Joshua the Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.**

Jude :17, it says, But you, beloved... It's the same message as what Gabriel gave to Daniel. You're greatly loved of God. If you're beloved understand it. Where's it coming from? That's what this is about. Understand **But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Joshua the Christ...** Again, it's just an expression. You're loved. If you're called, if your mind is opened up to the truth it's because God loves you, God's called you for a purpose to reveal these things to you. **...how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.** I think of what we have lived through; before as we went through a period of Laodicea and to see what happened within the Church, and then to see what happened with an apostasy, and then to see the struggles and the battles that happened afterwards. Everything we've gone through, incredible!

...there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons who cause divisions, and do not have the spirit. Now, basically here he's not just talking about something in the world, he's talking about the Church and things that would happen within the environment of the Church. Because it's easy to see this in the world; it's always been that way. Everyone through time has mocked those whom God has called. This is talking about something far beyond that as well, things that would be in the last time and what the Church, in essence, would have to experience.

So we've lived through that leading up to the Apostasy (we just talked about that), and through the Apostasy, because the mocking here is about how people have chosen how to live their lives. They mock God. They mock everything that God stands for. They began to speak against it. They began to teach against it. They began to say, "Oh, not all foods are really unclean," or they began to say, "You know, we really need to move more from what we are, because that was kind of hard, to something else," and so it's a matter of their changing what God had revealed to them

when they were called, so much so that the mind can begin to say, “Christmas isn’t so bad. You don’t have to observe it, but it’s not a bad thing to observe the birth of Christ on a physical plane.” So that encouragement to try to change your thinking in some of that and on and on it went, subtle little things that came along, disgusting things. But again, that’s what it means to mock God.

It still goes on. People who think that they can live a certain way of life within the temple and rob from God blows my mind! After everything I have said. I tell you, it really blows my mind. Shocked? No. Seen a lot of things in God’s Church. Disappointed? Yes. Hurt by it? Yes. Because I hate to see them suffer. But they’re suffering already and they’re going to suffer a whole lot more. That’s why it blows my mind that some of you are still trying to come to Sabbath services at times and you know what you’ve been doing. Mockers! Mocking God’s way of life, thinking we can live something and somehow God isn’t going to care and God will just continue to love us. We can continue to do our own thing out here and be obstinate about it and be told you’re even disfellowshipped and still think, “God loves me. I’m one in 99 that God has come after and I’m going to continue to do what I need to do now and finally start tithing.” Well, that’s a good one. I’m sorry; I’ve seen everything imaginable under the sun.

Human beings, when we cut ourselves off from God’s spirit, this is what happens. You become a mocker of God’s way of life. To walk around in the courtyard is a mocker of God’s way of life. It’s a mocker of the truth. It’s twisting and distorting scripture to fit your own ends, to justify yourself, and people do that. People are out here doing those things. It’s a constant reminder of what human nature is like and how far human beings have gone through time. Many have been called and few have been chosen.

So we press forward. You have to press forward. Your desire should be to do what was told to Daniel, to set your heart. Not just when you were first called, but continually, to ask God for help to set your heart, to keep it set in seeking Him and seeking His help and guidance and direction in your life.

...so how that you were told that mockers in the last time would come, walking according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons who cause divisions. That’s what happens. If we don’t live in unity and harmony we cause divisiveness and we can hurt others if we’re not careful. I’m thankful that, as a whole, this has been cleaned up within the Church, especially through the period of 2012 and 2013, and ever since then, candidly, but it started in a big way back at that period of time, even after certain fasts that took place in the Church.

Which reminds me, we need to do that again before long. So somewhere here in the future we’ll talk about a Church wide fast again because from time to time we just need a Church wide fast. We really do. To set our focus more on God’s way of life, to continue to do what He’s doing to help us become stronger and to accomplish the things spoken of in this particular sermon - become strong in might, in God’s might, God’s power more so, even more so. Sometimes we just have to be reminded of those things. Hope you’re using that as a tool in your life. There was a

period of time when we were asked to do it as a tool in our life for a certain period of time month by month by month by month. What's it like now? What are we doing now, all of us? What are we doing? Because it's easy to begin to slip away from some of that.

A good example of that is something that came up this past week, about people at this time of the year. You know what happens at this time of year a lot of times? Winter sets in, you know, we get colds and we start hacking away and people get sick and flus come around and things of that nature come around if we're not careful and it's just a seasonal type of thing. Who remembers God after what was said? How many are remembering God? How many?

See, at a point in time the ministry was being kept busy because people were looking to God and applying the very thing that they were encouraged to do - when you become sick call (not a suggestion but a command by God Almighty) for the elders of the Church to ask for anointing. It's a command. It's a command like all other commands. Tithing is a command and so is that; that we're to exercise something spiritually in a relationship with our God because we hear what God is saying.

Yet that one there is so easy, if we're not careful, to begin to say, "Well, I'm not that bad that I need to call for the elder. I can pop this or pop that and maybe a couple days or so," and a couple days go by and nothing happens; we choose to suffer physically. But whether God intervenes for you or not is immaterial. He may let you go through and experience or He may take it away. I've experienced all those things. I've experienced the things of doing the very thing I'm telling you about, where my wife reminds me, "Do you want anointed?" Because we tend to forget. We begin to think it's not that bad or whatever it might be and forget the fact that God says, "If you're sick call on the elders of the Church, even if it's your own wife." No, I'm kidding.

So I'm just saying here that it's something we can all, if we're not careful, be negligent in from time to time in our lives. It can happen to anyone at any time, but the reality is it is happening in a bigger way right now after something has been said by that when it really should be more on our minds because it has been said recently. See? It doesn't take too long. How long has it been since those things were spoken of, and then all of a sudden requests aren't being made like they were considering the amount of sickness we know of in the Church.

Well, it's good to be reminded isn't it? Thankfully God reminds us constantly about things in our life that we need to do, that we need to be focused on, because we as physical human beings tend to be very carnal and weak and we get distracted easily. That's why certain things can come at us and if we're not careful we get caught up in it and we get distracted and we get caught up in something out here that's away from what God wants us to focus on.

That's what this sermon is about, being strengthened in God's might. Don't allow such distractions to come along because those beings out there are going to try to get you distracted one way or another out here, and it's pretty easy to get distracted in some of those kinds of

things, get hung up in them, whether it be on the job or family or whatever it might be that might come your way to take your mind away from or distract you from.

So what's distracting some of you? When you get sick you've got to feel it? I'm sorry. Why choose to suffer? But even more importantly, what we don't think about sometimes is why choose not to obey what God says? That's a choice. It's a negligent choice and that's what makes it even more dangerous sometimes, negligence, to neglect doing something that we don't consider to be that important. All of God's word is important and we should want His strength in our life. If we don't do it on a physical plane are we really doing as we should on a spiritual plane? Because you know, I know of some people out here right now are getting distracted from things right here within the Church. They're getting their minds off on other things. They're looking... getting wrapped up in some... some... Do I dare call it what it is? Some kind of drama in life. The reality is when you do that you get your mind off of God.

We can't afford to do that as God's people, especially if everything is on time. January is just around the corner and things can happen quickly. Look at what's happened just recently between Ukraine and Russia. It only takes one spark like that, one ship to be blown out of the water, whatever it is, one escalation, see, and it starts and it starts in earnest. That's how close we are. You can wake up one morning and all of a sudden "wham." It started last night. Things happen quickly in this world. You need to be on guard.

But you, beloved, remember the words that were spoken to you by the apostles and of our Lord Joshua the Christ, how they told you that there would be mockers in the last times who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual, who cause division and do not have the spirit. But you, beloved... See, loved of God, building yourselves up in your most holy faith. How do you do that? How do you build yourself up, become stronger? Prayer. Fasting. Seeking to be focused on God's way of life more than ever. Seeking to set your heart on understanding. That's what this is about.

...praying in the holy spirit. What does that mean? Well, it means you want to be close to God and you're seeking God and you know you have an opportunity to pray to God at any time you want and as you grow stronger in spirit you're praying in the holy spirit, you're not just living your own carnal life and trying to get what you want in life. You're trying to change self. You're trying to seek understanding. You want God's way of life.

Keep yourselves in the agape of God, the love of God. So that's a choice whether we keep ourselves in God's love. You have to work at that. You have to apply yourself to that. You have to pray about that. Occasionally you have to fast about those kinds of things. That's a part of seeking understanding and help and strength, is being in this kind of mindset. **...looking for the mercy of our Lord Joshua the Christ unto eternal life.**

With that we'll stop there today, start with *Part 2* next week.