

Three Days to Passover, Pt. 1

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I thought I'd mention here at the beginning that we've been going through several series. I've broken them down a lot because this is geared toward any that might respond to the new book that comes out. That's why it's being done the way that it is. And some of these are going to be a little shorter in some instances because the attention span or the listening ability of people is narrowing. So, anyway, not like it was a long time ago here at the Apostasy, where it was at least two hours. So, hopefully, we don't get spoiled by it being a little too cut down at times.

But anyway, again, I divided these up a lot. So this, today, is going to be a continuation of all the series. Rather than just having one really long series of eight or nine parts or two series of six or seven or whatever it was going to be, because there's been quite a few. This one here is another break in the flow of things. We're going to begin with the continuation of this story today, but in a new series, if you will.

This one's entitled *Three Days to Passover*.

So we've started long back in the journey, then coming down closer, His final journey coming in toward Jerusalem (speaking of Joshua), and now the three days, starting at three days, and then up to Passover period. So, it's going to cover that period of time.

This is *Part 1, Three Days to Passover*. We're going to review where we left off last Sabbath in *Part 3 of Christ's Final Journey*.

Again, sometimes when people come to a site, they jump around, and hopefully this all ties together and this helps to put it in this proper framework when you look at what it's covering here in the book of John 12. John 12, again, where we left off last week, where He's riding into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt on Nisan (or Abib) the 10th.

Again, that day shouldn't escape us. It was the night before when they had the supper or the dinner, if you will, for Christ, for Joshua there in Bethany. And that's when Mary came in and used the expensive ointment, as it were, on Him. And at that point then Judas began to fume over it. His true character began to come out, or it began to be exposed anyway, his attitude.

And the most important about that being the 10th, at that time with that dinner, was that this is the time, on the 10th day, that a lamb was to be set aside by the children of Israel that would be used for the Passover. So again, important things that happen in a very timely manner.

I think by going through some of the things in the book, that's even been, if you will, has been magnified to understand the importance of timing and events and how meticulous God really is in everything He

does. It becomes very inspiring the more one sees how these things all fit together in such an awesome way. They truly do.

So, here it is again, the 10th day during the daytime portion when He's coming into Jerusalem. **John 12:12** it says, **On the next day...** So, this is the daytime portion of the Sabbath, the 10th of the first month. **...many people who had come to the Feast, when they heard that Joshua was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him and cried, Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel!**

So, as we looked at this, to understand what they're saying; He is the descendant of King David. They recognize Him as being or are focusing on that at this point in time. Because of all the journey that's taken place, Christ has made this clearer and clearer, and candidly, God has begun to reveal it more and more, as this trip has gone along, revealed it more and more to people, to the population, that He is more, if you will, than a prophet. He is a prophet, but far more than that. He is the descendant of David, the promised one, the Messiah.

And so, that's what they're saying: **Blessed is the King of Israel, who comes in the name of the Lord.** They're recognizing He's coming in God's name to fulfill that which is written. They don't understand it all, but at least they acknowledge that portion of it.

Then Joshua, when He had found a young donkey, sat thereon as it's written: Do not fear, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King comes sitting on a donkey's colt. So again here, it's going back; it's bringing a lot of things together here. Because Zion is about the Church, it's about those whom God has called through time, but that's who it's speaking to. It's speaking of those that God has called, has been molding and fashioning, or will continue to mold and fashion over the next 2,000 years that follows this, and letting people know, or at least focusing in on the reality of the attitude and the spirit of Joshua—humble—and all the lessons that are taught about the importance of humility, of a willingness to humble ourselves. There is none greater than Him, and to recognize what He was willing to do is an awesome thing. So, it's focusing on that.

This is what Zion is to recognize, is to understand. That's why we have Passover once every year to focus on this, to think about those things that affect us and why and how we're able to be called and be able to be worked with, how we have an ability to repent of sin. On and on it goes.

So again, willing, if you will, here, to ride upon the donkey. **Do not fear, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King comes sitting on a donkey's colt. At first, the disciples didn't understand these things,** as it goes on to say here. **But when Joshua was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.** So again, all the things that began to flood into their minds when God's spirit began to be poured out on the Day of Pentecost. Incredible.

Verse 17—The people, therefore, who were with Him, when He called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead, bear record or witnessed it. They witnessed this incredible event, the greatest to this point in time, and the magnitude that's there because of all the people who were there at this point in time. Because there were large groups that had followed Him all the way down through the areas of Galilee, all the way down through the sides of Jordan there before He came across into Judah again, or Judea.

And so it says, again here, **For this cause the people also met Him when they heard that He had done this miracle. Therefore, the Pharisees said to one another, We are getting nowhere. Behold, the world has gone after Him.** So again, this frustration that they had that was tearing them apart inside in the sense of seeing Joshua do all the things He was doing, hearing all the stories that were being told, seeing that He was gaining in popularity. They had no large crowds coming after them. Nothing, in that respect. And here it was an uproar within Jerusalem, within Judea, and all these things were spread abroad, if you will, farther than that, because this went up clear into the areas of Galilee and beyond when He first started this journey and all the people who were up there that were willing to come to that mountain, several thousands of people.

This is incredible. Sometimes it's hard to grasp the magnitude of these things. They didn't just come out locally in those areas. They came out from there, but they came long distances. And traveling back at that time wasn't that easy in some of the areas they went through. It's not like just jumping in a car and driving down the freeway.

We're going to pick up here now in Mark 11, continuing on with the story, speaking of the same day. There are pieces here and there in the four gospels so often, and it becomes really very hard to piece together. There are books written about the flow. I know there is one that was used at Ambassador called *The Harmony of the Gospels*, but even it wasn't totally correct as far as some of the time frame was concerned and when certain events happened.

But it's very difficult to go through the flow or try to put all four books together. It hasn't been done yet. Let's put it that way. There's more to come because there are some things that are hard to understand and can't be absolute. But this is as close as we've been able to be as far as the Church is concerned, and God has led us in these things.

Starting here in **Mark 11:11—Then Joshua entered into Jerusalem and then into the temple.** So, all this happened that day; this is that same day. Now He's come to the temple. **Then He looked around at everything there. And by then, the evening had come.** It talks about in other parts there, where they walked around discussing things around the temple. And some of those things are in some of the teachings as well. But they discussed some of these things, or Christ did with the disciples. And so time was passing on, and this is what it's coming down to.

And by then evening had come and He went back out. In other words, went out or went back, if you will, to Bethany. Because in the last several days here, this is where He went, back and forth to Bethany. Before that, we saw where He had actually, just a few days before that even, before this period of time on that Friday evening when He went down to that dinner, they had already gone up into a kind of a mountainous or foothill area, if you will, of some of the region around Bethany to the north there so the people couldn't find them. And so, they went there for a while. We don't know how long; it could only be two or three days. And then finally back and forth between Jerusalem and Bethany, which is only a couple miles from each other.

Then He looked around at everything. So again, here, starting here, then **verse 11—Then Joshua entered into Jerusalem and then into the temple.** So, this is the Sabbath before Passover. **Then He looked around at everything there. And by then the evening had come and He went back to Bethany with the twelve.**

Verse 12—Then the next day, so we're speaking about Sunday now, the 11th, **when they were coming from Bethany, He was hungry. And He saw far off a fig tree with leaves, and He went to it, hoping that He might find fruit on it. But when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for the time of the figs had not yet come.** So, at least on that tree, it hadn't started yet. They weren't there.

And Joshua responded by saying unto it, No one will ever eat fruit of you forever. And His disciples heard it. So again here, a point is being made in this story that is unique, that so often escapes people, but people tend to read right over things like this. It's just we try to read things oftentimes in a story flow and not in the process of what God teaches or what He's leading and what Christ actually might be saying in a particular matter, focusing on that and the importance of the event. But this wasn't just a nonchalant event. He uses it to teach. Everything He's done here now, especially these last few days, everything that takes place, it's a teaching opportunity for them and for the Church to follow.

So again, people reading right over some of these things and sometimes mess up on what it's talking about here concerning this fruit tree. We do come to the point where it talks about the fact that it was withered. And that becomes more important in some people's minds, of what took place, than what the teaching is from this. It comes down to the reality that there's only one true fruit that comes from God that lasts forever. Obviously, that tree isn't going to bear fruit forever. Obviously, every tree comes to a point in time where it dies, where it doesn't live on, and it doesn't bear fruit, and that's not what the intent of all this is. It's about being able to see beyond that to what is important and what does last forever.

John 15:1. Again, we're bouncing back and forth here a little bit on some of these things, and we'll come back to Mark later. But first of all, John 15:1. And again, some of these are just matters of things that flow in a particular frame here, if you will.

John 15:1. This was said on Passover, obviously, and we generally read it every year at Passover service. **I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away.** So again, it's an incredible process to know a calling that God has given to us, the opportunity we have to begin changing, to have this mind change, and that we can begin to produce fruit in our lives, and to understand where it comes from. The ability for fruit to exist comes from God, comes from the power of God's spirit through Joshua the Christ into our lives. And this is a part of this story, if you will.

So it says, **I am the true vine, and my Father is a vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, He purges.** So, this is our history. This is the life of the Church, to understand the process we go through when this process begins within us, when we have opportunity to begin bearing fruit in our life. And whether we do or whether we don't is up to us. It's available to us. God makes it available to us, fruit that will last forever, fruit that is forever in that respect, that comes from God. But whether or not we take advantage of that in the sense of recognizing the opportunity that's been placed before us and we recognize the importance of it, well, again, choices, choices, choices.

God has been showing the Church in the last several years that this is far more important than we have ever placed weight on it before in God's Church, truly. And this will be a teaching that continues on for the next 1,100 years, especially in the last hundred years, when people are resurrected and some who had opportunities before and didn't use them in a right way, who are going to have to come to a very deep state of repentance in order to come back, if that's even available to some. Because it's in the mind.

Sometimes minds become so set in something so backward, because of what choices they made before. Again, it's a spiritual matter. It's like what happened to Lucifer. His was instant. His was instant. When he did what he did, it changed because he was composed of spirit. His mind was composed of spirit. Everything about him was spirit. Not the holy spirit, but spirit essence. And to understand that is a marvel, of what God revealed to Herbert Armstrong about the angelic realm and how they're different in that regard, and how we were made physical for a purpose so that even with God's spirit, we can still change because our brain is physical.

It's an awesome thing how God is creating His Family, something far greater than the angelic realm. That's why I'm excited about chapter 9, and chapter 10, especially, that goes into these things even more deeply. It's an awesome, awesome thing to understand. That's why we need to grasp that once we have the impregnation of God's spirit, there's a time factor there that's in God's hands, in Joshua's hands as far as judgment's concerned, but it becomes a very dangerous thing to not use this properly before God, to make choices on our own that begin to hurt what God has given to us, to begin to perhaps become set in something that isn't that simple to change. Anyway, more will be revealed to us when Joshua returns.

“Every branch that doesn't bear fruit, He takes away.” So it's up to us. It's there, the opportunity for it, the ability to do it. We have to work. We have to cry out to God for help of His holy spirit to be in our lives, to help to be transformed, to be changed. It's something we've got to want deep down inside for this mind to be changed, to think differently, to ask God for help to fight the carnality that's within us as human beings so that we can grow spiritually in our lives, become stronger spiritually, more at one with God, in agreement with God spiritually.

That's up to every one of us. That can't be given to anybody. It's an individual choice. And it's a fight. It was meant to be that way.

That's an awesome thing to understand in itself. It was meant to be that way, to be a battle, to be a fight. Because it's in the fight that determines our character, the mind, the choices of to whether or not we really want what God has placed before us, whether or not we really desire with all of our being to put God first, and whether we're willing to continue at that fight day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year.

Can it stop at some point and turn against it? That's the danger of hurting that mind, of turning that mind in a wrong way that can do irreparable damage at some point if we go too far to where it becomes overwhelming. Is there a healing for that?

Once the spirit essence is set, it's set. So, it's a very dangerous thing for anyone in God's Church to fool around with, to mess around with, not yielding to the process exactly the way God says we should do it. To understand the seriousness of it and how hideous it is to turn against the one who died for us. That's what this story is about, of Christ going into Jerusalem to die for us so that we can have the ability to be forgiven of sin.

But more than that, it wasn't just to go into Jerusalem to die as a Passover to be forgiven of sin. It was so that God Almighty and Joshua the Christ could continue on a continuing basis to dwell in, to live in our being, in our minds. That's awesome! And only we can hurt that by sin, by not repenting of it.

As long as we're willing to repent, as long as we're willing to acknowledge what we are, as long as we have the humble spirit to recognize how much we need God and to recognize we have carnal human nature that's selfish, and that's just the way we are, and we've got to fight that, God will forgive us as we repent. It's a beautiful thing.

But if we begin to turn away from it, go back to other things? How really sick is that? Well, it gives examples in the Bible. It's like a dog returning to its puke to eat it. That's what it's like. Vomiting and then going back and eating it. A hog. So, it gives the example of a dog and a hog. Unclean animals and how filthy on a physical plane they can be.

And yet with God's spirit, we can do things that are filthy. I've seen people do, known of filthy things in the mind that people have done in turning against Christ. That's not a small thing before God. It's turning

against God, yes, but turning against Joshua and why He died for us, that's as low as you can go as a human being when you're begotten of God's holy spirit.

That's why the abomination of desolation is so hideous in what some did on a spiritual plane. I guarantee you there are individuals, a lot of people involved in that, who, in essence, are already judged. But they're going to have opportunity to see something come to pass, just as Lucifer has been able to see what's happened to mankind over the past 6,000 years, that God has worked with people, that people have changed, to see what's happened with the Church over time. But it doesn't mean he doesn't continue to work against it and fight against it, because he does. Sick, sick, sick.

So again here, He says, **I'm the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.** It's through Christ that we're able to have life come into us, connected to the vine, the fruit that's on the vine, the feeding that's possible through the vine, the nurturing that can take place. And only the fruit, in this case, can determine and decide through choices and decisions whether or not that's going to continue to come into us. And then, God Almighty is the vinedresser. He works, in that respect, to prune, to take care of the fruit. And where there's no fruit, it's taken away, because it hurts the rest.

It's like any plant like that. There are times that certain parts of it need to be cut off because it's not producing anymore, because it begins to take energy and strength away from what the rest can produce.

And that's the way the Church has been, ever since I've known it and ever since before that. That's what scripture shows us over and over again. What happened through all the Church eras? Battles, hardships, difficult things. Because it's through that that we have the ability to grow if we yield to the process. It's a beautiful thing when done right, when right choices are made. And when wrong choices are made, so be it.

And what's amazing is every one of us has to come into unity and agreement that God's judgment is righteous, and that's the only way it can be. No matter who it is – no matter who it is – no matter how much we may have loved them, God comes first. Christ comes first. God's Church, this way of life comes first above everything else. And if anything is ever put above that, we begin to walk on dangerous ground.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, He purges. So again, there are things we go through as well, clipping off little pieces here and there that might be hurting; part of a pruning process. ...**so that it might bring forth more fruit.** So, in our lives we go through that on an individual basis even, let alone the entire vine. But even in our own lives, there are things that have to be taken care of with God's help, gotten rid of with God's help. It's where growth comes from.

Now you are clean. That word translated “purges” in the King James comes from this word. It's about being clean. God cleanses it. That's what it's really saying, but it uses the word purge because that's

something that people can understand about taking care of something of this nature like a grapevine or whatever. **Now you are clean** (purged)...**through the word**. It's coming into agreement with the word of God, becoming at one with the word of God, unity and oneness with God Almighty. It's a beautiful thing.

Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me. We read this every year, but so often it escapes people. "Abide in me." It's a choice to abide in, to dwell in, to continue in God the way God says we ought to, the way we need to.

Even now, I have some I have to write and to ask about certain questions about their standing because I know they're gone. People who were at the Feast last year with us that will not be at the Feast with us this year. Horrible job to have to do that. I hate doing it, but it has to be done. Every year. It's amazing.

Abide in me and I in you. It's only by our choice that God will abide in us and continue to dwell in us. It's in our hands. That's the way God has placed it. He wants us to. He tells us what we need to do, but it's up to us to do it, whether or not we're going to cry out to Him for help, for forgiveness of sin, maybe even just to reveal sin to us. "Help me to see any sin that I need to repent of, that I don't see." David asked for that kind of help, for that which he couldn't see.

Abide in me and I in you, because a branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine.

There's a way to abide in, to dwell in Christ, in God, and God tells us how that's done. **And neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Anyone who abides in me and I in them, the same brings forth much fruit.** So, again here, an awesome, awesome teaching, an awesome process here of revealing things to us about what we have to be like.

And this whole story in John, to me, are some of the most awesome scriptures in all the Bible. John 14, 15, 16, 17, some of the most amazing, awesome things ever revealed to mankind. He explained why. The first thing He said to them, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." They didn't understand what He was saying. It's a spiritual thing.

And then He went on to explain then how He was able to do these things – because He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. And then He went on to explain that those who would follow are going to experience the same thing, how the Father and Him can dwell in us and we in them. Awesome! It's a spiritual thing to dwell in, to remain in, to continue in, to abide in. All the words that are translated from that same Greek word, all these words have meaning and apply.

I am the vine, you're the branches. Anyone who abides in me and I in them, the same brings forth much fruit. So, the reality is if we dwell in the vine and dwell in Christ, dwell in God the Father, and they're dwelling in us, you can't help but have fruit produced in your life. You will grow. You will mature and continue a maturing process. It's absolute because God's spirit can't go out without producing fruit. That's what produces the fruit, it's God's spirit. And the more that's there, the more that comes into our life, the more we're blessed.

Because without me, He said, **you can do nothing**. So, what a horrible thing to be cut off from the vine, to no longer be a part. Mind-boggling.

If anyone does not abide in me (dwell in, continue in), **they are cast forth as a branch and wither and are gathered**. So, they're cast forth as a branch that's not connected to the vine anymore. And what happens then is they begin to wither. Without growth, what happens?

The history of the Church has been people get farther and farther away from any reality of anything they ever knew. They can go back to putting trees in their home with lights on it, decorating. That's how far the mind can go. The mind can go back to all those things that were in the Protestant world, or worse—mind-boggling—because they're on their own; they're withering. What they had within them? It's one thing to be awakened out of sleep. It's another thing to destroy that which has gone to sleep by being farther and farther away.

If anyone does not abide in me, they're cast forth as a branch and wither, and are then gathered. And when do you think a lot of them are gathered? In the Great White Throne. What a horrible thing. Because that's going to happen to a lot, not to a few. **...and are cast into a fire and they're burned**. It's over with. Choices, choices, choices.

I often think of what's happening right now in the Middle East, and that mind that can become so defiant. Even if it's destroyed, to continue fighting and holding on to their way of doing it, to their own ideas. Because that's what happens so often within the Church for people who leave. Their own way of doing it, how difficult is that for anyone to change that course? Without God, it's absolutely impossible. Can it be reignited? Well, that's in God's hands, in His judgment, and it has to do with the spirit that's in them.

...and are burned. That's why God is giving to us more and more how important it is that we make right choices, that we recognize the seriousness of our choices, that we accept our choices in the sense of knowing no one else is responsible for me but me. You are responsible for yourself, and you have no control over anyone else. Sometimes by example, you can influence people, but you can't make anyone change their thinking. Isn't that an amazing thing?

People can try to reason with, they can try to understand, they can try to talk people into it, and maybe sometimes some people will respond at times, but not for the right reasons. Sometimes people will continue on for a little longer in the Church when they've gotten to a point where they've gone so far off base. They might continue on for a while. They're dealing with guilt, they're dealing with other things in relationships, and they're torn. And generally, it still goes in a certain direction. Choices, choices, choices.

Verse 7—If you abide in me and my words... The truth, God's way of life, His mind. The word is about everything that has to do with God, everything that He communicated to us from the beginning of our calling, everything that He's communicated to us since that we know, that we see in the mind, that we

have in the mind, that we're able to see because of God's spirit. Because you can't know these things, you can't know the truth and continue in the truth without God's help. It'll go by the wayside. So it's a matter of a hunger. It's a matter of a thirst. It's a matter of choices; how much we really want it. How much we want to be at one with God, to agree with God.

And boy, what a dangerous thing when we find out if ever in a person's mind they disagree in a certain area of something and begin to find fault. I think of someone here recently talking about, "Well, I thought that the Church was to go out after the 1 in the 99. I thought that there should be more love." I've heard this ever since I've been in the Church. People make these stupid decisions, do not obey God, and you think, "You're not even obeying God. If you won't do the most simplest of things that God charges us to do..." If we won't bring fruit meet for repentance, I don't even have the time to deal with and bother answering such a stupid remark. Because it's of a wrong spirit and a wrong mind and a wrong attitude. Get your act right, and maybe you'll get a response. God doesn't owe you that. You think God owes us anything?

I'm speaking here to anybody that might be listening, because I believe that there are, of individuals who get in that state of mind. It's a dangerous, dangerous place to be. If you're not willing to obey, but you're willing to find fault with God's Church, with God's people, with God. Because that's what a person does. They're finding fault with God.

"Why aren't you taking better care of me? Why aren't you trying to get me back in?" It's not a revolving door. It's not like some of these revolving doors that you get into in some of these hotels. On the contrary, you got spit out on the other side. That's why you're not a part. If you want to be right with God, there are certain things you have to do.

Some might think that's really hard, but it's not. We either strive to obey God, to love God, to want His way, or we don't try. We have to do it ourselves.

"If you abide in me and my words abide in you." If they dwell in you. In other words, if God's word dwells in us, that means this is what we've chosen to live. This is what we want. We're excited about what God gives to us, the truth that we have. The world doesn't have this, and we begin to take it for granted if we're not careful.

...you will ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. And I hope all of us now understand in a very deep way what this means. "You'll ask what you will, and it will be done to you." If it's God's will, and only if it's God's will. Only if it's in agreement with God. Because we can want, and will, many things in life, and want God to take care of it for us. It doesn't work that way. There are things that God does for us and has, you know, gives us grace and favor and help and things in our lives that we can ask for. But again, it's not a matter of having this kind of confidence that we can expect something from God that isn't promised to us, that isn't a matter or in agreement with God's will.

“If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you will and it shall be done to you.” **Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit.** What an awesome thing to say. “Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit.” That just reveals that there are those whom God calls who are excited about what has been given to them. They're responding and doing things in the way that they've been taught to grow in – to pray, to ask, to seek the help, more of God's help in their life. And the fact that fruit is produced reveals God's way works. God's way is working to transform the mind so that that individual has the ability to themselves become glorified in His Family. To become God, God Family, Elohim. That's what it is. Incredible!

...that you bear much fruit. And so shall you be my disciples. That's how we're able to be Christ's disciples, continue in the Church, is to have that kind of a mind. We want fruit produced. We want to grow. We want God's word to dwell in us.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Continue in... It's that same word, abide in, live in, dwell in **...my love.** Choices, choices, choices. Their desire to love us, to be close to us, to have great fellowship with us as we respond. And then I think of all the thousands who have turned against that. To turn against the love of God, to turn against Christ's love and why He died?

Let's go back to Mark 11, continuing in Mark and the story from the account of the fig tree on the 11th day here. After passing the fig tree, then they returned again to the temple.

Mark 11:15—Then they came to Jerusalem, and Joshua went into the temple and began to drive out those who sold and bought within the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers. This wasn't a small thing. He drove them out. He had this thing in His hand that He made, and He was driving them out of the temple, overthrowing tables, the money changers, the money.

Back then, people came into Jerusalem from many different areas, and they had, sometimes, different money from some of those areas. When it talks about the Day of Pentecost, it lists a ton of those areas and how that they even spoke different languages in a lot of these areas. And everyone heard in their own tongue perfectly what was being said. It was a miracle. One person speaking and saying one thing in one language, but everyone hearing in their own language. Incredible!

And so, again here, they came down, and like anything in the Old Testament where it says the Feast, you come up to a Feast, to the Holy Days, and it's too far from you, so you can sell your livestock, different things that you have that you might be bringing to offer and sacrifice because it's too far to travel with them – to take them and exchange it for money. And then, when you get there, then you can purchase what you need.

Well, this is what they were doing at the temple. They were actually selling things for the sacrifices, especially doves and less expensive things. But even around that area, they had the larger things to be purchased as well.

But the money changers, the custom was at that time that there was a temple tax or whatever, if you will, that was to be given too. But their ability to use some of the funds that they had, it had to be in this particular type of currency, if you will, that they had that was better known for its content in silver. It was valued because it was consistent, and other areas weren't known for the same thing. So they came there, and these money changers took advantage of that. They would charge exorbitant amounts to exchange rates because nothing else was accepted at the temple, especially for the temple tax. Only this one kind of coin that was more pure silver, if you will. And, anyway, that's part of the process here of what was taking place.

So, this was happening inside the temple, and these people were profiting from it. And there's a lot to believe that even the priests, the high priests, and others were profiting from some of these things. But anyway.

So it says, **He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those that sold doves. Then He would not allow anyone to carry any merchandise through the temple.** So, there was merchandise being sold there. And you think, how sick.

I think of Herbert Armstrong and the Feast of Tabernacles. It's one thing to make it available, to offer food and so forth at the Feast, but it got to a point where some things were being sold and people wanting to make profit off of things because of the Feast. And one individual had a book that he had written that he thought should be sold at the Feast, and basically was told no, and he turned bitter over it. Well, he'd turned bitter long before that. But anyway. Crazy things have happened in the Church.

It's the same sort of thing where people are taking advantage of God's people. And here it is, people were taking advantage, others were making merchandise of, in the temple, of people who came there to worship God. Taking the focus off of what they were supposed to be doing to something else that wasn't right. So that riled Christ up because it was something that was wrong before God, and so He took action and drove them out.

“And He would not allow anyone to carry any merchandise through the temple.” Can you imagine one person standing up like this and not allowing anyone? So, pretty strong approach that He had to take to do this, to where people were listening and afraid to do anything other than listen to this guy that's just gone through there and overturned things, that He is the one that's been doing all these miracles. He had a lot of backing.

Verse 17—So, He taught them, saying, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations, the house of prayer. You know, this is where you come before God. **But you've made it a den of thieves.** Not a place to recognize God, to honor God. And this was done very physically on a physical plane at the temple at this time, but you think it should be done in the right way. Look at where you are.

It's like coming before God on the Sabbath, coming before God on the Holy Days. We should be moved by that, that we do it in a way that honors God. I thought about that last night. I thought about what am I going to wear today? I try to wear a lot of different things, a lot of different combinations that we might be able to learn from it. And sometimes it might seem like a physical thing, and it is a physical thing, but it's about what's in the mind. It's about whether we want to honor God, whether our attitude in mind is one of coming before God. The coming before God is also a spiritual thing. It's in the mind and it's reflected physically then in our lives of things we do. So we have the physical that reflects what's up here and how we think. And so, we need to be careful.

I was thinking about how I sometimes have different colored shirts that I've worn at times, which maybe next Sabbath, I don't know. It looks like a colored type of t-shirt because it's that lower neck. It doesn't have the big collar. And that's fine...if it's with a sports jacket! But wearing it by itself, you know what it looks like? I didn't look around here today, and I hope that's not there. It's a t-shirt! It's a more expensive colored t-shirt and maybe more money spent for it, and that's fine when in proper decor with something. It's a very physical thing, but it reflects how we think.

We're coming before the presence of God more in that respect than any other time of the week. This is the most important time of our Sabbath. This is the most important time of seven days in the week. There is no other time of greater importance than this one right now. That we come before God, whether we're home by ourselves, no matter where we are, and that's a different matter. You know, if you're home by yourself, you don't have to do this. It is a different environment.

But if there are others...and reflecting. And even then, we have to think about it. We don't want to be there in our stinky socks, sitting in a lounge chair, and our feet up in the air watching this, you know. And if any of you are doing that, get up out of that chair. Sit up, get your shoes on. You know, we're still coming before God's presence.

Now, that's not a matter of prayer. Because I don't care if you're in your altogether and you're praying and you're comfortable with that before God, so be it. That's a different matter. And if you're wearing socks and you kneel down before God, so be it. But if it's a matter of coming together before God with others and of being an example of fellowship that we're able to have, then that's something we need to consider – others.

Why I got off on that tangent a little bit, well, it's because of coming before God's presence in the temple. And this is not a temple, but it is a place where we're able to come together with other of God's people, and it's something that I wish everyone would take a greater look at in their lives of how we do it, of why we do it, and recognize that in some cases we need to clean up our act in a better way of coming before God.

And I may have to become a lot stronger on some of this, because I go from area to area and I don't see change. Because I've been talking about this a little bit for a little while. There isn't an individual man

who shouldn't have some kind of jacket. To honor God. To honor one another in fellowship. Now, if it's hot and you want to take it off, fine, no problem with that. But you know what? Every Sabbath I get up here, and if it's in that other room that gets hot, and I can't even think straight, I'm still going to do this, mainly because of how I feel toward God, in the presence of His people. That's why I do it. It's about a standard we should strive to live that should be higher than at other times.

Now, I could go on and on. I could probably do the rest of the sermon on this. But I'm going to stop there, and I'm going to ask everyone, please, please, please look at your own life and what you're doing and how you're doing it and how you're coming before God. Because some of this needs to be cleaned up in God's Church, that we do a better job. Okay? Sometimes I'm ashamed of in some areas of how far some people will go in letting down. If you let down before God in Sabbath services, what are you doing the rest of the time of your life through the rest of the week? Because it reflects how we think. So, it's about God and about Christ. It's how we think toward them, how we love them.

I'm going to give it about a month or two months. And by this Feast of Tabernacles, we are going to be in greater unity and oneness in this one area in our lives. And if you need help with your wardrobe, financially, we'll give it to you. I don't care how much across the church. If it needs to be done, so be it; we'll do it. Okay?

So He taught them, saying, Is it not written, My house should be called a house of all nations, a house of prayer, but you made a den of thieves? Then the scribes and the chief priests heard it and looked for a way of how they might destroy Him. They so hated this, of what He did, and the people who were following Him and backing Him. It says **because they feared Him**. Because they feared Him, they didn't do anything then. But they wanted to. He was a great threat to their positions, to their authority.

...because the people were amazed by His teachings. And so, He had this following that they didn't have, and they were just eaten up inside. What an incredible thing.

Verse 19—Then, when the evening had come, He went out of the city. “When the evening had come, He went out of the city,” again.

Let's pick it up in Matthew 21. This is addressing some of the events on the same day here, Matthew 21, Sunday the 11th, when Christ had returned to the temple, done all that He had done.

Matthew 21:12, we'll read this part here: **So, Joshua went into the temple of God...** Again, this was after the account of the fig tree, and still the same day. **...and cast out all those who sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.** So every story adds a little bit something different sometimes, something that the other story doesn't have.

...and said to them, it is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you made it a den of thieves. Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. So even more

now, here they were coming into the temple and He was healing them. So, this just agitated the Pharisees and the priests and all of those even that much more.

Verse 15—So, when the chief priests and scribes saw the amazing things that He did and the children crying out... It's a word that literally means "just shouting out." **...in the temple saying, Hosanna to the son of David, and they were highly agitated...** Amazing, the human mind and how far these priests, these individuals, were going in their thinking. They weren't in control of themselves at all and seeing things in a right way. Not even on a physical plane.

And he, the chief priest, in other words here, **said to Him** (said to Christ), **Do you hear what they're saying?** "Don't you hear what they're saying?" It's like he found such condemnation with that, with what they were saying. It was so wrong in his mind that he couldn't help himself but blurt it out.

So Joshua said to them, Yes. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have perfected praise. You have to laugh at some of these things because it's like they didn't get it. It just made them worse. But here it is, He's from God, and He's telling them exactly those things that are written in scripture.

Verse 17—Then He left them and went out of the city into Bethany, and He lodged there.

Going back to Mark now. We're moving forward now after those events and teaching of Joshua the Christ just two days now before Passover, which is the 12th now, the 12th day of the month, which was a Monday, during the daytime. And here, back to the flow here of Mark 12, where they passed by the fig tree again. This is the next morning.

Mark 11:20—Then in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. Then Peter, recalling it, said to Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which you cursed was withered away. And Joshua, answering, said to them, Have faith in God. Well, what does this have to do with the fig tree? Well, He's about to tell them. And again, yes, it withered up. And then we read in John the greater part of the story here of what this is all about and the producing of fruit. It was to teach something that's far more important.

"And Joshua, answering, said to them, Have faith in God." In other words, believe what God says. It's up to you whether you live. If you believe it, then live it. **For truly I say to you, that whoever will say to this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in their heart, but believes that those things He says...** What God says. It's about God. It's about believing what God says. **...but believes those things that He says will be done, he will have,** the individual who asks, **whatever He says,** whatever God says.

So, this even gets more to the point. Sometimes this is read totally wrong or people interpret it wrong, but it's about this matter of if God has said it, what can you believe? What is it you're to believe? What God says. And if you believe what God says and you're in unity with that and you ask something

according to that because you're applying what you believe in your relationship to God, then you can have what God says.

That's why some of the most basic of these things is about a relationship with God that we're to have, again, that Christ said so many times here and even during this Passover period, to cry out to God. It's about praying to God. It's about crying out to God for His holy spirit to live and dwell within our lives, that we be able to be at one with God and understand and see His word in our mind. And the more we grasp that, the more we live that, the more God will give to us. But we have to believe something before we can pray for it.

So again, it's like what I mentioned here the other day, last Sabbath here. I think it was last Sabbath, about the kind of confidence we should have when we ask for forgiveness about something. If we've gone before God and we've repented, I don't care what it is in our lives, if it's genuine, true repentance and we ask God for forgiveness, and we're a part of the Body of Christ (and we haven't cut ourselves off), God will answer it. He'll forgive us.

If it's something far more serious that's been going on for a long time...? Because the very, very serious things in life that people do, oftentimes in the Church that have gone to a point where it's so far out, there are a lot of things that led up to that that should have been repented of long before that. So, there are some things you get to in time that you may be remorseful for that are so heinous, so sick, so disturbed, so wrong that it isn't so simple to turn things around quickly. It's something that has to be worked at for a long time sometimes, sometimes for years for some. That's the way it's been.

It's a matter of being cleansed. It's a matter of getting the mind right. It's a matter of continual repentance and getting back to the trunk of the tree, seeking God's help in all things to be back to the trunk of the tree. I hope that makes sense. Because there are some things we can't just snap our finger at and be forgiven of overnight because there are a lot of things that have led up to a certain point in time that have to be worked on first. That's another matter. But anyway. I made kind of a sweeping statement before that, so that's why I wanted to put that in there as a part of the story.

So as a whole in our lives, when there are things we want to change, need to change, need to repent of, and let down in our lives, we repent before God, and you have to start striving too to live what is right, to do what is right, and God will give you the help and God will forgive you.

People who have left, they can return. It's all a matter of repentance and how long that time has been. It can be done. Individuals who are asked to be separated for a short time, whatever it might be, can repent and get things right. But we have to go through a process when those things happen. But the more serious, the farther it goes, it becomes more dangerous spiritually.

Verse 24—Therefore, I say to you, Whatever things you... The word says “desire,” and that's not the right translation at all. It's not whatever we desire. Because you might go down the street someday and

see this billboard: One billion dollars, the lottery, and go out and “How much am I going to put on that?” Because that's what we want. That's what we desire. That's why we'd put the money in there for it. It'd solve all of our problems. No, it's just the beginning of them.

So, it's not whatever we desire and that we can go pray about that. “Think how much I could do for the Church.” You know, I'll be candid with you. If someone won a billion dollars and they just wanted to give a few million of that to the Church, it's like, what are we supposed to do with it? Pay everyone's way, get a ship to take us off to the Feast of Tabernacles? You know, have our own ship, cruise ship? You know, get one that has a whole 6,000 people, and we only have 300 and some, 400 and some, whatever it is, 500 to come, you know, max. We have the whole ship! You know, I'd be speechless. The reality is that isn't how it works. God doesn't work that way.

Whatever things you ask... Not desire. It's about asking. It's a word that means “request” or “ask.” ... **when you pray, believing that you will receive, you will have.** So, it has to agree with God. It has to be in unity and oneness. It has to be something that God says we should ask for. We should, because we believe God, if we want His help, we should ask for His holy spirit. If we want forgiveness, we should ask for forgiveness.

Verse 25—Then when you stand praying, forgive... So, it takes it even further. “And when you stand praying...” So, if an individual is asking God for something, desires something, there's a requirement. There are a lot of requirements living God's way of life, but this is a big one here. He's making it very clear here. “And when you stand praying, forgive.” So, we might be asking for forgiveness or something else, believing God, and knowing that we can be forgiven of our sin, but we're not willing to forgive someone else? It's like, don't bother asking because the answer is absolutely no. That's what God says, in essence.

If we're not willing to forgive others, if we're not willing to forgive someone else, be kind, be patient, be gracious, give the benefit of the doubt. **...if you have anything against anyone so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you of your trespasses.** So, choices, choices, choices. It's what do we believe? Because this is a part of believing God. If we believe that this is required, then we know that's a part of the process, that we have to think in a certain way.

So, our prayer, rather than asking for forgiveness in a particular matter, might be to help us to be right with someone else, to make it right, maybe, towards someone else. Perhaps we said something, did something against someone else. Because it's not just a matter of saying, “God, forgive me for treating this person this way or thinking this way towards someone.” But if something is wrong in a relationship, but to make it right, to have the tenacity to ask for the strength from God, for the mindset to go and make it right. To be able to say if need be, “I'm sorry.” Because a lot of times, that's all that's needed. “I'm sorry for what I said.” “I'm sorry for how I said it.” “I was wrong in how I addressed that.” Whatever

it might be. A willingness to obey God and then go and ask God for forgiveness of whatever it is we're seeking forgiveness of.

Because until it's resolved, in essence, God is telling us, what are you doing? Do you believe me as to how you can have fruit in your life and how you can grow spiritually if you're not willing to do this?

I've seen this so often in God's Church, it's not even funny. People that have drama in their lives and fights in their lives, and things that have happened. Thankfully, it's not happening like that to the degree it used to happen more in God's Church. Because it was really a very common thing that would happen when you have congregations of 400, 500 people in different areas. And inevitably, there are going to be those kinds of problems where people aren't getting along, where people are having arguments and bad attitudes toward one another, and just won't even speak to one another.

You think, where's that coming from? How can we all be in God's Church and not even be willing to speak? Something needs to be resolved there. Doesn't that make sense? And yet there are people who never seem to grasp that. What's wrong? Well, something in the mind.

Beautiful teachings here of how we're to live, how God works, what God expects of us, that we can't just expect everything from God and this is one-sided. It's like this matter of grace. I love it in scripture, the teachings about grace, the grace that God gives to us, which has to do with favor, with love, with forgiveness, all kinds of things that are a matter of grace, and if we're not willing to live that grace towards others, should we receive it from God? That's what it boils down to. It's a matter of realizing we have to change how we think about others, how we respond to others, how we treat others. On and on it goes.

Anyway, continuing on. **Verse 25** again here—**Then when you stand praying, forgive. If you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive your trespasses.** Pretty powerful. Now, if a lot of people in times past in the Church believed that, they would be afraid. Because one thing you don't want to take away from you is the ability to be forgiven of sin. You know why? Because that determines whether or not Joshua the Christ and God the Father will continue in you. Otherwise, you just get cut off. It's the way it works.

So, either we believe those things, or we don't. And this is an important one. So if we're not right towards others in our thinking, in our mind, how do we expect to be forgiven? How do we expect God to continue to dwell in us? Well, we shouldn't, because it goes against faith, it goes against belief for what God tells us we're supposed to be believing.

Matthew 21, going back to Matthew, the account here again, verse 20. **Matthew 21:20—Now when the disciples saw it, speaking of when they saw the fig tree that was withered, they marveled, saying, Look how soon that the fig tree has withered away. And Joshua answered and said to them, Truly I say to**

you, if you have faith, and don't doubt or don't have doubt... In other words, we believe God, and we're living it. **...you will not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you will say to this mountain, Be removed and cast into the sea, it will be done. Now all things, whatever you will ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.**

If they're in agreement with God's will. Just like this matter of forgiveness, if we believe them and we're living it, then there's power there. I love this example about a mountain. Well, first of all, there's no scripture I know of where it says you can pray about a mountain that's going to be removed and cast into the sea. But if God reveals something... We're not going to go there.

But anyway, using this example of something so great, so huge, that it seems like, "Well, that's just not going to happen. Who's going to ask such a thing of God?" and not understand what's far, far greater. Everything we're taught, that God Almighty and Joshua the Christ will dwell in our life day after day after day, which is far greater than a whole bunch of rocky mountains being cast into the sea. It's a far greater miracle, and it has greater significance than the Rocky Mountains, as an example.

I hope we understand that because sometimes we don't recognize what we've received from God. Sometimes we just don't grasp it to the depth that we should strive to grasp it even more so, thanking God that He and His Son dwell in us, that we have that power, that life, that spirit, that relationship, that we're able to have that kind of relationship and go to them in prayer.

To be able to be heard by God? You know, there are people who go up to a wall and write a prayer on a little piece of paper and stick it in the wall and then bow their heads against the wall, wanting God to hear their petition. And you think, we just know. We can go before God anytime, anywhere, and have that belief and confidence in mind that God has called us, revealed His truth to us, His plan to us, which is so incredible, things that the world can't see.

Even though writing it, I am dumbfounded at what God has given to us in PKG that's in that book. We know it as a whole. There are a few things in there that are added in the sense of additional things that make it stronger. But as a whole, we know these things. But the world doesn't. And we're at a point in time where God's getting ready to reveal it to millions of people. That's awesome! It's going to make what happened in Joshua's first coming seem so small by comparison.

What John the Baptist did is incredible! And the preparation for His first coming? But what's happening now because of what God is getting ready to do, because of what Joshua is getting ready to do, that finally, after all this time, after all the eras and eons of time, when the universe was being created, and then on this little planet, finally, mankind, and the blessing we have of being able to see God's entire purpose for it all. Awesome, awesome, awesome! And we're at the height of it right now in time. It should be incredibly moving to us.

Verse 23—Then, when He had gone into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things? Somebody ought to have just walked up to him and slapped the tar out of him right then and there. “You idiot! Are you blind? Even physically? And you claim to be who you are? The teachers of Judaism? The teachers of the Old Testament? And you won't acknowledge something that's staring you in the face that's so clear to people out here that have lined the streets and are laying out palms and clothing and so forth for Him to come into Jerusalem, and you won't acknowledge all these miracles had to come from God? What's wrong with you?!” Really!

They were so steeped in jealousy and envy and hatred, wanting to protect themselves and what they had, that their sight was totally clouded over, even on a physical plane. And yet thousands upon thousands were acknowledging He was the Messiah because they had to make that choice. Though God showed them these things and revealed these things to them, and a lot of them saw this matter of Lazarus and a lot of other things that had happened, thousands of people, they came to that point as God was letting them see— because of the magnitude of what was accomplished, of the miracles that were done – this is of God. He is! This is what they believed as He was coming in. He is the Messiah, the son of David. Awesome! That's what they came to.

Now, they could see that, all kinds of people. And Christ even points some of them out. Harlots. Tax collectors. On and on it goes. They believed! And they really had no excuse not believing. That's the bottom line. They're not going to have an easy time in the Great White Throne either because of that mindset and how they thought, the thinking that's in the mind.

“So, who gave you this authority?” I mean, that is such a stupid, stupid, stupid question. After everything that they had heard, after everything that they even witnessed? Because some of these came to the temple and were being healed right there! What man has ever done such things? How can a man do such things? No man can, unless they're of God.

Then Joshua answered and said to them, I will ask you one thing, which if you tell me, then I will likewise tell you by what authority I do these things. Awesome. **The baptism of John—where did it come from?** Pretty simple. “The baptism of John. Where did that come from?” **From heaven?** In other words, from God? **Or from men?** In other words, was it just John doing his thing?

Then they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we'll say, 'From heaven,' He'll say to us, Then why didn't you believe him? “If it's from God, why didn't you believe him?” **But if we will say 'Of men,' we fear the people. For all hold that John was a prophet.** And a far greater than a prophet like John was there. Though He was a prophet, He was far, far, far greater. Incredible!

So they answered Joshua, saying, We can't tell you. “We're not able to tell you.” **Then He said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.** He didn't say they were stupid, but I did because it was right in front of their face.

Then Joshua continued with another parable, beginning here in verse 28. And remember that all He was doing and saying is leading up to Passover. That's His entire focus. That's why He's there at this point in time. And just two days away.

Verse 28—Now, what do you think? A man who had two sons. And he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. But he answered and said, I will not. And then afterward repented and went. Then he came to the second, and likewise he answered and said, I will, sir. But he didn't go. Which of the two did the will of the Father? And they said to him, The first. And Joshua replied to them, Truly I say to you, that the tax collector and the harlots... Because they believed. There were a lot of them, and they're spoken of in scripture. Believed. Like Zacchaeus, a wealthy tax collector indeed, looked down upon by all because of the kind of job that he had.

...will go into the Kingdom of God before you. Because they're willing to humble themselves and acknowledge something that's true, that's standing there right in front of their faces. And they hear and they see and they say, "Yes, this has to be of God. He has to be of God." Pretty simple.

But when pride gets in the way? And that's what's an amazing thing. Sometimes I'm dumbfounded by how pride is so strong no matter who it is in human life. Everyone, as a whole, in human life, has pride and will be proud of some of the most ridiculous things in life that they have nothing to be proud of whatsoever in so many cases. And to think mankind is like that with such obstinance, it's kind of mind-boggling, but that's the human spirit.

Verse 32—For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe him, but the tax collector and the harlots believed him. Even believed John the Baptist, let alone Joshua. **...and you, having seen, did not repent and believe him.** So others were repenting. They were hearing what he had to say and they were wanting to be baptized, even with John. And again, He was far greater than John.

Verse 33—Hear another parable. There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard, and he made a hedge (or a fence) around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and leased it to the husbandman. In other words, everything that's needed there to be able to be successful in farming, in this type of farming situation. So, to the husbandman or the tenant farmers. **...and went into a far country.**

Then, when the time for the fruit drew near... Pretty powerful here, what it's talking about, because it can be taken in several different ways as far as the periods of time or who you're looking at. **Then, when the time of the fruit drew near...** In other words, time for ripened fruit and for harvest. **...he sent his servants to the tenant farmers that they might receive the fruit,** or in other words, the produce from it. Because that's the agreements that are given. There's a certain amount that was given and a certain part that they could keep for themselves in order to farm the land. So, there's always a portion in something like this when they're tenant farmers that would be given for living off the land that belonged to someone else.

Verse 35—And the tenant farmers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. So again, he sent other servants, more than the first, and they all did likewise to them. But last of all, he sent to them his son, saying, they will show honor to my son. So, again here, using Judaism and the priesthood and so forth, and those of the temple, and using this example first, in essence, for what we see and understand in what He was telling.

And so, finally, his son, speaking of Joshua, was sent. **They will show honor to my son. But when the husbandmen (or the tenant farmers) saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and let us seize on his inheritance. Then they caught him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the Lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?**

So again here, it starts out with an example here of something that we can easily see, and people do see as something that applied to Judaism and those people at that time, and to the Son of God, and so forth. But it applies to us as well because far greater is expected of God's people who have received of God's spirit and have, as it were, the ability to produce fruit in our lives, fruit that God wants us to produce, and a desire in order to grow, in order to become a part of His Family.

And yet there are people who have done exactly this over the past 2,000 years who have been a part of God's Church. Pathetic, sad, horrible, horrifying. Because what we have been given is far, far beyond in the sense of what God has given us to dress and to keep on a spiritual plane. His truth, His word. I think of the Apostasy. Dress and keep it. It's not just about physical land. For the Church, for God's people, it's about the truth. It's about the mind of God, the way of God. And to keep it, to build upon it, to grow, that's been given to us.

It wasn't given to them. It wasn't given to Judaism, though there are things they should have acknowledged and seen. But how much more important is this then to us?

Then they replied to Him, He will put those wicked men to a miserable death, and will lease the vineyard to other tenant farmers who will render (or give back) to him the fruit in its season. Then Joshua said to them, Have you ever read the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner? This is the Lord's doing, and it is amazing to see.

Again, apply it on a spiritual plane to the Church. Astounding, really, to see what's happened over 2,000 years within God's own Church, what happened finally with the Apostasy.

So, He says, **This is the Lord's doing. It's an amazing thing to see (to witness). Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation...** In other words, a spiritual one, Israel. ...**bringing forth the fruits thereof.** In other words, faithful tenants who will give back. True. But not all.

So, it still applies to God's people as well, and it's far more serious for God's people than it was for them. I hope we understand that. So, the example here of what was taught at this particular time was making it clear there's a transition from a physical Israel to a spiritual one. So, spiritual Israel that has the ability, the opportunity, the impregnation of God's spirit and life within them to do what the Jews weren't able to do, that we can do in producing genuine fruit? How much worse is it if we don't produce it? It's a heinous thing.

Verse 44—Then whoever falls on this stone shall be broken, but on whoever it shall fall, it will, it says, “**grind to powder,**” but that's not what the Greek is here. It's a word that means “**spread as a winnowing fan.**” So, in other words, there's a time of judgment that comes. There's a time of taking care of that which is not of the grain of the produce, but of that which is to be burned up. So, that's really what it's talking about here.

So again here, **Then whoever shall fall on the stone shall be broken.** It's about a willingness ourselves to humble ourselves before God, before Joshua the Christ, with humility, if you will, of spirit and ourselves to have self broken, to have it gone, conquered, overcome. That's what this is about. And those who won't, well, it says that stone is going to fall on them.

Then, when the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard the parables, they perceived that He had spoken of them. And although they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude because they looked upon Him as a prophet. So yes, there were those things that were pointed to them on a physical plane, but the teaching in God's Church, once people have God's spirit, how much greater are these lessons then to us to take them to heart. To realize we're on far more dangerous ground, if you will, if we're not seeking to do God's way and God's will and live the way of life we've been given.

And we can look at the Jews at that time and Judaism and think how atrocious it was that they didn't accept Joshua when He came, and it is atrocious. It is sick. But it's a lot sicker when we have the begetting of God's spirit. And hopefully, we're all convicted of that in a very powerful way. But not all are yet, because I still have to contact some to let them know there's no point in playing any more games. This is the end of it.

It's a hard thing to do, but it goes on and on and on, and God is cleansing the Body.