

We're going to continue on today on this 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread with this being *Part 4* in the sermon series entitled *This World's Passover*. And we're going to continue on in this for a while because this is that season of the year and it's important that from time to time God has us focus on specific things in scripture; and this year He's having us focus in a very strong way upon all the things Christ did as He was entering into Jerusalem knowing He was going to die as our Passover and those things that continued on during that period of time. So we have quite a ways to go here in some of this and we're going to continue forward because these are those things that He fulfilled and accomplished for every one of us and we need to be keenly aware and moved by those things when we see them.

Today we're going to pick up right where we left off last Sabbath and continue with the story. Jesus Christ gives much instruction and teaching during this period of time, especially in the last couple of days here before He gives of His physical life and that is taken on the 14<sup>th</sup> day later in the afternoon. Backing up to where we were, we're about to move from the 12<sup>th</sup> day into the 13<sup>th</sup> day because at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> day of course we understand sundown, as soon as sundown is there it's going to be the 13<sup>th</sup> and we're about ready to move into that period of time when they move toward the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem; only one day before the actual Passover begins.

Let's pick it up here again now in **Matthew 23** and continue on with the story. So much instruction that He gave toward the end of those things concerning the way the world is, concerning the way God desires us to be, wants us to be, and if we would desire a relationship with Him those things that we must live by and have deeply imbedded within us; and the only way it's possible is because of what He's getting ready to fulfill. Our Passover, in and through Him, because it's only through the forgiveness of sin that we can have a relationship with God, that God will dwell in us; and those are the things that Jesus Christ is zeroing in on.

**Matthew 23:16** – this is the period of time now when He's talking to the scribes and Pharisees, condemning them for the things, knowing full well what was in their heart and mind; knowing full well their attitude and mind and desire was to kill Him, to put Him to death; knowing full well that they're going to be instrumental in and doing just that before this is over with. And so He uses some very strong language in **verse 16 - Woe unto you blind guides who say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it's nothing;** in other words take an oath and speak of the temple area; that's nothing, **but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!** In other words now owes according to that oath. In other words; to them what's important is the gold. It's a mentality, a way of thinking – very carnal and they miss the mark, they miss the boat; they don't understand. And so He's telling them **...fools and blind: for what's greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold?** Should be able to see that, religious leaders, but they didn't see that, they didn't understand those things; they were more moved by the wealth, the gold. **And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever swears by the gift that's upon it, he is indebted.** In other words, now owes according to the oath. And so it's the same thing again, it's like whatever's placed upon the altar that that is what they're going to swear by or make their oath according to that – whatever they give.

And He says, **you fools and blind: for what is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?** ...that sets it apart and makes it special. Because even here when they were able to do various things you

couldn't just go out and have an offering anywhere; God was very specific in what He said to do. It has to be here in this location for all that this pictures and represents; it's not just the offering itself, it's to do it God's way and the way God says it has to be done. And like He said here, it's that which sets it apart for holy use and purpose...in a limited way, we understand that, but they didn't comprehend those things.

And He says in **verse 21**; it goes on to say here – **And whoever shall swear by the temple, swears by it, and by Him who dwells therein.** So if you're able to trace it back and understand what makes it special, what makes the temple special, what makes the altar special – it is God! God is the one who has established these things for the Jews, for the Israelites and so forth that they were to abide by. And so Jesus Christ is telling them, trace it all the way back – what is important in all this? And they didn't get it, they didn't understand it. And candidly the whole story, as He continues on here, is about the hypocrisy that exists in the world especially in religion, but also to understand that if anyone is to be able to comprehend and understand the things that He's saying, it's a matter of being able to have a relationship with Him, that otherwise people can't see and they can't grasp and comprehend the things of God; even those who claim to be religious and even those who claim to have gone through the scriptures, who know the scriptures, who maybe can quote the scriptures very well. It's not what it's all about.

And it goes on to say here then; **And he who shall swear by the heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by Him to sits thereon.** Now it's important to notice here that He is addressing some things that they had a great lack of understanding in, showing their hypocrisy, showing the attitude of mind here that they were blind, that they didn't get it, they didn't understand and throwing those things out at them, again, stirring them up even more. They had an attitude and He just helped to stir that attitude up in a deeper way to bring out what they really were even more so.

I think it'd be good here at this point to go back and look at... we'll come back here in a moment; but to turn all the way back to **Matthew 5** just to be reminded of what Jesus Christ did say about swearing, about promising through an oath, declaring certain things; because the reality is they weren't able to keep these things let alone in spirit and in truth; mankind can't, is not capable of doing. And so Jesus Christ at the very beginning in some of the teaching in **verse 33** says, **Again, you have heard that it's been said by them of old time you shall not foreswear yourself but shall perform unto the Eternal your oaths. But I say unto you swear not at all, neither by heaven, for its God's throne.** What power do people have? What makes your word better because you do something like that and because you say something like that? **...nor by the earth for it's His footstool, neither by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great king; neither shall you swear by your head because you cannot make one hair white or black.** In other words, what power do you really have? ...and what is your word? And that's the important point; He went right back to the whole crux of this and said, **but let your communication be yes – yes, no- no; yes or no. For whatsoever's more than this comes of evil.** Why? Because of how weak we are as human beings, how limited we are as human beings and it's better just to keep it to the point, yes or no, what is right or wrong in those particular cases there and not more than that when it comes to a declaration of an oath or a swearing or whatever it might be. So again here, it has to do with our limitations.

And so I just wanted to put that in there to make sure, to show you that it's not a matter of Jesus Christ earlier when He was talking to the Pharisees that it's okay to do. It wasn't okay to do. He's just showing their blindness and their hypocrisy.

Going back here to **Matthew 23:23 - Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** Strong words to tell someone like this point blank to their face...**for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done,** in other words the point being you should tithe, but how they went about it, what they did was the wrong manner; **and to not leave the other undone.** In other words, the things that were far more important.

It's easy to go through sometimes the physical aspects, of those things that we see when it comes to an outward show of things, the physical routine of things; but when it comes to how we truly think inside and how we live, especially in our attitude toward others and how we judge others – that's what God is concerned with. He's concerned with what comes out of the mind of why you do the things you do anyway in your relationships with others; and that's where the matters of the law come in. What's the law about? Relationships; relationship with God and a relationship with mankind, when you break down the 10 commandments: and those things have to do with judgement, mercy and faith. I'm looking forward to getting into some things that Jesus Christ says that I won't have time here today... but I think, what a tragedy; some of the very things that Jesus Christ spoke about at the very last night He was going to teach His disciples, some of the very things we go through on Passover and it doesn't take very long after we partake of the Passover that we miss the mark on what He had to say...and we're already having problems in relationships – even within the Church. I've heard of different things in different parts of the world already, different little rumblings here and there; and you think, "How long has it been now since we partook of the Passover?!" It's incredible what we're like as human beings and the battles we have. We have to keep fighting; but to miss the mark on some of these things, especially now in this time of our life, where we are in time, even so much more important how we live toward each other.

So again here, He's condemning the Pharisees because of *their lack of judgement* and not being able to have proper judgement or mercy or faith in dealing with people. Just like the matter of mercy... we're so quick to condemn, so quick to see someone punished or want retribution or whatever it is. He says, **You blind guides, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.** That took on special meaning for Laura and I when we were over in Israel because we have gnats in the States that gather in these little swarms; I don't know what you have here; but there's these little swarms and sometimes when the sun is going down they seem to come out more in the evening. You can see them because they're kind of clustered together and they're swarming around in a particular area and so you kind of avoid them because they can get all over you. They're kind of pesky because they're so small. You have the same type here? Gnats? Well, in the area of Jerusalem they weren't in swarms, they're just kind of everywhere and they're much smaller than the ones we have in the States and they would get in the hair of your arm and they'd get caught in there. You couldn't get them out. They'd get caught in your hair and it took on a new meaning because it was easy to get them in your mouth. You strain at a gnat, you don't want it to get through into your mouth and so they're really pesky over there and took on a brand new meaning when Christ was talking about this because He's giving that analogy here. Here you're trying to prevent from having one come in, and for them, most of them, a lot of them it probably would have been their thinking of eating something unclean. They don't want it in their mouth because then they're going to be defiled and yet God says, 'yet you swallow a camel', which is also unclean. The attitude of mind over there.

We saw an individual toward Passover there and they were trying to be very clean and they go to extremes sometimes. In this case here this family was sitting beside us at a table and the son pointed out that there was a dead fly on the table. We were seeing this commotion but we couldn't understand

them; it was another language, it wasn't Hebrew, but they were of another country but they'd come in for the Passover and the son was getting ready to do something about the fly and the father... it's like, "No, no, no, don't touch it!" And do you understand? The reason being is because it's dead. You're not to touch anything that's dead, or whatever, and they take it to extremes. And so here's this dead fly. So here they are getting ready for Passover and you can't defile yourself, you can't become unclean, by what their perception is of clean and unclean laws and the like – they wanted to be sanctified, purified to be able to keep the Passover that's coming up. And so the father puts on some gloves. It's like, to his family, "Watch this." And he goes through this ritual of getting these gloves on that he had with him and then he takes the fly... I don't know if he knocked it off, snapped it off; I can't remember if he just snapped it off or if he picked it up and dropped it off the table, or whatever; but he came to the rescue. I think, "The extremes that people go to sometimes to be 'righteous'." Incredible here!

And this is, again, what Jesus Christ was condemning them of. Because of their attitude, because of what they do...if they could only understand it. Here you strain at a gnat, you strive not to get something in your mouth...and I'm certain here it has to do with clean and unclean laws, again, your striving to keep something from getting into your mouth and even if not, nevertheless, you still end up swallowing a camel. That's the analogy He gives here.

**Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you make clean the outside of the cup and the platter...**all these rituals they would go through. All these have to do with religious ceremonies, services and attitudes they have about God and God's law that they didn't grasp and comprehend the spirit of what God gave to them. They carried things to an extreme and it was all very physical, all ritualistic to them and nothing but ritualistic. And so here's a case where it talks about how they clean various things and it says, **but within are full of extortion and excess. You blind Pharisees, cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter that the outside may be clean also.** It's like the ritual washings and so forth of cleaning your hands, or the things that they would do before they would eat a meal and so forth. And yet God is making it very clear that all that washing, what good is it if what's inside isn't right in how you live toward others.

**Verse 27 – Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** And so we have to be careful that we don't do things like this in our life. And the reality is sometimes we do depending on our personality, depending on what we're like. Sometimes we are hypocritical in things we do in life; and those are the things that God wants us to get rid of so that we're not hypocritical in how we live, but that we strive to be right, true with God in every way; in spirit and in truth. **Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.** These are strong words to say something like this to a group of people! "That's what you're like inside, just like a bunch of dead bones, that which is unclean!" And to them that was unclean...and to tell them that's what they're like, again, they obviously didn't take it very well and certainly didn't receive the correction; but God telling them exactly like it is. **Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Sin.**

I think of things we've gone through in the Church. We read something like this and if we're not careful it's easy to apply to others in the world that we see going around wanting to appear to be religious, but I've seen it in the Church in a great way and anyone who was in the Church before the apostasy occurred and was in it for any length of time... saw the same thing; hypocrisy and how people lived their lives, wanting to appear to be religious or righteous, and yet look what came out of us in time, came out of the

Body, came out of the Church. And so these are things for us to learn from and to apply to our life, to make sure we don't have any hypocrisy; that we're striving to be right with God in everything we do.

**Matthew 23:29** – again, these teachings take on that much more meaning and importance to us if we grasp what He's getting ready to do. These things take on a greater meaning and *importance* when we understand that these things that are on His mind have to do with the very reason why He's getting ready to die; so we can change and not be like that. **Verse 29 – Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the sepulchres of the righteous.** If they know there's a particular tomb of someone, of anyone...that things of times past, and some of those exist in Israel to this day of places where they believe people are; and the care and so forth He's saying that you will give to that on the outside in keeping it up and marking it as a special place. He said, although you adorn these areas and say, as it says in **verse 30 – If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them of the blood of the prophets.** Some of the things that some of them went through and how they were treated and mistreated. And He's saying although you go through this process of keeping these up nice in a nice manner and you say these things, "I wouldn't have been like that"...and He's showing here a characteristic of how we are sometimes. We look back in time and think, "I wouldn't have done those things. I wouldn't have been like that. I wouldn't have been one of those at the time of Christ who were crying out, 'Kill Him! Put Him to death! Release to us a thief instead; but kill Christ!'" And the reality is if we were part of that society, a part of that world, we would have done exactly the same things. That's what God's saving us from; from what we are as human beings.

**Verse 31 – Wherefore you are witness unto yourselves that you are the children of them who killed the prophets.** A lot of this is because of their attitude and mind. They're getting ready to kill Christ – *the prophet*, spoken of by Moses. Incredible! "You're a witness unto yourself." **Fill you up then the measure of your fathers.** "Do what you're going to do." **You serpents and generation of vipers; how can you escape the the judgement of gehenna?** Pretty strong words.

**Verse 34** - He went on to say, **wherefore behold I will send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them you shall kill and hang on a pole/stake, and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah.** This is going back and mentioning from the very first one at that point in time until Christ... from the very first one to the very last this is the way they've been. This is the way those whom God has sent have been treated through time; and making it very clear that's going to continue on; it's not going to stop. Says, **whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.** So they're going to fulfill more in what they do against God's prophets or teachers; those that are sent by God.

**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone them who are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you shall say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.** Amazing! He jumps forward in time here and shows that as a whole there are going to be people here who have a big change in attitude later on when they're resurrected from the dead and given physical life a second time. And what comes out of their mouth at that time is going to begin to change.

**Mark 12:41 – And Jesus was sitting over by the treasury and was watching how the people cast money into the treasury and how many who were rich cast in much.** That's the way of people sometimes – to be seen and this is what a part of what it was here, of different ones that would go by and cast in the things they did. And says, **there came a certain poor widow and she...** to me it's incredible all the things that Christ just continued to teach over and over and over again because these things were so weighing upon His mind, why He was there, what He was getting ready to do. To understand He was bringing in 4,000 years of history of what had happened to all the prophets...and nothing had changed. And 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have taken you in, but you wouldn't...' giving those things that have come from God, of how God has worked with the world through time.

So again here, now **Mark 12:41** – and so He was sitting over by the treasury and watching different ones and it says, **those who were rich cast in much money and there was a certain poor widow and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And He called unto Him His disciples and said unto them, Verily I say unto you that this poor widow has cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury.** So He's showing here the things that people as a whole never see, things that He talked about to the Pharisees and the scribes and an attitude of mind here that's something very difficult for us to understand as human beings; the spirit of a matter, or the intent. We generally just see the physical part of things from the outside; and He's getting to the core to help people to understand why we do the things we do, why we act the way we act, and revealing those things here, as an example here now, ...what's greater? Here a woman comes along and she casts in, as it says here, a farthing, two mites. A very small amount; but it was everything she had...everything she had at that point in time and the point being here... well, let's continue on...**He called His disciples to teach them. He said, this poor widow has cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury,** because some were casting in large sums and it was very obvious, **for all of them did cast in of their abundance,** of their wealth...it's not as difficult, **but she of her poverty did cast in all that she had, even all of her living.** So again, it's teaching a principle here of what is truly greater and how do we judge? How do we judge in our life? And those things He addressed earlier about righteous judgement, being able to judge properly. Too often people are moved by the physical, what they see on the outside and the example in this particular case here of how sometimes we would judge is by the quantity, not by the person and the spirit and what was really done in their life and what they did that can be far more meaningful at times.

And there's so much more preached on this particular period of time two days before the Passover. It continues on in **Luke 21.** God isn't concerned about the show. He isn't concerned about that which is easy for us to do as human beings. He's concerned about that which comes out of the inside and of the mind and how we deal with the various things around us in life. And so much of it indeed has to do with the spirit of mind and so often an attitude of mind of sacrifice in our own thinking and how we think. And those are the kinds of things we address when we come into God's Church. It wasn't meant to be easy for human nature to change because we have to dig down deep and God reveals to us the innermost part of our being when we do those things, when we go through various difficulties and struggles in life.

**Luke 21:5 – And some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones,** in other words they were moved by the quality of what was there, the expense that it took to build those things, to make those things as oftentimes we can as we're looking at architecture or various kinds of buildings that are there – and the temple was an astounding building in that part of the world, concerning the value and the wealth and the quality. **...and the gifts. And He said, As for these things which you behold, the days will come, in which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be**

**thrown down. And they said unto Him**, this was later, privately, as you follow the flow in other verses here, on the Mount of Olives that evening, **saying, Master, but when shall these things be and what sign will there be that these things shall come to pass?** And so again, we're very familiar with these things that are in Matthew 24. We spent a lot of time going through those things – matters of prophecy and so forth that Jesus Christ began to give even concerning what this was all about because it had to do with His return. He's getting ready to die – they didn't understand that. But He's getting ready to tell them about things that are going to take place in a particular time that they didn't comprehend when He even told them. Later they began to understand, through time, but even then they didn't comprehend those things fully because it wasn't for their time.

So let's pick some of this story flow up in Luke and continue on in **verse 8** rather than going into Matthew that we've covered so many times; said a little bit differently here. It's hard for us to grasp. This is difficult, because when we go through this we're going through a bit of a story flow here; but it's difficult sometimes for us to grasp what Jesus Christ was going through and what was in His mind and the *intensity* that was there as He drew nearer and nearer to the fulfillment of what He was going to do and His mind was very much upon the Church that was going to begin, upon those He was going to leave behind. He was sorrowful because of them and what they were going to have to go through in their life as some accounts come up with here later. He's looking forward then, about what this is all about and what it will lead to in the end, finally, when He's able to come back and do the things that He desired to do. We have desired in the Church of God to see God's Kingdom. People have desired to see that for a long, long time; and as we draw closer to it that desire gets greater. But I remember living in the period of Philadelphia during the time when Mr. Armstrong was alive...our desire was to see God's Kingdom come, the end of this age, the end of man's age; but how much more do we desire it now as we get closer and closer? It's growing within us! Well, Jesus Christ was filled with that and in a way that we can't even begin to comprehend. His desire to do those things that He couldn't do at that point in time. He came for a specific purpose – to die...but His return was to be much later.

**Verse 8 - And He said, take heed that you be not deceived for many shall come in My name saying 'I am Christ'**, coming in Christ's name, pointing to Christ. We see that in the Protestant world, we see it in the Catholic world... they don't talk too much about Christ, they talk more about Mary I believe. Now I wasn't a Catholic, but don't they talk more about Mary than they do about Christ? They point to Mary. But the Protestant world tends to point more toward Christ and talk about Christ and their ideas about Him, their stories and the like. And so He says these things are going to take place through time. 'Be not deceived by the different things that take place.' See, because what happened... there was an era of time that was mightily deceived; that had a horrible time because of this and that was the period of Sardis. They were bombarded the worst of eras by the protestant world, by this very thing here that Jesus Christ warned about; because at that particular time... if you go back in history and you come to a point in time where the Catholic Church is beginning and the true Church, yes, was on the earth, but small, not much of a threat to that growing Catholic Church but they still did away with people in the Church and other groups that might try to get started – anyone that opposed them. And then finally we came to a time in the 1500's and in through there – we came to a point in time of Martin Luther, Calvin, and different Protestant religions that started at a particular time. And all of a sudden we came to a time of technology too where Bibles were able to begin to be printed and because of that, of mass distribution, a tide was beginning to change...a lot of different religious ideas were beginning to pop up – it was no longer just the Catholic Church. You go to some places in Europe – Spain is a good example; we've learned more about that...that there are some people - when our son's gone down there, he's kind of a novelty because in that area he goes into all they know and have ever heard about is the

Catholic Church. They don't have a lot of Protestant churches there like you have here in Australia, and especially like we have in the States. Primarily it's the Catholic Church and so when they hear something different they're kind of interested a little bit, not a lot, a little; because of the difference.

And so this is what was taking place during the period of Sardis and this is why it was such a devastating thing to God's Church – because as time went along and the proliferation of knowledge if you will, of the Bible and different ideas that began to flourish out here, different groups had split off from each other, different ones that were coming out of Europe, different ones that were coming out of Great Britain because they wanted religious freedom, they wanted to be able to spread their ideas and The United States was primed for that. And here is a time period when the Church began to come along also into The United States and because of all these different religious ideas that were so strong at that time God's way of life began to take a horrible beating. People were able to be deceived during that period of time. They were bombarded by these things and we came to a point in time then when Mr. Armstrong had to be called because the Church had grown so weak it only had three primary doctrines left: the Sabbath; the name 'Church of God' – that it was God's Church, it wasn't Luther's or someone else's, and Tithing (1<sup>st</sup> Tithe). Those three things. And God said, you are dead and dying – spiritually you're dead and what you have is dying. So God raised up Mr. Armstrong to revive things and for the Church to continue on.

And so again here, the very things that Jesus Christ talked about – that these things would happen and that it would have its affect upon God's people. And He said, beware, don't let those things take place. Now later on as the Church, The Worldwide Church of God came on the scene, actually The Radio Church of God before that began to grow and so forth and all the literature that was out there...now we're at a period of time where communication is changing, later there's radio and TV, there's the printed press, there's 'The Plain Truth' magazine, there's all this literature you can get and when you're called into the Church and you're re-established in the doctrines that came through Mr. Armstrong to the Church – the Church became tremendously strong; and the ability to be deceived by Protestants became almost a joke. How can you be deceived by them now? How are you going to be deceived by Christmas and Easter? There's so much that's out there that we can see it very clearly. And the Church was given tremendous strength until negative change came from within...it wasn't from what was on the outside that began to work away at us, it's what started from within that began to work at the Church, once again, toward the end of Philadelphia.

But anyway, He's warning them about things that are going to come to pass through time. This was on His mind. *He knew what the Church was going to have to go through in time.* There were things He knew that God's people would have to go through in time; that God gave Him the ability to know, to see, things that were going to come to pass. How much? I don't know. But He saw enough...there were those warnings that were given here that came through Him to the Church. But again, very much upon His mind...*concern about suffering* that people are going to have to go through, continue suffering through...not just in the previous 4,000 years now, but in the next 2,000 years.

**And when you shall hear of wars and commotions don't be terrified, for these things must first come to pass, but the end is not straight away,** in other words, not yet to occur. It's been the way of the world. Wars and rumours of wars and fighting – especially with technology back then – they didn't have it like we do today where something can start and you hear about it immediately on the news. **Then He said to them, nations shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,** it'll just get greater and greater as the world becomes greater and more powerful and these kingdoms are going to rise against

each other and nation against nation; **and great earthquakes shall be in different places, and famines and pestilence and epidemics...**that doesn't mean it's the end! It's just been a way with mankind. The more man sins, the more these things have happened on the earth, and this is what He's pointing out.

And He says, **and fearful sights and great signs that shall be from heaven.** He's not talking about the end-time yet. He's saying these are things that are going to continue on...don't be shaken by these things when they happen. Because what happens in religion? That's why I used to get questioned about these things on radio interviews and so forth. "Well, what makes this different?" You can't give that to anybody. What makes the difference is... this *is* the end. *This* is the end. All the earthquakes don't prove it; all the fighting and the wars don't prove it; all the things that continue on, some of the things about the Trumpets – they don't prove it. They're a continuation and an escalation as time goes on here in the world; but they don't prove it at all in any fashion or form, just as much in the last 2,000 years – it wasn't time yet. Incredible! It's amazing what pushes people's buttons in this world and some things are written to push people's buttons; it's just the way it is. It's the way God has ordered it, has given it. Sometimes to test, to try – whatever we go through in life...to what truly is inside, what truly motivates us as human beings.

And so He went on to say, **but before all these they shall lay their hands on you and persecute you and deliver you up in synagogues and in prisons being brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake.** In other words things are going to continue on like they have with the prophets in times past and these things are going to happen to God's people in the future; they're going to continue on. And those things have happened. I think of Philadelphia...thankfully they didn't happen then. I think of Laodicea...they didn't happen then; this kind of thing. People weren't taken and beaten for what they believed and so forth. We have a lot of freedoms in the world in a world that considers itself to be 'better', and in so many ways it is better, isn't it? Democracy we call it. Still isn't God's. We see the problems, we see the flaws, we see the weaknesses, we see the hypocrisy, the lying, the cheating... and He went on to say, **and it shall turn to you for a testimony,** a witness. Whoever it is that lives at any time – you know what happens? You are a witness of the way man is... you're a witness of the way the world is. We are still witness of the way man is at this time and the things that have happened before; in different ages, in different times God has witnesses, people who have lived during periods of time of the way man is at any particular moment in time – over the past 6,000 years. Incredible!

And He says, **It shall come to pass to you for a testimony,** in other words a witness. **Settle therefore in your hearts,** in other words, **be at rest in your hearts; not to meditate before what you shall answer,** and so when things do happen, when you're brought before someone He said, "Don't take a long time worrying about it, thinking about how you're going to say certain things and so forth." Now these things *do* happen from time to time and not for the purpose of condemnation always, but again Mr. Armstrong had incredible opportunities from time to time, meetings with different ones and he gave what came to him as God's ministry does, whatever came to him. It's not something he had to fret about or worry about; some unique experience that would come along – God would give it. And that's what He's saying here; God will give you what you need. And that's the way it is with all of us when we come to a point in time... there are times when you're called upon; what you believe, what's in you, why do you do the things you do. It's not a matter of trying to think out how to give them the best answer because you're not going to be able to reach them unless God's in it for a purpose to do something; and if God's in it for a purpose to do something He'll give you what you need to say, He truly will.

How often have you been talking, have you been in situations where you have talked to someone... I've talked to so many people in God's Church like this... and situations that have happened in their lives where you'll be talking to someone; they ask you a particular question and I'll give you two examples here, two extremes.

The one is we want to give... "Oh, they asked a question, now's my chance." You know, you've been looking forward to this opportunity, you want them to see the truth – which is a desire we have for our relatives and friends and so forth, and all of a sudden you have someone, a co-worker or one of your friends or a relative asks you a question; and sometimes what we do is we give them the whole truck load. We're ready to unload the whole truck when really they just wanted a quick answer to something, maybe as a passing conversation or whatever, but no, no, this is our chance. And sometimes when you go through those things you find that you're pushing it. You don't feel comfortable, you're pushing something and you don't feel comfortable with it – there's not a right flow to it, it's not flowing properly and you're trying to come up with different things to get it in there and whatever...

The other example is, is when God's involved in it, when God has a purpose in it and someone asks something and all of a sudden things come into your mind, in some cases some things you never even thought about fully, sometimes a matter of scriptures that come to you or things of scriptures that come to you that at other times you have to go to a concordance to find them and all of a sudden they're right there at the tip of your tongue and you're able to speak and it just flows.

Those are two good examples of experiences that sometimes we have in God's Church that show whether or not God's in it or not. If you're pushing it and you're trying to continue to give and push and nothing's... it doesn't seem to be a right flow...it's because God isn't there – just us. Other occasions God is there because there's a purpose and a time that something's going to be given to an individual that's going to stick and come up at another time, maybe not until the Great White Throne, but God does the moulding and the fashioning. Sometimes we can get in the way if we push; and we could hurt someone and we can thwart what God may otherwise be doing in their life; we can actually turn someone away from, turn them off to something... that when God's in it there's a flow. It's a beautiful thing, truly is: and the more in tune you can become to those kinds of things the sharper you become in how to speak and how to talk and how to understand that which is true even in a case like this: that God gives us what we need when we need it and if it's not there, there's a reason for it; *it's just not there* so we shouldn't force it.

And so He's making it very clear here, telling them, **be at rest in your hearts**, don't be overanxious about something, a particular matter, **not to meditate beforehand what you shall answer**: as He gives the example here...sometimes the more we mediate and think about how we're going to do it... *it's us! It's the way I would do it!* It's the way I would say it. It's what I think needs to be done in a particular matter and when it comes down to it if God's in it or if God's not, what good is it going to do to give the truth?

**Verse 15** - it goes on to say, **For I will give you a mouth and wisdom**, there's nothing more beautiful when it comes from God, when it's a matter because God has given it to us, and everything we have that's true God's given it to us hasn't He? But to put those things together in a way that maybe can reach or help or stick with someone else... we just candidly don't know how to do that. We don't know what will reach another person, or what will stick in another person's mind. We don't know! And that's

why we have to rely on God to give us what is needed and if there's a flow that comes out God'll be in it, God's in it; and if He's not then don't push it. Leave ourselves as instruments in God's hand and when it's time it'll be there. It's an awesome thing; it truly is, the more we become attune to how God works in our lives and through our lives toward others. Says, **I'll give you a mouth and wisdom**, it's through God's spirit and it's just going to be there, not because of our intellect, not because of how we were able to think this out, how to put it all together... it's just how God does it and gives it. ...**which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist**. Even if there'd be some around who'd find fault in, the bottom line is they can't. When it comes from God, they can't.

Think of all the things that Christ said...they continually tried to come at Him and find fault with and find a flaw in and twist and distort; and they couldn't do it. Why? Because it's all from God. So all these examples of things we went through in the last sermon of what Jesus Christ continually was telling them was coming from God. Jesus Christ wasn't thinking about how to do it, or what's the best way to answer or whatever. He was fully at one with God and the words He spoke were fully from God. It's an awesome thing.

**Verse 16 – and you shall be betrayed by parents and brethren, relatives and friends;** isn't that amazing? What happens when you come into God's Church? Whew! Doesn't take long does it? The end hasn't come yet. That's happened to people during the entire last 2,000 years in the Church because of human nature, because of the way people are, because they can't see what you see, it hasn't been given to them and the carnal natural mind resists and hates the truth. It doesn't want the truth. It is not attracted to God, is not attracted to the truth. That's why the Protestant world has a different spirit that works there when people are attracted to those things; God's not in it; there are other things involved in it that draw people. But when it comes to the truth human nature fights it, resists it. What did you do when you first started learning it? Now sometimes, because of what you've gone through, you're ready – God's humbled you and brought you to a point in time where you're ready to receive it and you start seeing it and you accept it. Sometimes we go through a battle and like the scripture talks about, that one word in the Greek language when it talks about being called, it's the one of 'being dragged', He starts dragging you at first because you're not really wanting to go and it's like you're kicking in the dirt and trying to get a grip on so you can hold back. And that's the way we are sometimes. I've known of individuals who when they first read the book, one mate is excited about it and another mate gives them a pretty tough time and says some really nasty things about me and about the book and things that are written there. We've had some situations where all of a sudden, at a particular point in time, they began to see, their eyes were opened up and they quit kicking and fighting and resisting because God had a purpose in drawing them and bringing them along at that time.

And so we go through all kinds of things don't we? But we definitely experience this one, where other brothers and sisters, parents or children, or friends, or co-workers on the job... your life isn't the same with them anymore. You wish it could be; you desire that family be able to be a family; that you're able to be close to your family, but you can't give this way to them. That's in God's timing and God knows when that's best. And so what we desire to have we realize we really can't have it until they're of the same mind and then we understand when someone else is going to be called, whenever that time is, that that's when you're going to be able to have a *true* relationship with them, a *right* relationship with them.

And He says, **and they shall put some of you to death**. So that's happened in times past. Even relatives and friends have been the cause of some, in times past, of God's people having been put to death...and

that may happen in the future for a purpose and for a reason. **And you shall be hated of all men for My names sake**, not loved. When you turn to this way of life, when you start keeping the Sabbath and you go to your employer, “Not going to come anymore on Saturdays. Friday night...” See, in some places of the world when the sun goes down its like 3:30 in the afternoon. That’s pretty tough. You can tell your boss, “On Friday’s during the wintertime I’m going to be able to work up to 3:30 here and that’s it. I have to leave after that.”

“Oh really?! And for what reason?”

And then you tell them, and some people don’t just jump up and down and say, “Oh I think we’ll just close down then. I agree!” No, they’re not very happy about it and some people lose their jobs over it and have to go find something else. Amazing! ...**you shall be hated of all for My names sake**. All who are not called, all who are not drawn to this as a whole, there’s that which they don’t love, and if we understand how that word is used, we’re loved less, much less than what we were before.

**But there shall not a hair on your head perish.** That doesn’t mean... see sometimes we can misread scriptures. It already said that some are going to be put to death; so, **a hair on your head perish?** It has to do without... in other words, in the context here - without God’s presence and awareness. You are His and God knows *everything* that occurs and happens in your life. He’s *intricately* moulding and fashioning you every day of your life – every day we’re in the Church. We can’t even think like that. If we could, our conduct would be far better, the way we talk to people, the way we think. It doesn’t take me very long, I’ll just be real candid with you – when I’m in a crowd... doesn’t take me very long and I’m fighting a battle. Walking down this street the other day here after just having given a sermon, that last sermon that I gave a second time, and here we’re on the wharf area of the river there, Yarra River; beautiful area of Melbourne and they had a new hotel there that we were staying at for free, because of points. And so we were walking out down to this area where they have all kinds of restaurants and of course on a Saturday night you know what it’s going to be like, restaurants are going to be packed, going to be full and sure enough...but not only that, there’s this walkway, this walking area between the river and the restaurants; it’s quite wide; and people all over the place because of the weekend that we had this past week. And as people are prone to do, everybody’s thinking about themselves and no one else and it’s this thing about meeting people. You can have five people...they can be holding hands and thinking everybody else in the world had better get out of their way, and they’re going to just mow right through. And you’re expected to get out of their way and sometimes you get these looks. I remember one guy coming at me in a particular area there and he’s like this big macho heavy guy and he wants everybody to know it and his eyes just zeroed in on mine. It’s like, “You’re moving! I’m not! You want to hit this?” I moved out of his way. But that’s his attitude – it was all over his face, you know, and so what do I have to do? I have to fight an attitude of just loathing human nature, the way people are, the selfishness of human nature. I have to be careful then that I don’t respond in a wrong way to somebody – which I didn’t, but I had a battle. I let my wife know, “This is really irritating me.” The longer we go in time here, the more irritated I’m becoming by selfishness. It seems like its building in this world and it’s getting greater and greater. Maybe it’s because I see it more and more in life because of growth and so there’s a danger in that sometimes we have to be careful of; of how we treat others, how we think toward others and so that’s another area for us to grow in, we have plenty of them. But you have to be on guard, don’t you? You have to continually fight against your own human nature – every one of us does.

And so this scripture then is about God’s awareness, God’s presence. We’re always in God’s presence, He’s always aware of everything we’re going through; He’s right there with us. And it’s a matter of doing it right before God and if there’s a purpose in what we suffer through then there’s a purpose in what we suffer through and He’ll help us through it, He’ll be with us, He’ll bring us through. If the purpose is to

die...then we're going to die. That's the way it is. So He went on to say here, **in your patience possess you your lives.** 'In your patience'... a lot said there; patience and waiting for God, and waiting for the process of change in our life and continually fighting at it knowing you can never give up, you can never begin to coast even. *Coasting* is dangerous. *Laodicea* is a perfect example of that kind of mentality which can happen to anybody at any time. I've cried out about that many times, just in the past year here were times because I've seen it in the lives of people, even in new people that come along. You've got to be careful that you don't get into a point in time when you begin to kind of drift and coast. You've got to fight constantly for this way of life and don't allow that lukewarm spirit, that lukewarmness to enter into your life where you're not fighting for this way on a continual basis. You don't want to get to a point where you begin to coast.

And so Jesus is giving those warnings all the way through here telling about things that you can expect are going to happen. That's tough isn't it? When you first come into the Church and you hear about it, the sooner you hear about it in sermons or whatever, the more prepared you are, but sometimes you maybe don't hear a sermon right away, or don't read about it right away...that as soon as you start going this way people are going to begin to turn against you; and that hurts. It just candidly hurts when your mate or your parent or your child or your grandparent or your grandchild or your brother or your sister begins to loathe you for what you believe. Incredible! The suffering, the mind sometimes then...the battles we have in that area. It's a part of it, isn't it? ...and we learn, we learn what it's all about.

And so Jesus Christ all along the way here preparing the disciples for things to come because He's not going to be with them much longer and He knows it: and so much is being given here to help them to have a better understanding, when the holy spirit then is poured out, that all these things begin to flood into them and be given to them; that they comprehend the things that He was telling them here toward the end, the things He was filled with and wanted to give to them. That's why I think about the time we live in right now, how that I am moved by, excited by – because I know that God is giving us *more* in the sense of preparing and what's coming here. That excitement, that anticipation. I didn't have this several years ago or ten years ago, or twenty years ago to the degree it's here today; not from self – it's from what God gives because of where we are and that anticipation that God gives to us that *He* is wanting to share with us – *His excitement!* And what God was sharing in Jesus Christ at that time with the disciples was very powerful and what we're experiencing right now is very powerful, truly is.

**Verse 20 – And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies then know that the desolation thereof is nearer.** ...getting nearer. And so there are those things that have happened through time but there are those things that have happened closer to the end-time that things are indeed getting nearer and we see a kind of world that doesn't get along well – different wars that have been fought at different times and squeezing in on the area of Israel today, the area we call Israel today of the Jews that have moved there and of Jerusalem itself, it's capital, and other things that have happened in various wars – whether it be with Egypt and struggles with Syria and Lebanon and the Palestinians, the Muslim world and Judaism don't get along. And so indeed these skirmishes, these things that have taken place through time that are escalating and make it a hotbed are still with us today. But He said those things would be there, but know that this is getting nearer when those things are there. You go back a period of time when the Jews weren't even there – wasn't an issue. This wasn't an issue. This, of no relevance whatsoever; today it is when the Jews started coming back after WWII, wanted their own homeland, wanted their own place and the mentality of people then in the world and how they thought about some of those things and how that *they* think in some cases and even in the world of Traditional Christianity, that they're helping to be a part of bringing about prophetic events toward the end. It is toward the end,

they just don't understand what's taking place and why...because there's physical and there's spiritual, things that have happened physically that God gives to us as an example for things indeed that are spiritual and the spiritual part is far more meaningful if we understand that His primary concern, again, first and foremost is what? The Church, the Church, the Church – it's about the Church – always first and foremost about the Church through time. And so again here, we can look at physical things in the world around us and understand the analogies of those things that God uses, but the far greater focus is the Church. And if we understand spiritual Jerusalem, we understand where God is working and why.

**Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains and let them who are in the midst of it depart out and let not them who are in the countries enter in.** This happened in type physically – there have been physical things that have happened in this region of the world over and over again. There are those things that certainly happened in the 70's A.D., of a time when Jerusalem began to be ransacked, began to be destroyed – that region of the world. I've mentioned this before, where people went to Masada, to that area of the world to fight, to resist the Romans and all the killing and so forth that took place and certainly that would be a warning to the Church at that particular time. When you see certain things happening in Jerusalem – now is the time to get out; so a type of something physically that is fulfilled in a far greater way, has already been fulfilled in a far greater way for the Church. And we've talked about these things; when we understand what the spiritual part of Jerusalem, Judea is. He says, **flee to the mountains...**we understood what happened when the scattering took place in the Church and we did that, we didn't know what we were doing but we were able to look back later on even as Christ speaks here in some of these things that He's giving at this particular time; but we didn't know what we were doing. We were fleeing into different areas, some larger groups that were scattered out here, some smaller, and we had a horrible time we went through concerning the apostasy and what happened in the Church. **...and let not them who are in the countries enter therein.**

**Verse 22 – For these are the days of vengeance,** punishment; that's what it means; because of judgement...and when we understand a matter of the Church and what took place within the Church and the time period we live in, we're coming to a point in time which first began with the Church of a time of judgement. Much of the judgement in the Old Testament that comes upon the world is not just a time of judgement as to whether or not you're going to be in God's Kingdom, it isn't just a matter of a judgement of eternal death as an example, or of the period of time of the Great White Throne, of a time of being judged when you're given the opportunity to live by God's way of life. There is that which has to do with punishment that has to do with eternal death, yes, but before that takes place there is also that spoken of that's about the end-time: punishment; man's rule for 6,000 years and what God is going to do upon the earth when He allows certain things of judgement to begin to enter in. There are things that are going to begin happening, that are happening that as that increases it's a matter of God's judgement and punishment upon the world, allowing the world to do this to themselves in so many respects; and the spirit world as well to be involved in it until the very last day when God Himself intervenes and destroys; on the very last day, it's an incredible thing to understand, on that one day God is going to destroy much of the earth...more destroyed in that day than any other; and in some cases more on that day than many months of time – in what God does, because now it's time for His Son to reign and He's bringing about an end to man's rule and to what man has done to the earth: though He's going to destroy those who've been destroying the earth...after 6,000 years. Incredible!

He went on to say then, **for these are the days of punishment,** in essence because of judgement, **that all things which are written may be fulfilled.** Things to be accomplished; things that must come to pass. And all this is a story building up to the very thing they wanted to know: they were around the temple

area, they were looking at all the magnificence of the temple and then they left, they went to the Mount of Olives and then they came to Him privately, away from the crowds and they asked Him, “When shall these things be? When are these things going to be done?” ...the end of the age, or the end of whatever... and the different way they ask it and the way it’s recorded there in Matthew, Luke and Mark and so forth. And this was His response through time of things that were going to take place.

Dropping on down to **verse 34**, let’s notice...an admonition He gives – **And take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting**, a warning for all time for the Church, for God’s people; in other words – partying, excessive focus on physical pleasure. Don’t get caught up in the world, in the pulls of the world. I’ve known this to happen to people in God’s Church, who after a time they let down and go back into the world or get mixed up with the world or begin to rub shoulders with society again and the kinds of things the world does when it comes to “partying” and so forth, and get their eyes off the focus that God wants us to have it on. And those kinds of things lead people away. He said...**and drunkenness, and the cares of this life**; what are the things that we have seen, that we’ve been witness of that take people away out of God’s Church. These things...the cares of life. We get so consumed with family, more than with God and with what God’s doing in our life. We raise something up like an obelisk, like idolatry; and we can raise something up and begin to be moved to that as consuming our life rather than God and God’s truth and what He’s given to us. What is more powerful and precious and mighty than what God has given to you to live and dwell within you in your being? A portion of Himself. How many have had that opportunity in 6,000 years, to experience that? To experience having a portion of God dwell within them? Very few. How awesomely blessed are we, above all people on the earth through time? Can’t even begin to measure that; and yet it’s hard for us sometimes to grasp that because we are so *physical* and so *physically oriented*! And so we *allow* distractions in our life that carry us away; jobs, employment, whatever it is that comes into our thinking that begins to take us away. And we let those things consume our life and they just occupy our time and we’re worried about them instead of where are we in our growth, in our relationship with God and *are we putting the Church first? Are we putting God first? Is this way of life first for us?* Only we can answer that, each individual can only answer that in their own life; and then it’s reflected by the things we do and by how we act and by how we respond to what God gives to us.

And those are the things then that Jesus Christ is admonishing. He’s crying out. He is pleading with His disciples...with us. That’s what He’s doing. The very reason He died, and the warnings that are there so that we know what to watch out for, so we know what to be on guard against. Because as you go through some of these stories here, we’re going to go through some more here as we go along, but so much of it ends up with being alert, being on guard, being watchful...that’s what He’s leading up to here. And so He’s saying here, don’t get caught up with surfeiting, with drunkenness, some lifestyle that sometimes people are drawn out of; they start imbibing of it a little bit in the Church; they get back into their little bit of their old routine of things that they came out of and those things can carry us away back into that party life, whatever it might be, cares of this life.

I’ll just say that I still see these things in the Church today. We haven’t changed. We’ve improved immensely. We’ve grown immensely. We have been given so much more – immensely so from God in this end-time, but human nature is still human nature and these things still exist. They have *always* existed in God’s Church and they still exist; not as much as in times past... I’ve seen tremendous growth over the past many years here, past three years especially... and great changes people have made in these very things here that Jesus Christ is warning about; but they still exist and that’s where we have to fight.

And so He says, if you do these things, for the essence of the teaching here He's given, **and so that day come upon you unexpectedly.** So He's talking about the end of an age, but He's talking about a day that can come upon you unexpectedly – when He comes, when He returns, when He's here. And it doesn't matter when it was through time – this is not just about the end-time, it's about all time, the last 2,000 years in God's Church. If it was a hundred years after the death of Christ the warning is still there; if you get caught up in these things then that day is going to come upon you unexpectedly. What happens? Because you can lose spiritually everything you were given. You can *fall asleep* like so many have done in this age, and fall asleep spiritually. And Jesus Christ hasn't returned yet, but for thousands, tens of thousands He's come already...if we understand what Jesus Christ is saying here. He's already come, unexpectedly so, because of what took place in their life and what took place in my life; if God hadn't awakened me I'd be in the same situation. But tens of thousands of people have to wait until a resurrection to continue on now, to be able to be on guard again, to be spiritually alert and on guard again because they have lost what they were given.

**For as a snare shall it come on all them who dwell on the face of the whole earth.** So the reality is when it does take place it's going to be as a snare, a trap to the whole world – but so is it for every individual that's called into God's Church if he's not watchful and alert and on guard...and He'll come as a trap and a snare because you start doing those kinds of things that are not of God and we begin to get farther and farther away from God and we begin to get weaker spiritually – whatever the things are that consume our life besides God, besides the truth, besides God's way of life – other than what He's called us to change in. And after a while it can be like a giant trap and we're there and there is no way out. We can get to a point where we're so weak and so far gone we have to wait.

Notice what He says then, **watch you therefore**; watch! Be spiritually alert, spiritually on guard; that's what this is about. ...**and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass.** I remember some having given sermonettes, things that I've heard in times past, speeches or whatever in College; but I've heard this before where some have quoted this very scripture saying we're to watch and pray so that we can be accounted worthy to escape. That's not what you're to pray about. "God please count me worthy to escape these things." That's not what it's saying. Things depend on language so often about where you're putting the emphasis if we understand the spirit of what God is saying and it's not a matter of... there's that whereby we're going to be accounted worth by God, but what do you do? You *watch* and you *pray* so *THAT* because of what you're doing in a relationship with God you'll be able to grow and change and conquer and overcome and be spiritually strong that God *will* account you worthy, see, and to escape those things. It doesn't matter what age you live in. Those that lived in Thyatira, Pergamus, it didn't matter...all the way to the end.

So we're to watch! Something that God gives us charge to do in our life, to be spiritually on guard, to be spiritually alert, to heed the warnings that are given here; **and that we might be able to stand before the Son of man.** This is *awesomely* important then to the first group of those who are going to be resurrected when Jesus Christ returns because this is where the emphasis is primarily – at His coming - because all those who have been called in time into the Church are those that their desire, what they're to keep their eyes upon is the return of Jesus Christ so that they can be resurrected and be before Him when He returns. And then obviously the rest of the plan continues on through the Millennium and on toward the Great White Throne.

**Verse 37** – He goes on to say... that **to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man**, that's the desire, **And in the day time He was teaching in the temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount of Olives***. Again, it's starting to recap the 12<sup>th</sup> day and the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> day after sunset.

**Verse 38** – **And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, for to hear Him**. In other words in the daylight portion of the 13<sup>th</sup>, the things that continued on in time as He continued to preach. It doesn't cover a lot of those things that were spoken in that particular time period as we'll see when we go through some of this.

But let's pick up the story again now in **Matthew 24**, the one we're probably the most familiar with, that's quoted most often; referred to as the 'Olivet prophecy' so often by some. Going to look a little more closely at what Christ was saying about Him coming in the Kingdom, His second coming, and this was again, on that night of the 13<sup>th</sup>. **Matthew 24:30** – **and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory**. So the timing? When this begins to happen we're there – this is the point in time that it leads up to and very specifically, it's on that Day of Pentecost, the very beginning of the Day of Pentecost here when some of this begins to take place, the resurrection that takes place then of the 144,000. It says, **and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a Trumpet and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other**; and so this is a specific time period here that it leads up to.

**Verse 32** – **Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when its branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves you know that summer is near. So likewise you...** in other words there's a time span that's going to take place here, but you know full well, He's saying here in essence, that summers coming. You see these little buds. I like that time of the year when they start coming, because indeed you know it's going to start getting warmer as you go through the spring of the earth. Down here in Australia it's the opposite, isn't it? You're entering into the autumn. That seems so strange, but it's reversed in the southern hemisphere obviously. But for us it's the spring time, summers coming. It's the reverse in seasons. **So likewise when you shall see all these things know that it's near, even at the doors**. So it's there, it's almost upon you. What is He saying here when He says... All of what things? What is He talking about? Is He talking about when you see this final thing here that we just read about in verse 30-31, the sign of the Son of man in heaven and the great resurrection? By that time it is right upon you, it's there. He's talking about a period of time, of something that's going to take place, that's going to become more obvious that we're almost there; summer's almost here – but it takes a while for it to get here. So He's not talking about something that happens instantaneously, He's talking about over a period of time when it become visible, if you will, to His people, to the Church.

And these are the leaves on the tree that Jesus Christ is referring to; and this is the beginning of the end before summer is here, back in verse 14 through 16. This is when it began in a very powerful way; something that God gave in a *great* way to the Church that's akin to the leaves when they begin to bud on a fig tree.

**Verse 14** – **And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come**. God let Mr. Armstrong know we were at the end of time. He let Mr. Armstrong know that that was the 6<sup>th</sup> era of the Church; didn't fully know what the 7<sup>th</sup> era was all about, thought that maybe the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> would co-mingle together in time. And that wasn't the

case; because of different ideas and so forth because God hadn't given it; and so the Church would always look at different scenarios; what could it all be about, and what best fit into what we knew to that point in time and sometimes those things would change as God revealed what His specific purpose was, or what something specifically was.

And so, what a powerful thing. We saw something happen, some of us lived through a portion of that, the latter part of the gospel having gone into all the world, unto a witness to all nations, we saw 'The Plain Truth' get to the power it did. A *small organization* as far as the world was concerned. That's why some religions hated us so much. They were *huge* in numbers compared to us. 150,000 worldwide, the largest it ever became counting children, entire families and everything, not baptized members; but that's counting everybody that was associated with the Church, that was a part of; and we lived through that period of time, we saw those things come to pass, and a witness to the nations in a very powerful way, and then we saw toward the end, even more powerfully, Mr. Armstrong going to world leaders. Awesome what took place, because in so many of those cases it wasn't a matter of being able to go to the people, it was a matter of it had to go to leaders and then it was their responsibility whether that was received. And the whole witness of the world was no one accepted it, no one wanted the truth except those specifically whom God called; some called to be co-workers who were drawn to it and attracted to it – they received a portion of help to be drawn to that, but not more than that. There were those who were drawn specifically to be moulded and fashioned to become a part of the 144,000. There were others brought to a point in time to be vessels of dishonour. That's what happens. It's God's doings. Vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour and how are we to tell our God, "That's not fair!" Because that's what human beings think like.

The point being is that God is always righteous and just in everything He does and how He deals with us. That's why I marvel at some of the things that God gave in the book there that has to do with these very things of what happens at the end-time and why and how and what God does with human life. He gives us the choices; *we* make the choices, *we* carry the responsibility for the choices we make. He doesn't *make* us; He doesn't *force* us to do things. He brings us to a point, in many cases obviously to conversion; and as an example then in what happened in Laodicea, many people that were brought to conversion at that particular point in time – they had an opportunity of a process beginning within them. We all did; of God dwelling in us. We always had a choice.

But a large number of people were drawn to fulfill things that God was going to fulfill prophetically, an apostasy that had to take place; and because of human nature God knows what we will do under varying conditions in the world. He *knows* what we will do. He *warns* us about falling asleep. He *warns* us about becoming lukewarm. But what did we do? We became lukewarm and fell asleep. Whose responsibility was that? Ours. It's our choice. We were warned. We were told. God didn't *make* us do those things. He gave us opportunity. *We* have to accept the responsibility. I had to come to a time when I accepted responsibility and say, "*I didn't listen! I didn't watch! I wasn't on guard! I didn't see what God told me and warned me about.*" All I can do is repent and say, "Father forgive me." Because it's sin on my part – what I did – and accept my own personal responsibility. God didn't *make* me do those things. I can't blame God for the wrong decisions and wrong choices and the bad environment around me. The world has always been a bad environment, but with God's favour and God's help you can change and you can grow and you can be alert and you can be on guard and yet every one of us in Laodicea fell asleep. Every one of us!

And only because God had a plan and a purpose then for vessels of honour and for vessels that He was going to raise up to do a job, to be a part of something, and to complete the 144,000...and also to do a work toward the end-time – God had mercy on some to bring them into, to shake them up, to bring them to repentance. But again, He had to *intervene* to bring us to repentance! He had to *intervene* to keep us from being destroyed. He had to *intervene* at different times to shake us and awaken us to help us to see what we had done; by His mercy and by His grace. *It wasn't owed to me! It wasn't owed to us!* But it's amazing to me sometimes human nature, how quick we are to point a finger at God and say, "Well, that's just unfair God...that's just so unfair that I'm in my situation!" If anybody ever feels like that I feel sorry for them. "So unfair that I have to carry this burden. It's so unfair that I have to carry this weight. Woe is me!" When God has given us the greatest riches that any human being could ever desire...and that's God in us. What could be greater than God Almighty to dwell in human life, to dwell in you. And He opens that door up for us to accomplish that. We just don't understand, so often even when God has called us – we still don't *grasp* the magnitude of God Almighty; of His mercy; of His love; of His kindness to us, because we're so carnal, so filled with human nature. We are so physically oriented in our thinking. That's where the battle is, isn't it? Awesome!

And so, again, all these things on the mind of Jesus Christ because they're very much on the mind of God Almighty that there are 2,000 years to go; and an incredible thing is about to take place – His own Son is going to have to die so that the greatest riches a human being can *ever* attain to, could *ever*, *EVER* be given, that the Great God of the universe would dwell in them and not only that but we would be able to have a dwelling in us to a point where we are impregnated with a life that begins to grow and begins to change, to a time that when we get there we can actually be born then into the very Family of God. And we, candidly, don't get it. You can't grasp that. I have it by knowledge, but I cannot grasp the magnitude and the glory and the might of that – yet – what it means to be in God's Family. I'll begin to see that and understand it when I'm there; but before that it's only by knowledge and inspiration that God gives in your mind because you've never experienced it. What do you have to compare with it? We're so limited as human beings. It's awesome! It's incredible, it truly is.

And so again, all these things on the mind of God Almighty, that are coming through to the disciples through Jesus Christ...and very much on His mind, in His being, because everything in His being is everything that God gives to Him; at one with God in ways we can't comprehend...because we've never experienced it. We experience a little bit once in a while in our lives. Amazing! Can't have it constantly; can't experience it 24 hours a day. Wish we could...but we can't. That's a part of growth, conquering and overcoming.

And so the gospel was to be preached in all the world as it says, **as a witness into all nations, and then shall the end come.** Again, the witness being that the whole world, even when it's preached in all the world – everybody rejects it except those whom God specifically draws out of it and calls out of it.

**Verse 15 - When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place...**you know when I saw it? I knew that I saw it much later, after it'd already happened, as I looked back I see what happened. You look back and, "I see what happened. Now I see it." When you see it spiritually. When I was actually going through it I was in turmoil, my life was in turmoil. It was hard. I can't even begin to convey that except for people who went through the same thing...that the horror of what was happening all around us...that something like this could happen in God's Church. That's why people began to ask the question, "How can this happen in God's Church? If it's *God's Church* how can this happen in *GOD'S CHURCH?? IT'S GODS!!*" And that finally led us to an

answer a little bit later, led to an answer that, “You’re the one that let down... that’s why it happened. That’s how it happened in God’s Church.” Incredible! And then as we began to accept personal responsibility we began to see that *we did it, we caused this, we caused all this to come to pass.* We didn’t stand like we should have. We weren’t able to stand like we should have...and on and on it goes.

And so, **when you therefore shall see the abomination...spoken of by Daniel the prophet...**when I finally came to understand who the individual was, began to preach about it...it was some time into this period of time. It had already happened quite a ways before and finally began to understand what had happened to us and why. ...**when you see it stand in the holy place**, the holy place- the Church of God, an abomination; that which is going to work to destroy the Church. Incredible! ...**then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains.** Well, we’d already fled. We didn’t even know what we’d done until later on; we were able to look back and say... “Fled into the mountains.” Didn’t know where I was. God had mercy on us. We were able to continue on for 3½ years. Satan wasn’t allowed to have us during that period of time. We were protected from him in our ignorance and in our weakness.

Those were the leaves on the fig tree. That was the beginning, summer is getting closer. We didn’t know when. Still didn’t know when; it’s just getting closer. We’re on a countdown, we’re getting closer. We didn’t even know that that *was* the countdown. Isn’t that amazing? We didn’t know that what had happened when this took place in verse 15 was the beginning of a countdown – the 1<sup>st</sup> Seal of the book of Revelation was opened and we didn’t even know it until God revealed it later up the line and let us know that was the first. And we’ve been in the second and the third, and the fourth...incredible!

Over and over again, things that Jesus Christ gave that was to carry the Church into the following 2,000 years leading up to the time He would finally return to this earth.

**Matthew 24:33** – going back to that flow...**so likewise you when you shall see all these things know that it’s near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.** Now some, who have lived in this generation, this time period, whatever this is specifically referring to – there’s been a lot of thought about this. But God making it very clear here it’s not going to be a long time. Have there been people that have died? Yes. We’ve had people that have died year by year as people get older in the Church. But there are those that are going to see it through, God makes it very clear, and it’s not going to pass away – we’re there.

**Verse 35** – **Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knows no one, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.** That causes a bit of a consternation on the part of some people; and so Jesus Christ is letting them know nobody knows when that is – only My Father in heaven. It wasn’t even given to Him to know when it is. He didn’t know and He said the angels don’t know. Only God the Father... it’s His to know the time and God had to bring us to a point in time where we were reminded of how He works and how He reveals things in His time...that before He does anything He’ll reveal it to His servants the prophets and it’ll be given. But He won’t do anything until that time. And so we just happen to live at that time and people don’t really want to know that answer. They would rather stick to that one and say, “No one could ever know.” And you think... “You think you’re going to know finally?” Well the sad thing is they won’t. When Europe does what they’re going to do and 10 nations come together – we can see now more clearly how that there are even people in the scattered Church who just aren’t going to accept that as being what’s spoken of in Revelation. And when China does what it does, there are going to be people in the scattered church who don’t believe that this is it. Astounding that the human mind could be so resistant, so defiant.

**Verse 37 – But as the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** Now, who knew or believed what was coming even back then? Only one as to whom God had given it...the world didn't believe it, not even his own sons really fully believed everything. It became obvious through time here they were moved to work with their father; I don't know if it was just a matter of family and employment, I don't know. But Noah was the one who was moved and motivated by God to do these things and certainly as it goes on to say, **For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,** in other words, this is the way the world is – it'll continue doing that until it can't do it any longer. People are going to continue to go about their lives, try to have reasons and excuses why things are happening the way they are. When the world is going through World War there are still going to be people eating, drinking, having parties, giving in marriage and life just goes on. People will excuse it away. They're going to hear things about this being of God and they're going to laugh it off and scoff at it and make fun of it in Asia and Europe and so forth. Fewer and fewer in scattered Israel are going to mock and make fun as time goes along; but as a whole these things continue because this is the way human beings are.

**...until the day that Noah entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came;** so even then, when they got in the ark, "There he is." You know, that had to be quite a show to the scoffers. I can't imagine having lived at that time period. I can't imagine seeing and witnessing something like that...this huge thing of construction - out on dry land to boot. And seeing something this massive being built...in that time it had to be awesomely impressive. I don't know what else would have been akin to it at that particular point in time in history. And you see something like this that's built out there, a family doing it decade after decade; decade after decade building on this thing. And then all of a sudden here all these animals start coming and people had to be certainly talking about that. That had to cause some kind of different thinking to take place. Not enough to change them, but again, they came and Noah's family had to start corralling everything and feeding everything because you have to start feeding right away from the very first day they started getting put on there. And then all of a sudden the ark's door's is put up and the pitch put on it to seal it. And then finally the rain starts coming. And it wasn't until that moment, right to the very end, that it became evident. Incredible!

**And knew not until the flood came and took them all away;** then that ended it. **So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** There are going to be those things that are going to happen right up to the *very last day*; of human beings who ignore, who fight, who resist, who mock, who ridicule God. But as we get closer and closer, becoming evident that God's going to move things in a very quick way upon the earth, quicker and quicker as we get closer and closer to the very end.

**Then,** in other words 'at that time' is what the Greek is saying here, **there shall be two in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.** So there's been a lot of talk within the Church over the years as to what this is talking about when there are things it could be referring to after the point in time of individuals who work side by side and it really doesn't matter whether it be a matter about the Church or a matter about the world at the end-time; the point being is there are those in relationships, there are those in working conditions, in close family, or whatever it might be and can be right beside each other and when it comes down to it – one will make it and one won't. One will survive and the other won't...and that's how Christ leaves it here. **Two grinding at the mill; one shall be taken and the other left.** It's the way it's been in God's Church; not that it's a 50/50 split, that's not what it's talking about; just showing that it doesn't matter whether it be in family or on the job or wherever, there are going to be situations arise, like for the Church, that

there would be some who would go to God's house side by side, an example there, some that would be taken and some who would be left, some who would continue on and some who couldn't... or at the very end when things take place on the earth.

So again, the admonition is here, the point being in all this, Jesus Christ said in **verse 42**, again, the same thing, to watch...**Watch therefore**, that's what counts, that's what's important. **Watch therefore for you don't know at what hour your Lord does come.** And that's the whole point of what Jesus Christ was saying. And it's not important the specific time, the specific day, the specific year for the past 2,000 years, for the Church, as it has been about listening to what He had to say about the importance of being alert, spiritually on guard all the time. That's what's important. That's what counts. That's why I cry out so often about fighting. You've got to fight for this way of life and you can't let up in your fight. People that are coming along that are new... you've got to continue to fight; you can't quit. You've got to keep at it. It doesn't stop. If you want this way of life, and that's something you must show to God as well – that you want to fight for it, that's what's in your heart and that's what's in your mind.

**But know this that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would have come He would have watched.** Even if you know the exact day; if you have a certain belief it's the exact day – that doesn't mean you're going to be there, it doesn't mean you're going to make it, doesn't mean you're going to change, doesn't mean you're going to overcome, does it? It's how you live every day of your life, that you don't cease to watch and be alert and be on guard. That's what's important. **And so if the good man would have known in what watch**, in other words what time of the night, because the watch had to do with the time and the hours of the night **that someone would come.** In the daytime they called it the hour, during the particular hour of the day; but at night they called it the watches because there were people who were on guard; there were people... they used an example here of sentries or people who were at the entry of a city or a town or whatever – at the gates and they would have sentries, guards who would watch and be on guard throughout the night, like in the military against enemies and so forth. And that's what Jesus Christ is giving the example of because we live in the night. This world is filled with night and we have to be alert, to be in the day, to stay in the day. We have to watch and be on guard. **And so if the good man would have known he would have stayed up and would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken up. Therefore be you also ready.** It's an attitude of mind, it's the way you think and how you live your life. **For in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes** for you... and so that's been a strong warning over the past 2,000 years. Now we come to a point in time where it's all coming together because He's literally returning, not just spiritually returning, in other words, for us in our life as to whether we watch and don't cease to watch and be on guard.

**Who then is a faithful and wise servant**, beautiful verse here; because so many haven't been, because so many haven't been faithful to what they've been given; a faithful and a wise servant. The analogy of the parable of the 10 virgins, being wise virgins: it wasn't enough that some were wise and some were seeking to be filled with the oil and going through the routines of things they needed to do like prayer or study or whatever it might be of a part of life...it went deeper than that. It went to the point here of being faithful, watchful, alert, on guard as a part of it. **Who then is a faithful and a wise servant.** Faithful with what God has given to us, **whom His Lord has made him ruler over his household to give them meat in due season.**

Let's continue on here with **verse 46 – Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He comes shall find so doing.** I hope we understand that when it's talking here, it's not just talking about His eventual actual

return in time. This has been something that has been good for God's people for the last 2,000 years to live by because when you die He has come. Whenever your life has been in the last 2,000 ...for people who have lived and died in the Church, or in the environment of the Church; because not everyone died *in* the Church. There are people, even now, who are going to die, who have to wait a thousand years, who aren't going to be in the resurrection. So, **blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He comes shall find so doing.** Practicing, living – that's what it means. Doing what He said, being watchful.

**Verily I say unto you that He shall make him ruler over all His goods, but and if that evil servant shall say in His heart, 'my Lord delays His coming'...** Attitude of mind, in other words, by how he lives – he's not alert and not watchful – and it's just a matter of time now, more concerned about time and so forth as so often has happened in God's Church... because what happens then – we don't think that way, that **my Lord has delayed His coming;** it's a matter of the attitude of mind and how we think in everything that God has given to us; and it changes our behaviour toward others. That's what He's showing here when we're not watchful, when we're not alert, **and shall begin to smite,** word means 'to strike out at, to mistreat' **his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken.** A choice. When a person begins to be more consumed with the cares of this life, the cares of this world... whatever, rubbing shoulders with this world, family in the world, job in the world, whatever it is that's in the world that sometimes we get consumed by and that takes over and becomes more important than God. And we have to be careful – there's a balance in that, isn't there. God is always first. That's the balance. God is first. Everything we're motivated to do is because God is first. That's why I've admired, from time to time in various regions of the world when I know there are individuals that have made such comments...I think of a young person not too long ago making a similar sort of comment in the U.S. when they were talking about their desire to go out and get a particular job, to have a job because of their *desire* to give to God's Church. What a spirit! What a heart! What a mind! Because his desire was to be able to be able to produce to give to God's Church, to be able to do what the Church is doing in a more effective and more powerful way. What a spirit! What an attitude of mind! To be productive in order to give more to the Church because the Church is first! That's the kind of thinking we're talking about.

So if everything you do is about the Church, in other words, about your calling, about your fellowship, about your brethren, we're going to have a different attitude toward one another and the way we think about one another. Our keeping close to each other, especially since we're so small and so scattered... keeping certain relationships there, in other words, times that perhaps we pick up a telephone or send an email and keep that relationship there because we treasure it, because it's important to us.

But it says here the other attitude of mind is, **shall begin to smite/to strike out at his fellow servants, to eat and drink with the drunken,** sometimes we get consumed with various things and time goes on; especially the longer someone's been in the Church, sometimes this can be more dangerous to them because we can begin to let down if we're not careful in our relationships toward one another. We begin to forget what it's like, that you shouldn't ever have a word come out of your mouth that speaks ill of a brother; that to do so is a sin and cuts you off from God. That's what it's talking about here. Such an attitude is one that basically is telling God, **my Lord delays His coming,** in other words, God isn't the focus like He should be in our minds, in our thinking. Not sobered by the reality of the importance that God is there, in our presence.

So again here, our behaviour...God is so concerned about our behaviour toward each other in the Body and if we see the Church and if we see Jesus Christ *in* the Church, if we see a relationship that we have with Jesus Christ...isn't that what so much about Passover is... we didn't read those specifically at this

time; we've talked about it, I've referred to it before Passover season here, but when you go through 1 Corinthians 10. 1 Corinthians 11 when it gets into where Paul talks about keeping the Passover and we're going to follow the example of Christ and what He gave to us and partake of the bread and partake of the wine and how we come before God in taking the Passover – all those things that he covers. He starts out in chapter 10 when he talks about, the word is used there in the Old King James, it's not the word fellowship...what is the word the world uses? Communion... knew I hated that word. They use the word communion and have so misused that word but it's this word for fellowship, it's about a Family, it's about a fellowship that we're able to have with one another in the Church that we have with God through one another. That's an awesome thing to understand. It's a fellowship with Jesus Christ and God the Father within the realm of the Church that we're able to have. It's an awesome thing to understand – a fellowship with Jesus Christ, which is to say, a fellowship with God that we're able to have through a real fellowship physically as well with one another in the Body, in the Church. It's an incredible thing. We are a Family. And that's the way we must see one another, and that kind of a relationship, how we think about one another. And if we uphold that standard... Which is what? God and Jesus Christ... then it helps us to be able to deal with the differences that we sometimes allow to get in the way of different people where we find fault with... "Why did so and so do this? Why did so and so say that?" Of sometimes not being able to forgive or forget what someone said in the past, and whenever they say something every once in a while it pops back up into our mind because we really haven't forgiven them; because we don't have Jesus Christ and God the Father in our minds to the degree we should have as far as a fellowship. Jesus Christ died so that He and His Father could live in every one of us.

And if we could only get that truth into our being, into our mind – that's what these days are about, that *sacrifice* that made that possible; because the problems that we so often have, or the things that hurt us within the Church have to do with our relationships...even within the Body, as small as we are. And we're judged by those things in a very great way. That's why I refer back to so often 1<sup>st</sup> John...they are so powerful. **1 John 4:19**...it says, **We love Him because He loved us. If a man say, 'I love God,'** we wouldn't be able to love God if He hadn't given us the calling we have so He can love us. The world is cut off from Him and He can't love the world; which means to give favour to, help to, aid to and so He can't give that until specific periods of time; like the Millennium, like the Great White Throne, or to those whom He's called. Then He can begin to love us as He brings us into a relationship with Him.

**If a man say, 'I love God,' and hate his brother,** in other words, fail to love His brother, fail to apply the things that God says we should have concerning our relationships – something so simple as *never* to say a bad word to put someone in a bad light. There's only one time as a whole within the Church a person can discuss, as a whole, someone else in the Body and that is in order to help them, in order to know them, in order to be able to work with them and that's generally within the ministry, and we don't have that much within the ministry because I'm talking about evangelists as a whole and myself as a whole and my wife and some of the senior elders on occasion. But the farther it goes, the less that is to be done, the less that there is the need there for that kind of thing to be done; but it's for the sake of serving and helping within the Body. But within the Body, sometimes what we do, if we're not careful, is we can fail to love our brother the way God says to and something can happen and we can begin to hold a resentment toward someone else for something they've said or something they've done or whatever it might be...or something we think they're doing wrong in their life of how they should be serving God better, they should be doing this... Well, no, God says you just should be concerned with yourself. Don't be so quick to judge a brother – just be concerned with yourself because *you're* not doing everything right. In the *first place*, when you start talking about someone else, or thinking that way toward

someone else – *you've already sinned!* And you should be focusing on yourself. You think with human beings that'd be so easy to see, but it's so hard for us, isn't it.

**If a man say, 'I love God,' and hate his brother,** in other words, fail to love his brother, God just says, **he is a liar. For He who loves not his brother whom he has seen how can he love God whom he has not seen.** That's the point. God has given us the Church where people are impregnated with God, with a portion of the mind, the being, the life of God and Jesus Christ living and dwelling within us...and we must see that.

My genuine desire through time has come to be, in a very deep way, that every one of you whom God has called, that you *be* in His Kingdom – some in the first resurrection that are headed in that direction...and those who are going to continue on into the Millennium...and in time, toward the end be able to enter into God's Family at *that* time! Isn't that what it's all about? Isn't that what we should want and desire with all of our being for each other. And if we can help facilitate that then we should do that and sometimes we help facilitate that by saying, "I'm not going to hold anything against them. If they irritate me about something they've said or done, it's gone! I understand how they can be sometimes..." As much as I want someone to understand how I can be sometimes when I'm not doing things *perfectly*; and I don't do things *perfectly* – see. I have battles I have to fight. I've told you when I walk down a street what it can be like, or get in a car what it can be like – that's the way it is in life. If I don't have a meal at a proper time sometimes my wife has to put up with some of those battles that I have. If you don't eat at a proper time it can affect your metabolism and how you react. An allergy, something as dumb as that, silly as that can affect you in how your attitude is. But what about other things as well, what about when you're going to work on the job and you've got to put up with the nonsense of somebody that is treating you in a nonsensical way? We have situations in life where there are just people who put us to the test. You go and you have to work around that during the day and you get home – how are you acting by the end of the day, by the time you get home in the way you treat your husband or the way you treat your wife or the way you treat your children...etc...etc...? Sometimes if we're not careful we can take it out upon them because we're so frustrated and eaten up by what's happened to us in the world and so we can say something sharp to the very one who's closest to us. And that happens within the Church then, it just gets bigger and bigger and broader and broader. There are things sometimes we have difficulties with regarding other people because people are different.

**And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.** It is so foreign in my mind to comprehend why we don't love each other fully, completely, why we would ever fail to love someone, why we would ever hold anything against someone else in the Body. I understand it, but I don't, if you understand what I'm saying.

The next chapter...**1 John 5:1 – Whosoever believes...**if we could drink this in and it be a part of every day of our life what an incredible thing for us spiritually, because this is really what it's all about.

**Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God;** begotten of God. There are things about Jesus Christ you cannot comprehend, believe, have in you, unless God has given you the begetting of His holy spirit – that's the way it is. **...and everyone who loves Him that beget;** the begetting that comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ...if we love them, it says, **and everyone who loves Him who beget loves him also that is begotten of Him.** In other words, how can it be any other way? If we love God the Father and Jesus Christ through whom the begetting of the holy spirit is given to us, when we've had hands layed upon us to bring us into the Body of Christ...How could we do anything else but love every person who has hands layed upon them? That's the way it should be. It isn't always that way.

Anyway, that's a great deal to do with some of the teaching here of what Jesus Christ was giving about smiting others, begin to strike. You know, those are warning signs. If in your life you ever have a battle toward anyone in the Body of Christ and you're not able to resolve it and you're not able to put it behind you and realize that whatever it is in them that they're going through...I hope that they're able to come through it well. I hope they're able to change, and that if it's something you know is wrong you want the best for them.

**Matthew 24:50 - The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he isn't looking for Him, in an hour when he is not aware and shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.**

**There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** The point being is if we don't live this way toward one another, this is the test for us; this is where we're really tried. It's not in your tithing, although that can be a trial for some; it's not in the holy day offerings that are given, although that can be a trial for some; it isn't in going back and forth for Sabbath services, although that can be a trial for some; or to Holy Days, or going through the motions of religion that we do, or praying and so forth – it's what we live toward each other whereby God judges us, whereby we are judged in a very powerful way. And that's so much of the message of Jesus Christ over and over and over again here before He dies for us.

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