

Today we're continuing with the sermon series entitled *More Time* with this being *Part 3*. We will eventually get back to the other series that we interrupted with this particular series and the reason for interrupting that is because of where we found ourselves when we were up in Toronto; being at a period of time that separates what is referred to in Daniel as 'Time, Times and a Half' and we have been talking about that because we have now entered into a different phase. We've gone through 2/7^{th's} of it now with 5/7^{th's} remaining and we, again, have been given more understanding of some of those things, of the timing of that, so we've been reviewing some of that. And so in this series we have reviewed and built upon the revelation that God gave us about that subject matter in the Last Great Day of the Feast this past year of 'Time, Times and Half a Time'; and now we've also focused even more fully on the 'sign' – gone through and discussed those things about the *sign* that God is using in the definition of a 'Time' which He has established as 'an appointed time'. It's really quite awesome when you go through and look at these things that God has given and the revelation, the timing of events and so forth of those things that He's given.

We started to look at what God has also given us in some physical Old Testament examples that serve as a spiritual type of what we have been and continue to experience on a spiritual plane; and these *types* are also patterns, if you will, they're a pattern of how God is moulding and fashioning us, just like when different people are called. We all go through a pattern. There's a way that God works in our life. There's a way He begins to draw us and lead us and open our minds to understanding that we have to go through, we go through the same thing as a whole, as a pattern. We go through different experiences but there's a pattern that God uses in life in dealing and working with us and we become familiar with that. And there are things that have happened throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament and different examples that are patterns of how God has worked with people in the past and how He's working with the Church, with us now. And so we're going through and looking at a few of those.

We looked at the example that has had a special relationship with so many of us, of standing at the Red Sea because it was a matter of looking to God, waiting on God, looking to see what God is going to do; because, as we talked about last Sabbath, God led them by the way of the Red Sea – and there was no highway as we generally speak of travelling from one location to another on that route. We use the term highway out here when we travel. They talked about the way; there was the way of the Philistines to the north on the coast, there was the way of Shir just a little bit below that about 20 miles inland and then there was the way that God referred to, as the way of the Red Sea. But there was no such thing. There was no way of travel through there but God was going to open it up for them to go into the Promised Land, to begin heading in that direction anyway – it took them 40 years, we know the story.

But again, I've referred to standing at the Red Sea many times in the past, especially those of you who go way back into the late 1990's and early 2000; and that was an expression of something that I grew in, that so many of you grew in. You used the same expression as time went along because we wait on God to show us the way to go because we don't know. And I've used that example in sermons and so forth, and again, not to rehash the entire sermon last week but it has special meaning to us because for us it's a spiritual pattern of something on a spiritual plane; for them it was a very physical thing. They lived through the physical experience of it all.

Then we turned last Sabbath to the story of Gideon and his army and we have used the expression of ‘running down the hill together’ that we used at a specific moment in time that God gave to us and yet last Sabbath we began to build upon that. There are other patterns in the story of Gideon that I wasn’t even familiar with until I started going through this sermon series and it started hitting me right and left that these are patterns for us as well of things that we’ve gone through. So we’ve been looking at some of those as well, very inspiring.

So let’s pick it up today where we left off last Sabbath in Judges 6 in the story of Gideon, picking up here now in verse 18. So God was beginning to work with Gideon, telling him what He was going to do, that He was going to *use him* to help save Israel at that particular time. We read the story of Israel where they had gone astray *again* as they did at different intervals in time and strayed away from God and now it was at a point in time where they were being humbled because of different armies that were coming in there to spoil the land and to kill people and so forth that was taking place. And so God had told him these things and he was encountered by an angel and he asked the angel to stay there and he says...

Judges 6:18 - I pray that you do not depart from here until I come to you, and bring forth my offering, and set it before you. And he said, I’ll wait until you come again. And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: ‘kid’ can be used differently at times – it’s a small goat in this case; the meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon the rock, and pour out the broth. So it’s a little akin to the example later on in time of Elijah when he had the sacrifice that he was going to offer up before God and there were priests of Baal and so forth there and he told them to bring in all this water and soak the wood and everything around the altar and then God lapped that up. This is a kind of a pattern of something that preceded that in a very small way.

He told him to pour the broth over this. In other words, wet the area down with the broth and just offer all this upon the rock. **And so he did this. The the angel of the Eternal put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes.** Different ways that God works with people at different times and this was kind of in the early stages as far as things that God had revealed to mankind by this time; but unique experiences. That would be quite an experience to obviously go through something like that. Here you’re talking to an angelic being and he touches this rock and here is this fire that comes up out of it – something that just doesn’t happen naturally physically and it made quite an impression obviously, but still there was more that he had to go through here in order to have greater confidence and greater courage to do what he needed to do. Going on, **Then the angel of the Eternal departed out of his sight.** And we’ll come back to that in a moment to the continual story flow here.

I think about back in the period of time in early 2005, I mentioned that last Sabbath. It was becoming clear that we’d gone as far as we could and that we would simply continue with our same efforts until God made it clear what we should do next. A little bit like standing at the Red Sea again but following some of this story flow here it was mentioned how we began, to in a more eager way, to offer up an offering to God in our concentrated efforts of promoting the book, both books, but the first book at this point in time, but we’ve always put greater effort into it as time went along. In late 2004 the first book began to be promoted and we began to concentrate on that. Through early 2005, again going through some of the history here, and we did that by means of the ‘Readers Digest’ that I mentioned last Sabbath – also the internet and radio interviews.

All of this was a new experience for us and we began to see results that God gave back and that inspired us and encouraged us. God encouraged us mightily as He did as a pattern, again here, to Gideon; because as God works with you and moulds and fashions you there are things you just don't automatically jump into. There are matters of faith; there are matters of taking one step at a time and God having to bolster that encouragement or the courage that you have to do the things that are in front of you. You can't just automatically do what He's preparing you for. He didn't automatically thrust us into the end of this age without preparing us in advance. He's preparing a small body of people at the end-time to do some incredible things as time goes along, primarily to reveal to mankind that *He's* doing it. Nobody can do it and certainly a small group can't do it and so that's the incredible story here of Gideon; how small of a group finally did what was accomplished, what was finally done. God making it very clear that *He* is doing these things; not people, not by might, not by power, but by His power, by His spirit, God does these things¹.

Those are things that we are learning from and being moulded in by a pattern, by a type. What we offer to God is different today. We don't offer up sacrifices in the sense of animals, in the sense of those types of things that they did in the Old Testament. God has shown that what we offer up is our self, each one of us. We offer up our lives, our time, our efforts to serve God and then the question is: Does God receive that? What does God do? Well, the evidence of those kinds of things come in what God does with whatever's offered to Him. That's why in different scattered groups that take place out here there is evidence of whether God is there or not there. And that's a part of a pattern again that God has used in our lives to help us to receive encouragement that He's there; because of the things that took place, because of the growth of various things that happened with such a small group it gave incredible encouragement.

And then I mentioned the idea of a second book that began to come to me in mid-2005 there but I hadn't started writing it. Then I had a heart attack in the beginning of August and we come to this part of the story again, another pattern here. **Judges 6:22** and I'm not going to go through all that story I went through last Sabbath – I don't need to repeat all that, I'm just giving a quick review here today. **And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Eternal, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord Eternal! For because I have seen an angel of the Eternal face to face.** So this is what gave *him* encouragement. They saw things on a physical plane. God bring us in time to see things on a spiritual plane and you can't convince anyone of it, it's something you personally experienced in yourself. It's just like the truth – when you begin to see it you can't give that to anybody else, you can't give people the same excitement.

I remember when I was first called and a desire I had to share it with some of the relatives. I remember one time that there were several of the relatives of the family that had come together in the town we lived in and they had interest in some of the things being said and after a little while they have some interest, or they had some interest at that time, but it didn't go very far and after a while that interest started changing very quickly because it dawns on people; if this is all true, they've got to make some changes in their life: the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the plan of God. They've been lied to all their life and they have to address those things and that's difficult for human nature unless God is specifically drawing you and calling you.

And so again, those things that were put into our minds when we began to come along, those things that you can't learn any other way except God communicate them to you and we learn very early on

¹ Zechariah 4:6

then you can't give this to anyone else either; it's God's doing. That's why we used the example over and over again in scripture that *God does the calling*. Jesus Christ doesn't even do it. God does the calling and He gives us to His Son and that's where the process begins. It's an awesome thing to understand. Jesus Christ said no one; no man can come to Me except God the Father draw him.² And so sometimes when you hear people talking about how they gave their heart to the Lord, or they do this or they do that; that's not real. It's something that God has to give to you and it begins to change your life.

So again here, going on with the story. He was moved because of understanding that he had seen an angel and because of what the angel did then and showing that God had indeed accepted this offering; the evidence in the fire that took it all, received it up and it disappeared, it was gone, something that just can't physically happen. This inspired him and moved him and gave him greater courage to do the job that was in front of him; but he still wasn't there.

I think of what we've had to go through. We've had to go through periods of time here to help us become stronger and stronger to do what we need to do; because it's just not naturally a part of us. God has to mould and fashion these things within you and so there is that pattern again of what we go through.

Verse 23 - And the Eternal said unto him, Peace be to you; do not fear: you shall not die. Went through some of that and on a spiritual plane concerning the Church and what was going to happen. And then it goes on to say here; **Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Eternal, and called it Jehovahshalom:** in other words, 'the Eternal send peace'; **unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.** And so again here, something that we experienced as a type, or I experienced as a type a little bit differently, not an altar, but that which was offered up before God – the writing of two books. Something that I don't like to do, that I didn't like to do. I'm not a writer. See, I know this, but I can't tell that to anyone else, it's a matter of whether someone believes it or not, but I *hated* English, I hated writing, I hated compositions in College. The last thing I ever wanted to do was write...and so we started out with 'News Watch'; we built up to 'Time is Running Out', 'Time Has Run Out', the little booklet and then to the books. And so that was something offered up to God because it was contrary to my human nature and then God received it, accepted it. That evidence was in what God did with it. And again, something that personally to me is very inspiring and as I tell you the stories and share those with you then you have the same inspiration that comes in a similar type of pattern, something that moves you and inspires you.

So again, not only was the second book then underway, God had given me a peace of mind of what we were doing and where we were going. Even in the way the books were written were totally different from each other and then I think of the preparation that was taking place for a profound Feast of Tabernacles for 2005. So all these things were happening in August and all up to the Feast of Tabernacles of that particular year that were types and patterns of things that gave us tremendous encouragement.

Verse 25 – so now we're getting to the point here where we had ended last Sabbath. And it came to pass the same night, that the Eternal said unto him, Take your father's young bullock, and the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has... So here's this constant thing that was with Israel; Baal worship and different gods that the different peoples that surrounded Israel worshipped. God was giving them the truth, had given them the truth and worked

² John 6:44

with the Israelites at different times and things that had taken place here. And here is this example then of something that was taking place, Baal worship out there again and Gideon's own father affected by it; not to the same degree as others were in the region around them, but still affected by it because a little bit can rub off, a little bit of it can be received in your life because it's so predominant as a part of the world around you. And this is what had happened to the Israelites, this Baal worship, sun worship. It's an amazing thing when people begin learning about Baal worship, worship of the sun god, worship Sunday morning, early Sunday morning, the day of the sun. You think, "Where did all of these terms come from?"

People don't understand history, they don't know where these things come from. Where do all these names of different days of the week and so forth come from? It's just like the word for Sabbath. Amazing how many languages, there are over 100 that the word for Sabbath is the same... they don't have a word for Saturday. It's like, Sabbatos or different forms of that which has to do with the Sabbath. In different languages around the world...that the 7th Day means Sabbath; but most of them have the same kind of meaning for the 1st day of the week and it has to do with the sun. Where did that come from? People don't question those things; they don't ask questions so they just accept a part of life that's passed down from generation to generation. They don't understand where Baal worship, or sun god worship and some of those things come from and how it started entering into Israel. And so that's what's an amazing thing about history when Christ finally came along, some of the things that were taking place in the regions around them wasn't anything new. Sunday worship wasn't something new that came along after Christ. It was there way before Christ was born.

He was told to take two bullocks, **your father's young bullock, and the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the grove that's by it: And build an altar unto the Eternal your God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which you shall cut down.**

What an incredible story! What Gideon is told to do here; go take your father's bullocks, take one of the bullocks... go take down the grove, cast down the altar and then come back and offer up one of his bullocks – your father's! So you're destroying all this stuff out there; at the same time you're actually going to kill some livestock as well... these things are valuable to them. They're used for work. It'd be like you grow up on a farm and you're supposed to go blow up one of the John Deere's, your parents only have two. You work with them; they're worth a lot of money. You wouldn't dream of doing something like that, destroying it. But here something was to be offered up as an offering.

So He says, **build an altar unto the Eternal your God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which you shall cut down.** So again, the pattern and the type we can learn from in this concerns a doctrine that still remained after the era of Philadelphia and it was a lingering false doctrine that was as much of a stench on a spiritual plane as the grove of Baal was to God, and I don't know that we understand that to the depth that we need to. I think we are more and more as we go along here. There are some things in this story here of understanding about the God of Israel, but it had been polluted with this god Baal as well. And so these things were there and yet the Israelites, just like today and some of the mixtures there of things with what is 'true Christianity' that are out there today, the pollution that's there; and this is a similar thing that was taking place in that particular region there. And so again, on a spiritual plane the grove and Baal is very much like a particular doctrine that still remained with us during the period of Philadelphia and this concerned the true identity of the one and the *only* One Eternal God; the Eternal God...that we went through in 2005. And a big part of the trinity was still in the midst of the Church and God wanted it finally removed. That's what we came to in 2005. Mr. Armstrong came to understand at

a very early age in the Church, (in the sense of Philadelphia beginning), that the trinity was false. He understood that. He understood where it came from, that it came from the Catholic Church, it didn't come from scripture. The Catholic Church admitted, acknowledged that the trinity idea is of their making entirely...so by 325 AD, and in through that period of time there were things that began to creep in about Easter. They removed Passover, they didn't want Passover to be a part of the church anymore; they wanted to move from Saturday to Sunday; all this is a part of history. They began to move toward a teaching of a trinity; somehow three different beings that have eternally existed but they're just one, but they're three and they're one and three like the spiritual three musketeers. It's kind of this nebulous thing you can't really get a hold of; they call it a *mystery* because they can't even understand it and when you read their writings it's a mystery all right.

Mr. Armstrong came to understand very early on that the holy spirit is not a being, it's not a person, it's the *power of God Almighty*, it's the *power* He sends out to do His work, to do whatever He does. It's the power of God; it's not a separate being that has its own mind, its own personality. On the contrary, it's from God the Father. So, Mr. Armstrong understood this at a very early time, but a part of the teaching of the trinity was still there. The teaching of the trinity is that these three beings have eternally existed and one of them is Jesus Christ; and so we still had that within the Church, that Jesus Christ had eternally existed and we came to understand because God revealed it to us, no, He hasn't. He had a beginning in life. He didn't eternally exist. He began when He was born of the virgin Mary, His mother, but His Father was God Almighty. And so a process began in time. He's been doing a work now for nearly 2,000 years but that's as long as He has existed. And so we came to understand some of those things and God began to make those things right within the Church. But this was a difficult time. It wasn't an easy thing for Gideon to go against his father; it wasn't an easy thing for Gideon to do something that in some ways, come across sometimes perhaps of being a little presumptuous or whatever. He knew, or he had feelings at least of how this might affect his father. So again, it wasn't an easy thing to do for him just to go in and destroy things that pertain to his father and killing a particular animal here like this of his father's. It wasn't his, it was his father's, and that's why the story is written as it is.

And so again, I think of some of this at this particular point in time of something we went through and something God wanted removed from the Church. But I want to take you back to 3rd John. Let's go over to the book of 3rd John because even as Paul told the Corinthians that they were 'as his children'³, in other words, meaning, 'in the Lord'. Because there is a unique relationship that God gives within the Church so often between those whom God is calling and those that are working with those whom God is calling. There's a special relationship. My wife and I talk about that oftentimes and especially in so many of the young people being called today and...just be real candid – so many are like our children and it doesn't even matter what their age is.

There is that relationship that is unique and so Paul spoke of those things about the Corinthian Church because there was that close affinity of working with someone that God is drawing and moulding and being a part of moulding and fashioning their lives and then there's that which John says here in **3rd John** beginning in **verse 2 - Beloved, I wish above all things that you might prosper and be in health...** Isn't that what we desire for one another? And John certainly desired that for everyone within the Church... that they would prosper and be in good health; that's our natural desire toward one another would be that things would go well for one other; **even as your soul prospers**. Which is far more important than something about your physical health and your physical prosperity; it's your spiritual life that you

³ 1 Corinthians 4:14

prosper and grow spiritually. That is far above and beyond because sometime the physical things that aren't easy to go through are the things that help us to grow and so we understand that sometimes we have to go through trials and hardships and difficulties; as a matter of fact, quite often, it's a part of our growth.

Verse 3 - For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, even as you walk in the truth. That's always inspiring. Generally within a period of six months we have an opportunity to go back into an area to visit people and I'm always encouraged because... you know you live your life day by day and you can look back in time and you see certain changes have taken place or you see one another and sometime you don't really see that greater change because of a period of time that has passed. We have an opportunity in a sense of seeing you maybe once every six months and we see changes, we see growth, we see things that people go through and the maturity that is there and that is an incredibly encouraging thing to us. And so this is a part of what John is talking about. So he says...**I rejoice greatly; we rejoice greatly** when we see these things. I mention it from Sabbath to Sabbath when we're visiting different areas.

... so when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you... What greater thing is there than the truth that is in you? I also mourn inside, I hurt inside when I see people who don't latch on to the truth or who latch on to something different from the truth, or want to bring in something in the midst of a fellowship that isn't true, that *hurts*, that causes damage; and so sometimes those things exist from area to area, from time to time. People have choices to make and so that's a part of our growth too, that we experience what that's like because those things aren't enjoyable either because we all want to be of the same mind, of the same truth. And so John's just stating the obvious here, "I rejoice greatly in that you have the truth, that you're growing in the truth, **that you walk in the truth**" ...because if you're not, then you have some hard times ahead of you or you might not make it or you may fall by the wayside; especially after what we've gone through in an apostasy in the Church.

Verse 4 - I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. I understand that in a great way. We understand that in a very great way on a spiritual plane. So as a type and pattern of Gideon's experience with his father, this was difficult for me to do because of my feelings of great respect to Herbert W. Armstrong. That was a hard thing for me. I had a difficult time because I didn't want to say or do anything to cast any bad light on him whatsoever because I knew who he was, I know how God used him. There was a desire to do this in a very sound and a balanced way and to make sure people understood, to strive to make sure that people understood that this was God's doing. If God doesn't give you certain truth it's not the individual's responsibility. It wasn't the fault of Mr. Armstrong; it was the choice of God Almighty to not give it for a particular reason until another time; for our benefit, for our growth. And so I went through a difficult time and dealt with this in a unique way because I wanted to make sure that this was presented in a way, and prayed to God about it – that it wouldn't show any dishonour whatsoever, but on the contrary; would honour him. If you understand what I'm saying. And so just to make it clear, this was a hard and difficult thing for me to do because of this, because this is how I looked at Mr. Armstrong. He was like a grandfather figure to me and when you have those kinds of close relationships, close feelings on a spiritual plane it is unique because I knew how God had used him in a very powerful way to raise up the Church at the end-time, who fulfilled a part of a role of the 'Elijah to come' just as John the Baptist had; that Mr. Armstrong did in even a greater way because of how God used him to restore truth to the Church at the end-time. We understand that not one of us would be here if it hadn't been for what God did through him. Just putting things in their proper perspective.

When you read through a story sometimes you don't think about all the things that are associated with this, but this, to make a point, was not easy for Gideon to do; but you obey God, you do what God tells you to do because that's what's right. It doesn't mean it's easy. Things we do are not always easy, are they? When you come into the Church and God says, "Here's the Sabbath Day. Here are the Holy Days. Here's My way of life." You have a choice to make. And so often that affects your job, whether you're going to work on Friday nights and Saturday anymore; it affects the Holy Days as to whether you're going to say, "I put God first. God's going to be first; no matter what happens, God is first! Not anyone, not anything comes before God..." and there's that commitment you have to make at baptism. God is first! And if we don't have that kind of conviction then we're going to be tried in those different areas and so often we are because of the battles of the mind.

And so again here, we go through many things, but we have to make choices...is God indeed first? And so we're tried in some of those things sometimes, but it must be a part of our thinking and a part of our mind that yes He is... more so than our father, or mother, or sister, or brother, or anyone in life, our own mate. God comes first! And that tries a person in human life. That's why it says what it does in Luke 14 unless we're willing to put God first, in essence... I'll just read that to you. I have used this so often; we talk about it for baptism and as people are coming up toward baptism.

Luke 14:26 - If any man come to Me, Jesus Christ is saying this; **and hate not his father, and mother...** it doesn't mean the word 'hate' like we take it in the English language to mean. This was an old word that was used in Old English, it means 'to love less', in other words, 'by comparison'... meaning that *God is first*. If God is first, then everything else is less, because God is first...that's what it's saying in a different form here, that's what Christ is saying. So, **if any man come to Me and not love less his father, his mother, and wife, and children, and brother, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.** That's what Christ is saying. You've got to love everything else less. God is first. Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, comes first in our life; and our Father... above and beyond other relationships and other people. And so we make choices of things we have to do and we *hope* that others won't turn against us, or won't hate us or whatever, but the reality is *we have to make a choice*. And we make those choices day in and day out in our lives. God is first!

We'll pick it up the story of Gideon where we left off... but again, all these types and patterns of things that God has taken people through in times past in a physical plane He takes us through on a spiritual plane.

Judges 6:27 - Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Eternal had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, you know their response... How are they going to respond? They're not going to be happy! They're not going to be pleased with this, with what he's getting ready to do; **and the men of the city,** so there was a fear there as well; but he feared God more, he honoured God more, had a greater reverence to God than he did to them and that's the point of all this: God has to be first. Goes on to talk about how he did this; **he didn't do it in the daytime, he did it at night.**

Verse 28 - And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down...so there was more of an influence of others around there who wanted this, who desired to have this, especially in the city there. There were those who looked to it in a stronger way, in a greater way as well. So when they saw that **the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it...** Next morning you wake up and everything's changed around you when it comes to some of these things... **and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that**
More Time – Pt. 3

was built. They knew about this, what had happened. **And they said one to another, Who has done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.** So it didn't take very long to find out who had done it. **Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out your son, that he may die:** they weren't pleased and he knew they wouldn't be pleased; but this is the response so often of people. They just wanted to put him to death for what he'd done... **because he has cast down the altar of Baal, it's the same spirit, same attitude** that killed Jesus Christ. It is *amazing* to me how people can turn.

Well, what is it we've been hearing all week here? LeBron and Cleveland and when he finally picks a certain area... isn't that amazing the kind of news we have in our country here that takes people's minds away from certain things. Anyway... Awesome here, incredible to understand some of the things that sometimes are out here and how fast human nature can change. And we see that in a particular city right now – they're not happy with a certain choice that a superstar in basketball has made. How much more when it comes to religious beliefs? It's a lot stronger to people then... it should be, I think it is...😊... than sports. It shows how sick this world is. At least there's no one trying to kill anyone yet. But anyway, through history people have killed people because of religion, because of religious beliefs; and will turn very quickly and have tremendous hatred and that's something that's out there to this day.

I am amazed by the amount of hatred... I used to be amazed by going to the internet and putting in Mr. Armstrong's name and seeing the hatred that was out there. Very little that was positive about what he had done and all of the stuff that was negative. And it didn't take very long and it is the same thing with my name and far, far more that's negative and distorted and twisted, the lies that people are willing to say, how far they're willing to go in life and it's the same sort of thing that's happened through history. But Jesus Christ experienced this in the greatest way in that respect as far as that which is written in history in time and so here it is... these individuals here – *same* attitude and spirit because of some religious relics and certain beliefs they had. They wanted to kill Gideon and so they told the father to **bring him out that we can kill him ...because he's cut down the grove that was by it and cast down the altar of Baal.**

Verse 31 - And Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you plead... it's the word that means 'to contend for', in other words, are you going to come to the defence of Baal here. Do you have to be the one to contend for Baal? Can't Baal take care of himself? If he's done something so bad and he *is* this great god, can't Baal contend for himself? ...can't Baal do this himself? Do you have to do it for him? That's basically what Gideon's father was telling them. He says, **will you plead/will you contend for Baal? Will you save him? He who will plead/contend for him, let him be put to death while it is yet morning:** if you have to do that then you be put to death; **if he is a god, let him plead/contend for himself, since one has cast down his altar.** So if someone's done something like this to him, then let him show that he's god and see what he does.

Therefore on that day he called him, he called his own son, **Jerubbaal, Let Baal contend...** So he started calling his own son by a different name saying, **Let Baal plead/contend against him, because he has thrown down the altar. Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.** They were getting closer and we know the story here of what God had already told him, "I'm going to use you to save Israel from these hordes that are coming in here."

Verse 34 - But the spirit of the Eternal, came upon/clothed; as it means in the Hebrew here, 'clothed' **Gideon completely, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.** So this is that region,
More Time – Pt. 3

this is that area. There were those that gathered together because of the battle that was coming and this is a part of that story.

Verse 35 - And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; so not only in that area there but throughout the tribe of Manasseh, **who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulon, and unto Naphtali; and they came up/gathered to meet them.** I think of how God has used the area of Manasseh at the end-time, this nation is Manasseh and the world is ignorant of it. They don't understand where we come from. They don't understand where the primary people have come through Europe and how the Israelites were taken captive and how Ephraim became Great Britain and the Commonwealth of nations as it says in scripture; and they don't understand where Asher and Zebulon and Naphtali and some of those nations in Western Europe came from, that they're part of those Israelite tribes from the past – they became known as the Lost 10 Tribes. Only one kept its identity – Judah. People know who the Jews are to this day, but they don't know the rest of the tribes – where are they? Incredible! And then what God promised to the two nations of Ephraim and Manasseh at the end-time, that they'd be the greatest nations the earth has even known, has ever seen, Manasseh being the very greatest; and that's what we are, and that's what we've come to and that's why God says then, we come to our end and the end comes. We live in those particular times.

That has a bit of a meaning to us when we read through a story like this and we think about how God used the nation of Manasseh because of the wealth He gave to it; because God gave us this nation. He gave us this land; He gave us the power and everything else that's here. We didn't give it to ourselves, we didn't manufacture it ourselves – God gave it to us on a golden platter.

And so I think of this time period and I think about it being right after the Feast of 2005 in December; I began to read sections of the first chapter of the new book in a sermon that was given to the Church at that particular time. It was difficult to give because it was now stepping out in greater boldness and power because of what was ahead and because of what God was showing just as Gideon was having to do here, of being a pattern that has to be followed of something that God has to mould and fashion these things within us. And so with a greater boldness and power, power that I was not accustomed to experiencing, that God indeed clothed me with more of His power, with more of His spirit, with a greater boldness to do what was ahead. I look back and think about some of these things and I'm candidly dumbfounded by it.

But again, things that were written in the second book that was to be announced to the Church in that sermon; if you remember the story – one of the two end-time witnesses and certain things that go with that and the job that's ahead. And that's what God was showing Gideon, a particular job, again, a pattern here of something that He was going to do through him. So as a pattern and type of what Gideon did... I was given the task to blow a trumpet on a spiritual plane if you will – to bring together a more focused and armoured people to fight a great battle that was yet ahead. We're all one, we all came together because God is doing it. And this, again, consisted of announcing that to the Church at that particular time. It was hard, but it became more a part as we went forward. It was the same as how Gideon had to go through several experiences to build him up, to encourage him, to give him the strength, the confidence to do what was ahead of him. God didn't just thrust him into it right away because it wasn't a part of Gideon yet. Gideon didn't have that encouragement yet, that *courage*, if you will, to do what he had to do.

Judges 6:36 – so again, patterns and types of things that are here that are quite profound - **And Gideon said to God, If You will save Israel by my hand,** Because God already told him ahead of time. When this
More Time – Pt. 3

process first started that's what God told him. But the question is still there...IF... if you're going to do this God...this reasoning that we sometimes have back and forth with God. **If You're going to do this by my hand as you have said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it's dry upon the earth beside it, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as you have said.** If you'll just do this one thing then I'll know it. He was still lacking confidence and boldness to do what he needed to do. **And it was so: for he rose up...**now these things happened to Gideon in a very rapid manner. So what happened to Gideon we've gone through in a few years of moulding and fashioning on a spiritual plane. What Gideon did on a physical plane happened to him fairly rapidly.

And it was so: for he rose up early in the morning and thrust the fleece together and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said to God, Don't let Your anger be hot against me, don't be upset with me because I have something more to ask; and I will speak but only this one time more: let me prove, I pray You, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry upon the fleece, and upon the ground let there be dew. Just in case there's some fluke of something that happened here and I don't understand let it be reversed this time. **And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only and there was dew on all the ground round about.**

We have to go through things sometimes to encourage us, to give us strength and confidence and boldness and to do what we have to do to be able to talk in interviews to people, to be able to speak at ideaCity and to talk to them in a boldness that God *wants* to have be there at the end that is not just a part of someone by nature. It's something that God has to give.

I've made comments before that the books were like the fleece to me, they really were, to give me encouragement because I saw something that God was doing. I've even talked about how that the two books were even done in a different manner from each other: that the first book, knowing that I'm not a writer, that the first book when it came together that in the beginning God laid it all out, the chapters, the content of what was to be in them and then I began to write and God would give the things that encouraged and inspired the things that needed to be written. The second book wasn't like that – there were times when I would be praying about it and thinking about a pattern to follow like the first book and all of a sudden some other chapter would be given and God would give something else and something else that was to be written and I never knew what was to be in the chapters until God gave it. So I experienced something that I can't give to people and tell you because it's my personal experience; that the second book and the way it happened is that God just gave it as I would sit down to write and those things would begin to come and all the things that are written there about things that are going to come to pass – they're going to come to pass. We walk by faith. It's an incredible thing to understand.

We have a period of less than two years and we believe, while the world laughs and scorns, but they won't laugh and scorn too long, that Jesus Christ is going to return May 27, 2012. They don't understand that Jesus Christ is to come twice. They don't understand that He came the first time to be a Passover. That's why the Jews have a difficult time with that, because they never grasped that He was to be our Passover, because everything about the Messiah to them is about a world leader, a world ruler, one who is going to raise Judah up to rule the world and that's not what the Bible says. Because they misunderstand what it says about Israel and the things of the future. They don't understand that Israel is about something spiritual, on a spiritual plane about a spiritual Kingdom, the Kingdom of God that's going to rule on the earth. They don't understand the things that God revealed later on through John in the book of Revelation, about 144,000 that were going to rule on this earth at Jesus Christ's return. They don't understand those things. They don't understand that the Messiah had to come first to die

for the sins of all mankind so that we could have a relationship with God, because only through that, by His sacrifice were we able to be forgiven of sin through our Passover.

And the world has taken that away through Easter because it's not Passover anymore, it doesn't relate to the Old Testament, it doesn't relate to the story of a lamb who had to be without blemish, a lamb that had to have its throat slit and eaten every year to learn what Passover means. Jesus Christ gave to the disciples before He died the meaning of Passover on a spiritual plane. "You're to eat My flesh and drink My blood..." And there were some on that day that quit following Him.⁴ It says many of His disciples, not the twelve, but many of His disciples on that day quit following Him because for a Jewish person to drink blood or to eat human flesh was unheard of. It's like, how sick can you be? And they didn't understand that it was spiritual, that it had to do with the meaning of Passover that Paul later referred to in I Corinthians 10, 11, and 12 and in through there, chapter 11 especially talking about the Passover – that which Jesus Christ instituted for the Church that we were going to do as a Church. We keep *Passover* year by year, we take the little bit of wine and we take the small amount of bread, and we *wash one another's feet* just as Jesus Christ did because He said you're to do the same thing.⁵ But that got lost in Easter because they didn't want Passover. But we keep it as a matter of faith.

And so there are things we understand about Jesus Christ and that He is going to return. The Messiah, the same word for Christ in the New Testament, means 'the one who is anointed' and *all* the Jewish people and people through time who have understood what the word means, they know that it's 'a one anointed to be king', to be the ruler in God's Kingdom. What an awesome thing to realize in history, in time, after 6,000 years...Jesus Christ came after 4,000 years of man being on the earth and we're now at the point of 6,000 years. We get to live in a time when Jesus Christ is coming back, this time not as a Passover. It says this time He doesn't come as a lamb but that He comes as a lion. That's what John says in the book of Revelation; talks about the power in which Jesus Christ comes to rule the earth⁶. And it says He's going to rule it for 1,000 years⁷. I marvel sometimes at how willingly ignorant some in Traditional Christianity, those who lead it, ignore scriptures in the Bible.

It was last night that we were talking about how that even sometimes in graves and so forth that people have their head and their body positioned in certain way in a grave yard. I don't know if some of you know this but tombstones so often are faced so that the head has to be at a certain place so that in the resurrection the head comes up toward the east...in a resurrection. Where does that come from? ...and why on earth do they need the resurrection if they're already up in heaven or down in hell or wherever it is? Why do you need to be resurrected later on and your head be in a certain place? Anyway, some of the silly ideas sometimes that people have in this world. But you look forward to the time when there's not going to be any more ignorance like there is to this day. Jesus Christ is returning in less than two short years...

It may not happen with the Gulf, but I'll tell you what, there's some scary things going on down there, there truly are; and if it's not that it's going to be something just as scary and scarier. You've read the books, you understand there's going to be a lot of devastation of things that take place at some point in time here with this, beginning with the 2nd Trumpet. We understand that. But if some of the things are true of what they're discovering in some of the places there it's horrifying the amount of power that can

⁴ John 6:53-66

⁵ John 13:14

⁶ Revelation 19:11

⁷ Revelation 20:4

be unleashed on this earth in a very short order and that's the way this world is; things can happen quickly overnight and we're not even talking about nuclear weapons and things that are going to take place as we go forward through time here. Nations are not going to be happy.

What's happening in Europe and what's happening with the euro and what's happening as they get their back pushed to the wall; that's why I started laughing at some of the ideas that people had, that somehow they're going to abandon the euro. Intelligent leaders and people talking about how they're going to abandon the euro. You think, "You don't have the foggiest idea what's coming. You don't have any idea what they have to hold onto and what they're going to preserve; that they're going to continue longer and last longer and be out there longer than what we are." And the world just doesn't understand prophecy and what God's getting ready to do here.

Going back here in the story of Gideon, things that are a type of things that we've gone through. **Judges 7:1 -Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people who were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the most of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.** Now if you go on to Judges 8:10 you'll see there are actually 135,000 soldiers out there as far as the army is concerned; it was incredibly great and that's why they said when they looked out upon the plain that they couldn't count because of all the camels and because of all the people; no man could number the people there but God says the what the number of people was; it was around 135,000.

Verse 2 - And the Eternal said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel lift themselves up against Me, saying, I have saved myself by my own hand. So He's saying all these that you've called on out of Manasseh and the Abiezrites, there are far too many people here and if they go out in this battle and I give them victory they're not going to give honour to Me and acknowledge that I am the one that gave them this victory. They're going to say *they* did this by their power. He said that the army you have with you is too much here and they'll begin to say **I have saved myself by my own hand/by my own might. Now therefore go and proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoever is fearful and afraid let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And the people; it says, of the people there were twenty-two thousand who returned;** Amazing! Twenty-two thousand who left, who weren't excited about entering into this particular battle with a force down there that was so overwhelming, 135,000 down below. So it says **twenty-two thousand who returned and there were ten thousand who remained.**

So ten thousand stayed back, twenty-two thousand left; so only about a third remained. Now, some of these numbers don't escape us of some percentages, not everything is exact, but still there's that pattern, there's that type of something here that we went through, something that we experienced. I can't help but when I read something like this to think about what we experienced and what happened with the apostasy in the Church; two thirds were gone, almost overnight. A third of the Church remained, scattered. It's exactly what God said in Ezekiel 5, Ezekiel 20 and different places like that – there would be a third that would be scattered, still holding onto various things that were there, but we understand that one third of the Church went back to what they were called out of, another third just quit and close to a third here, it says, in essence remained behind. That's kind of the analogy of the type for us that was used. And we relate to the story then, we have an affinity with that. I did very early on. And so that's why we're drawn to the story of Gideon even more so.

Verse 4 - And the Eternal said to Gideon, There are still too many people; bring them down to the water and I will try them for you there: and it shall be that of whom I say to you, This shall go with you
More Time – Pt. 3

the same shall go with you; and whomsoever I say to you, so in other words it's going to be what God does; it's going to be of God's choosing. And everyone that came through what we came through is of God's choosing. God woke up whom He woke up and let others sleep that He chose. It's of God's doing, we understand that. And so this is a method God used for Gideon. Then shall certain ones, it says, go with you.

Verse 5 - So he brought the people down to the water: and the Eternal said to Gideon, Every one who laps the water with his tongue, like a dog laps, him shall you set by himself; likewise every one who bows down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. Some good lessons in some of this. Men of war, the ones who brought water up and were still alert and watchful and drank water that way – God says that three hundred remains; but all of them who turn their back, in essence, all of them who went down to the water and drank out of the water directly...if you have a military around you're to be watchful, to be alert and be on guard; so the example of something that is given in this fashion here God used in a very powerful way to teach something spiritual as well – that what He told the Church; we're to watch, we're to be on-guard. It talks about war and battle and so forth and that which we're to be prepared for. Well, these individuals definitely weren't prepared in any fashion or form.

Verse 7 - And the Eternal said to Gideon, By the three hundred men who lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand: 300 people. Can you imagine? That's why we used the term of 'running down the hill together'. God was preparing us to run down the hill together on a spiritual plane and the work we were going to be doing – 300 against 135,000; so if there's a victory it's not left in anyone's mind, any doubt about who gave the victory. God did. And that's what God is doing with us. We understand that in a very powerful way toward the end-time; that God talks about dumbfounding or confounding those who consider themselves to be wise by that which He does through that which is not seen as wise.⁸

And all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took rations in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained/kept those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. Now again, this type or pattern contained in these numbers didn't escape us, didn't escape me. That's why we had a special affinity to it; just in numbers period, counting all. But I think of several years in a row there where that's all we were; we stayed around, we hovered around 300; and that gave a special affinity to the story of Gideon here and what God was doing with Gideon and what God was doing with us. Not large, quite small. The world has mocked at and made fun of the Worldwide Church of God in times past of only being 150,000 worldwide, but we were really whittled down in size when you talk about numbers and so forth, the things that took place through the apostasy and what happened.

Judges 7:9 - And it came to pass the same night, that the Eternal said unto him, Arise and go down unto the army/host; for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you fear to go down, go down to the host with Phurah your servant: So Gideon still wasn't there. There are things you have to go through as a pattern to prepare you for things later on and we've gone through things to prepare us for what's ahead because they're just not a part of us and God just can't *put* it in you. There's certain qualities and characteristics that God wants us to have that takes time to mould and fashion within us and so it was

⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:27

here in a very quick way with Gideon; with us it is over a period of time because that which happens to us is on a spiritual plane. But again here, He says, **take Phurah with you and go down by night.**

Verse 11 - And you shall hear what they're saying; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then he went down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were there with the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand of the sea side for multitude. In other words you can't count it, that's the analogy that's used there. You pour sand out and there's no way of counting it and you look out on this horde and you can't count it. God said how large it was, He told them the number.

Verse 13 - And when Gideon had arrived, behold, there was a man who was telling about a dream to his comrade, now, I don't know how they snuck over there, where they hid, were they behind a tent and they heard through the tent? But the two of them snuck down amongst an incredible horde like a couple of spies would going in to infiltrate an area and they heard something inspiring. They heard an individual, one of the soldiers, telling a comrade about a dream; **and he said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and all of a sudden a cake of barley tumbled into the host of Midian,** kind of this huge cake, this huge barley roll came rolling in, **and went into a tent, and struck it so that it fell and overturned it, that the tent remained flattened. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing except the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand has God delivered Midian and all this host.** So, whatever happened that this is placed into their mind, it's there because of what God was doing. God can communicate to the mind. Just like what's happening at the end-time here that I was mentioning from the book; that as time went along there is going to be more of a sense in people's minds that something is wrong in this world. Can't put your finger on it...but they know that something's wrong. There is a greater sense and a growing sense that we're at an end-time; that we're at an age of great conflict.

And so this is starting to ripple through the world and we've seen that it has grown tremendously in two years time – you see it in news, you see it in movies, you see it in all kinds of things – this sense of something that's foreboding that's out there. And there are reasons for that, because of what's getting ready to take place. Those kinds of things are the very things that when things do happen it helps people to come to repentance faster, more quickly. Fear is a very powerful thing in the lives of human beings and when people fear, sadly, that's when God can begin to work with them and begin to bring them to repentance. Because right now people as a whole don't fear as they should fear. They don't fear God, they don't fear for what can take place on the earth very quickly and so forth. They don't *believe* certain things can take place quickly.

They don't understand what's taking place in the Middle East. They don't understand what's happening in China and Russia and the motivations behind the people there. They don't understand what's taking place in Germany again and a people, that when they're pushed up against a wall, what they will do, what they've done every time they've been pushed up against the wall. That's why NATO was started...to prevent them from doing again what they've done before. All the things that took place after WWII; incredible what we go through, cycles we go through and then time passes us and we forget. And today people don't know what they will do when they're pushed up against the wall again and they're being pushed up against the wall and this country is helping to do it in a large way and we don't even understand.

So by October of 2006 we began publishing '2008—God's Final Witness'. Gideon received great courage and encouragement with boldness to move forward and do what he had to do with the enemy soldiers that were there; and God used a different means to give me a greater boldness in the battle that was in front of us. In 2007 the requests for the books began to increase mightily and it quickly went out into over 160 countries. That gave me encouragement. I thought, "How incredible with the internet that God can have a book go out like that into different countries." And then with the internet, all the downloads that were taking place; we didn't even have to send the book out! That the downloads of the books that was taking place out there and people in different countries and different places reading it – awesome, incredible what God was doing. A little bit here and a little bit there from something so small. When you see God in something it's a very powerful thing when things take place that don't happen in the world by normal means.

Just like what Mr. Armstrong did when it was time for him to go to different leaders of the world. He met more world leaders than any other human being; and most certainly more than another religious leader. Spoke in China, I am still dumbfounded by that; and speaking before different people of different countries at a time when Communism was at its height, in that sense, in that part of the world and whether it be of the Arab world, it doesn't matter where. He went into so many different places in a short period of time and spoke to the different leaders. I think of those Japanese Diet members, similar to our senators here in this country, there were those eight who referred to him and they said in essence they were his Japanese sons; some of those that became Prime Ministers. Things that happened over and over again; Japan, Hirohito giving him the highest honour that can be given someone who is not a part of Japan, to a foreigner, awards and symbolism. King Leopold who gave him that clock that was made from a cannonball from his father; that he picked up off the fields in WWI.

Things that happened so quickly that just don't happen normally and only God can do those things. Some people were jealous, thinking of how human beings respond and so forth. But it wasn't time yet. God did a very powerful witness in the world at the end-time with leaders of the world and the gospel went out into all the world and that's what had to happen at that time in a very powerful way. What's happening with us today is different and unique.

When radio interviews were given regarding the second book, I could tell there was an increase in boldness that I was given from the first set of interviews given. I could tell a change from the first set of interviews to the second set in what God was giving and greater boldness to do the job that was in front and I'd say the presentation given in *ideaCity* topped it all off. To go before a group of people when all my experiences in times past has only been to speak to people of whom God was calling and who have the same beliefs and so forth and to speak before a group of people like that who have no beliefs whatsoever in those areas and to see their response. It's not going to be hard to do the job in the future here because it's the same message over and over and over again.

One day in the world all the mocking stops.

Judges 7:15 - And it was so, when Gideon had heard the dream that he was told and the interpretation of it, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Eternal has delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And I think of what we've gone through in the last few years and I have a boldness I can't even begin to describe and a confidence to do a job in front that I believe with all my being. God has to give those things to us and just as He did to Gideon here when Gideon came back because of what he heard and the confidence and the boldness he had to do the job that was in front of him. There was nothing that was going to move him from that at all.

So we have patterns and types and this is where we come to the one of running down the hill together and this is the one we've used that has meant so much to us at a period of time when we began to prepare to do what we did at a specific moment in time.

Verse 16 - And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches within the pitchers. They were hiding the torch in the pitcher so you couldn't see the flame and they were preparing themselves to come down the sides of these hills in three different companies of people, to run down at the same time and so this is what they were being told. ...**and said to them, Look on me, and do likewise:** same message to this day. You do the same thing, you say the same thing, you teach the same thing, we believe the same thing and when it comes time that's what we share with others – the same thing – not anything different. We don't do anything different; it's all the same message. So what we do, we do in an orderly unified manner just as they do it with the same purpose and the same focus all the way to the end...things that God brings us to.

...**and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall you do.** And so we follow a type and pattern that God gives to us and that's why even within the Church God has brought us to a point in time of being more at one than any other time. That's why I think of the power of the internet and the power to be able to have things on an internet to where everything is there. If somebody's being called by God they can go there and get the truth. They can go there in the topics and they can find what they need to find, they can listen to sermons or whatever it is on any subject that's out there as a whole for what they need. We teach and do the same things – every one of us. We don't deviate from it one iota and those who do go by the wayside, those who do can't be a part and share in it.

...**and behold when I come to the outside of the camp it shall be that as I do you shall do and when I blow with a trumpet,** there comes a time... says, **I and all who are with me shall then blow the trumpets also on every side of the camp, and say, The sword of the Eternal and of Gideon.** Again here, God always in the forefront, God always first – Him and His Son. That's where our eyes are focused. **And so Gideon and the hundred men who were with him, came to the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had newly set the watch:** so here is point during the night when they change the watch. They actually told time by the daylight hours – they had the 12 hours and then the night time they had the night watches, that's where it comes from, because they had guards and sentry's that were posted, especially when there was a military campaign happening such as this. So it says, **they set/changed the watch.**

While that change of the watch was taking place; the new sentries and so forth, it says, **they blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.** So they were all in place here and they had these torches and the pitchers that were covering them so that they couldn't see the light down below and they all had these trumpets spread out in a long area here. And so their perception was there was something far greater coming at them. When all of a sudden you see all this light on the side of the hill, there's this new watch, it's dark out there and all of a sudden all these torches are there and you see them moving down a hill toward you and these trumpets going off (everyone then having a trumpet in their hand), it did something in a very powerful way because God brought this to pass – put fear through them in a very powerful way.

So the companies blew the trumpets, broke the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow with: and they cried, so they were screaming and they were blowing trumpets and they were doing all they could as they were running. **The sword of the Eternal and of Gideon!** So they were crying this out as they were coming down the sides of the hill round about that particular area and it says... **And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.** They panicked. The people in the watch – they started panicking first and they started sending out cries and so forth and they started running. It was like this incredible force coming up against them. Only a story like this you can... Hollywood tries to write stories and so forth but God bringing something like this to pass was quite inspiring. And so this force begins to flee, they begin to run.

Now what we've looked at here in Judges concerning Gideon happened, again, over a very short period of time and we need to understand that. The types and patterns that we go through, again, they happen over a longer period of time. They have and they continue to be so. And some of this is going to continue – just like being at the Red Sea – it's the way we live. It's the way I live; it's a part of me now. I don't have to go back and revisit that like I did several years ago when I started talking about it – it's in me now...things about Gideon and so forth – they're in me now. We don't revisit them, but some of these things continue on and some of these things will continue on as we go through some of the story here and especially next Sabbath and continuing on with this particular series here.

On our part we haven't entered into the real battle yet, we've already run down the hill. I hope you understand that. We talked about it, we did it. But we haven't entered into the battle yet. Interesting here what happens in the story. The things that are coming here that we haven't done yet. There's more to come in the story because it's over a longer period of time of what God is doing. But we did this as far as the experience of running down the hill together.

By late 2007 and early 2008 we began to put a great push into throwing ourselves into the battle by beginning to run down the hill together. We talked about it, we did it; people sacrificed incredibly so to do this – a lot of people sacrificed a lot in order to accomplish this. I think of a sacrificing of giving in order to do this that people did – the 2nd tithe that was sent in, we even sacrificed in that area in the sense of cutting back in the amount of time spending at the Feast and we had other reasons for that as well; but as far as a sponsored Feast, we only had four days of it, those monies that were otherwise to be used for the Feast were sent in to help do what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures – to serve in the future those who are going to be a part of the Millennium, those who are going to be called.

As we were running down the hill God began to give us a kind of spiritual adrenaline. I received it and you received it. Do you know how? I'll guarantee you that as they were running down the hill their adrenaline was high. Can you imagine running down a hill like that against 135,000 out there and you're doing it by faith and you believe that God's going to give a victory to you and there are only 300 of you and you're blowing trumpets – you're making as much racket and as much noise as you can and you have these torches out there and you're screaming and hollering, **The sword of the Eternal and of Gideon!** ...as you're running down the hill? Well, notice what happened next in the story which led to another great turning point for us.

Verse 20 - And the three companies blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow with: and they cried, The sword of the Eternal and of Gideon! And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. So look at what happened next here.

Verse 22 - And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Eternal set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath. Notice...**And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, out of Asher, and out of Manasseh, and they pursued the Midianites.** It wasn't just the 300; more joined in. It's a beginning of what began to take place. But I think of some of the things that began to happen because it becomes even greater as we go along in the story here but there are things that began to happen with us that God began to call a few, to give encouragement to us. We saw what running down the hill did; it gave more. We have people that began to be called at that particular point in time and gave us greater encouragement to continue with some of the things that are in front of us and that's why some of you are here to this day, some of you that began to be called in late 2007 and early 2008 and on since that time and continues on as it is. Small; but incredible what took place here.

And so even in this battle some were added to it out of Naphtali, out of Asher, out of Manasseh and so forth, not just the 300 now; more began to be added in. God gave them greater organization and numbers for which to do the job that was in front of them and that's what God is doing now and He's going to add a whole lot more. We already know there are a lot more to come out of our past, these are not new people. Those who are new that are being prepared have a unique job for them but there are many more out of our past that are still going to come and we know that's going to come in time.

So in a similar fashion we've been given the ability to organize in order to continue a forward momentum with greater power than what we had before and that just continues to be added to. I think of all that's been added to the ministry, the power that's there; will probably talk about some of that at the Feast. We don't grasp and comprehend how much God has given to us because of an organization, because of how He's organized us now to do what's in front of us.

Judges 7:24 - And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, Ephraim wasn't even invited before. Now all of a sudden they're being invited to enter into this battle – their brother, Manasseh's brother Ephraim, **saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them...** we haven't gotten to this stage yet; this is coming in time as far as a type, as far as a pattern; **and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together,** so this spread fast. That's why some joined in quickly; because they saw what happened when the 300 ran down in faith and that God's going to give them the victory, and so they saw the camp break. No one can take credit for that. They saw something happen here that they received encouragement from. God did this. They started to flee and so now they're going to go after them, now they're going to chase them out for good.

And so it says here; **and they took the waters** (talks about Ephraim gathered themselves together) **and they took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew in the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.** It's being very specific about what was taking place; about a battle that entered in and where Gideon and his army were in their pursuit at this point in time and they met up with them. So this happened in a very fast manner.

Judges 8:1 - And all the men of Ephraim said to him, they're not really happy, they're not totally happy with what took place and how this took place and here's their response; **Why have you treated us this**
More Time – Pt. 3

way, that you didn't call upon us when you went to fight the Midianites? And they scolded him sharply. Isn't that human nature? People are going to go through some similar things in a spiritual plane here before long. **And he said to them,** (they'll eventually see themselves, but anyway) **He says, What have I done in comparison to you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?** He's showing something here... he's lifting them up, he's complimenting them and he's using wine as an example here and the vintage and the grapes and the produce of the land and surely that of Ephraim is better than that of ours; because he's of this area, Abiezer, because this is referring back to Joash who was an Abiezrite.

Verse 3 - God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: look what God has given to you...look who you have... look what you've brought! What have we done? So again, he's giving them encouragement in their battle and what they were doing and he says, **what was I able to do in comparison to you? Then their spirit was abated toward him, when he had said that. And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men who were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.** An incredible force now that did finally come out, that were added to what was already there in the very beginning, but God started with 300. It's an inspiring story; and then others began to add into it in the story and we're looking forward to a time when a lot more... I've been looking forward to that time for a long time because there are those out there that I know. I don't know who yet, but there are some I already know, there are some that some of you know already because those of you have been around for a long time who were a part when the apostasy came. We look forward to a time when some that 'we have walked to God's house side by side and council blended sweet' join in the battle. But God has to bring them into the battle. And I've looked forward to that day since so much of this began knowing what God says in Ezekiel that's going to take place and the numbers that are going to be there. We know that there are going to be around 3,000 or so that are going to be called out of our past that were baptized before the apostasy in 1994 who are going to be with us in the battle and I very much look forward to that day. Wish there could be more, but there can't because there's more that God's teaching through all that's taking place here and that's another story.

So the types and the patterns that we've looked at in the story of being at the Red Sea should now be simply a matter of this is the way we are, this is the way we think. We don't have to live that anymore day by day. Now, some of you are new, you're maybe growing in some of those things, you're learning some of those things, but for those of us who've been around a long time, it's in us, it's just the way we are, that's how we look to God, we look to God. It's something that's been moulded and fashioned within us. When we come up against something that's difficult or hard we know that God opens the way, we look to God to do it. That's just the way it is, and He does; and there's a confidence in that, there's a boldness in that we just look to God. He opens the way.

Same thing with Gideon's army here of things that have taken place. I look back with fondness of talking about that period of time when God began to give it to us even at the Feast of Tabernacles about Gideon. We talked about it one time, I remember there in Nashville area, talking about Gideon after the Feast and talking about some of these things that took place and sure enough this is where we were in time and God began to bring us to that to do a job, to do part of it anyway, a part of that job that was in front of us. So again here, incredible stories as we continue on.

There's another one that we come to that has great meaning for us and that's the story of Joshua. We're going to go there next. So understand that the things of the Red Sea continue on, it's a part of us; things about Gideon, they continue on, they are patterns that God uses in our life on a spiritual plane that we relate to and they mean a great deal to us. And they can only mean a great deal to you if indeed

God has given it to you and it's a part of your being. And so we come to a particular phase in time here when we begin to look at what God is doing and that's in the story of Joshua. We went through part of this on Pentecost but we need to go through it again and add to it because these things should show us and remind us of how God works.

It's important to learn from that, how God works. There is a way that God works with us and I think of the patterns of how God worked with Moses. I look at the patterns of how God worked with Gideon to give him greater courage in the battle that was in front of him. And then I think of how these stories should remind us of the importance of how God works with us, to lead us; and that's very much about His government, truly is, something we understand, something that He's established in His Church especially as we've added to that structure speedily, in a speedy fashion over the past few years here. Who would ever dream we'd come back to that point in time. An apostle, two prophets, three evangelists. That would have been the farthest thing from my mind to think we'd be back in that structure again after what took place in times past – some of that structure that was never there as far as prophets concerned. Senior elders, elders, associate elders and there are more to come. There are many of you who are ready right now but it's not time yet to do it as far as ordinations concerned because of what God's going to be doing and how God works with us. But there are many of you who by all rights, you're ready, in the sense of those who are part of the past, those who have been around for a period of time and they're going to be added to the battle in front of us. But I'm inspired by it, types and patterns of things that are coming.

And I hope all of us do respect that order that God has given in the Church, because every once in a while I hear of someone who has messed up in that area as far as an honour, as far as recognizing how God works through the Body, and how we need to indeed have respect to those offices and to the individuals who are there. There are lessons in that: there is an order of things – don't let that order escape you. So every once in a while sometimes people slip and they let some of that slip in their life and their respect toward someone who perhaps is their senior elder, or their elder in their area and you need to remember God's in it and where God is in it.

Joshua 1:1 - After the death of Moses the servant of the Eternal it came to pass that the Eternal spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you, and all this people, I think of things we've gone through... Moses wasn't allowed to go into the Promised Land. He worked with the children of Israel for 40 years but God had in mind to do this in another way and some of the things He did when He took the children of Israel into the Promised Land. I think of where we are in time. I think of Philadelphia and so often Mr. Armstrong teaching in the Church and we looked forward to Jesus Christ returning. We had our eyes very sharply focused on that. We knew that's what this was all about and we knew that we were at the end-time. We didn't know how close. We were always told since I was in the Church in 1969 to plan 10 years ahead; and sometimes within that framework was 5 years because it could happen very quickly as well, things could happen quickly in Europe. So we always had that vision, we always watched things that were happening in Europe and things that were happening in the news, we've always been that way.

I've told this before in times past how with every car that we've ever purchased we've always thought this is probably the last one; done that for 30 years. This is probably the last car we're going to have to get... it's going to last us through this. And yet, we're now down to this point in time and each time the window has gotten closer and closer. We finally came to an apostasy and the things that took place there in 1994 and now after that point in time we started realizing things could happen very fast. We began to realize the Seals were already being opened; the 1st Seal had been opened at the apostasy.

How fast was it going to happen now? We didn't know yet. We didn't know where God was taking us. It's incredible what we've been through – those of you especially who've been on the entire journey. But again, it wasn't God's part to take Moses into the Promised Land; but we're now at the Promised Land. What they went into was very physical. What we're getting ready to is physical and spiritual because it's what everything in the Bible has ever talked about, that we look to a city, every one of faith; says, 'they looked to a city whose builder and maker was God.'⁹ Mount Zion. Spiritual Jerusalem, spiritual Israel. Everything that God is moulding and fashioning and we realize the first part of it comes to the earth with Jesus Christ; 144,000 who are resurrected with Christ, or resurrected to be with Christ when Christ returns, to be in the God Family, to rule on this earth for 1,000 years it says. Incredible! And then at the end of the 1,000 years, millions, maybe billions will be added to that Family by that time...and then a Great White Throne. Incredible things that are in front of us.

And so God is telling them in this particular case here on a physical plane; they're getting ready to go into a physical Promised Land. Moses wasn't going to do it, but Joshua was now chosen to do it. And so He says, **Moses My servant is dead, now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people to the land which I am giving to them, to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread, there I have given it to you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.** So this was the beginning of something on a very physical plane, in a very limited way because this is going way back in time when they were small in size. God had plans for expanding that through time because Manasseh was to be given something even greater. Ephraim was to be given something greater in territory and size. This country that was just sitting here for hundreds of years that people hadn't come to develop, that they think maybe some came to, some Vikings came to, some different ones came to at times – sitting here until a period of time that God gave it to Manasseh, a period of time that God gave Canada, Australia, New Zealand and different areas to Great Britain – Ephraim. Incredible the things that God had planned in time to give to Israel – because they're Israel. Incredible!

He went on to say here then what was going to be given here; **No man shall be able to stand before you, in other words to prevent you, all the days of your life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with you: I will not leave you, nor forsake you.** And so again here, giving Joshua encouragement, telling them this is the time, you are in that time. What I told Moses and what I told the children of Israel, now I'm giving to you and the children of Israel this land. And if you go on in time you see those promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob –they went on into time and greater blessings in time that God was going to give.

I think of those who can't stand before it either. I think of those who can't prevent it. We talked about the dream in the story here recently about Jacob and Jacob's pillar stone. What an incredible story to realize that he set up this stone that he had this dream on about what God was going to do with Israel and what God had planned in time for His Family that went far into the future. And here he was on this journey because of what his father had told him; that there were certain things that had to be done a certain way that God's going to give to us and build through us and here this same stone has been under the throne in London for so long until just recently. They finally moved it out. 'Jacobs Pillar Stone'; had the sign underneath it. Incredible! Stone of Scone. Stories like this that you can't write, you can't make up, stories about a kingly line from the time of David who would reign over Israel till it was all over with, till the very end, till Jesus Christ came, till the Messiah came and would take over that throne, that

⁹ Hebrews 11:10

government over all the earth. But that throne as well over all Israel. And to come to understand that all the kings and queens and all those who've ruled over Great Britain, they're Jewish – they're descendants of king David, but they won't acknowledge that, they won't admit that. People think you're stark raving mad until they go back in history and find out these things are in history. Incredible stories!

He said, **I'll not leave you, nor forsake you.** And so I think of history and I think of things that happened to Great Britain when they began to rise and people who came up against them and things that happened. I think of the Spanish Armada that was buried in the sea basically; an entire fleet, a great naval force that came up against Great Britain – something that happened as powerfully as it did and destroyed an entire fleet as a whole. They weren't able to come up and conquer Great Britain. I think of things that have happened in different wars, miraculous things, things that are written in history that people have seen; including angelic beings that are recorded in history of things that people have seen they have no explanation for, things the Germans experienced and did and so forth in different wars. I think of how close Germany came to having a nuclear weapon and yet they weren't able to have it because it wasn't time, it wasn't for them to have. God says He'll prevent those; He'll prevent things from happening in order for you to be great, in order for you to accomplish what you need to accomplish. And He's fulfilled His promises all the way to the end; and then He says I'll take it from you.

Verse 6 - Be strong and of good courage: for unto this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, God tells us that. That's what He wants us to be. You can't do this half way, you've got to throw yourself into it with all of your being, with what you believe, with what you're doing, with what God is placing before you and that's how God says to do the job; He wants us to do it boldly and confidently and that's how it's going to be accomplished. He's built that within us.

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, and no one is going to be able to stand in the way because God's going to do it – that's what gives the greater courage; **which Moses My servant commanded you: do not turn to it from the right hand or to the left,** and so everything that God's given to us is same message. We don't turn to the right hand, nor to the left... it is exactly what it is, what God has given to us. We believe the same thing, we follow the same thing. **...that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate,** think upon it, **therein day and night,** and so God has given us those things to help us to grow, to be able to be close to His way of life, to be close to the truths that He's given to us. It is our strength, it is our power; **that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.** That's the way it is in life.

We're in the middle of a series right now that we've interrupted about tithes and offerings and we're going to go back to it. But it's incredible here the things that God says about our response to Him and our obedience to Him and whether or not we prosper, whether we're cursed or whether we're blessed. And sometimes people wonder why everything's going wrong in their life...and come to find out that it's because they rob God. If you rob God, life is not going to go well for you. If you take from God life is not going to go well for you. If you have that knowledge and you have the understanding...not only will it not go well with you, it will definitely go against you. You can take it to the bank! As much as the other side of obedience... you can take it to the bank. God'll bless you, God'll be with you, God will not forsake you; it's about a relationship with God. It's not about the money – and that's a hard thing sometimes for people to comprehend. It's about a relationship with God Almighty. Anyway, we'll come back to that story.

...for then you shall make your way prosperous; if you obey God, if you follow God, if you put God first God will bless you, He'll fight, He'll help fight your battles, but it doesn't mean everything's going to be a cake-walk. It doesn't mean you're not going to have hard things to go through, on the contrary, it's because of the hard things that you're made stronger. Every hard thing I've ever gone through has made be who I am, has made me have the strength and confidence that I have. And so it is with you...**and then you shall have good success.**

Verse 9 - Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; you know, it's inspiring to go through the book of Hebrews and go through Hebrews 11 and see what all the people of faith have done and the boldness and the confidence of a relationship they had with God. So He says, **haven't I commanded you?** It's not a suggestion. He says, **Be strong and of good courage.** How do you do that? Be strong? You can't work it up on your own, it's a matter of obedience, it's a matter of a relationship with God. You have to know where the strength comes from, the power – the strength comes from God, the courage comes from God; the boldness comes from God. If you make it up, if you work it up, it's fake; and when you go into certain battles you'll fall because you can't do those things successfully when it come to spiritual growth and training. **...do not be afraid, neither be dismayed: for the Eternal your God is with you wherever you go.** What incredible confidence to have; to know that whatever you do in your life God is there.

I was thinking the other day about elders in the Church, about people who've been ordained and the blessing we've had of being able to add to the strength of the Church and I was thinking how that sometimes in times past and maybe even to this day sometimes we look at those offices and those positions as being something we want to attain to, we want that. Or that there's something of 'we've arrived' or 'we've made it' on a spiritual plane if that happens in our life and we've so missed the mark if we think in any fashion like that because there are people in our past who have thought in those ways and looked to those times in their life or desired those things in their life and I think... Do we not grasp what it means to be begotten of God's spirit? Do we not grasp the greatness, the power, the awesomeness of what it means to be a child of God? ... to be one of God's children? Do we not grasp the power that's there? ...that if you're one of God's children the boldness and the confidence that we really *should* have if we see that? And the more you see that and understand that the more confidence and boldness you will have – that everything that happens in your life; that God is there. Everything that happens in your life! Because God is moulding and fashioning *you*. He's not moulding and fashioning people in the world right now – they're just living their life until a time they're able to be called to be moulded and fashioned. In time God is going to mould and fashion everyone who will chose that for themselves. But you have that now, the opportunity to be moulded and fashioned, the opportunity to grow and to understand to be a begotten son of God, what that means. The world doesn't understand that truth.

I think of Mr. Armstrong. One of the great truths that God gave to Mr. Armstrong: *What our purpose in life is about – to be in the God Family! Not to be up there drifting around in heaven on a cloud, or down in hell and having some little weird beings with flames shooting out their ears and their skulls and they're pitching these pitchforks in your rear end and everything's hot; but you can't quite die. But man you're hot!* And you're going to be tormented and you're going to be tortured. You think, "What kind of a hideous, fiendish God would do something like that?" What a *sick perverted mind* to think any being would be like that let alone God Almighty; and yet that's the way the world had painted Him. The world of traditional Christianity has this *concept, they've used it in sermons, "You know, you're going to go to hell!"*

There are situations in life sometimes between religions and what people feel and people that are so ready to condemn each other in their religious beliefs – even in traditional Christianity; and it's, "If you don't believe this way you're going to go to hell! You're going to burn in fire!" And people talk like that and you think, "How can you talk that way, how can you think that God would have some kind of satisfaction that if you don't obey Him that His satisfaction is that you're going to be suffering the rest of eternity?" Look at some of your trials in life... What is one of the hardest trials in your life that comes to your mind right away, one of the hardest things you've ever had to experience in your life...the gut wrenching pain and sorrow and hurt that you're experiencing. Now just multiply that for years and years and years, just a continual sorrow and unhappiness in life and misery in life and you can't kill yourself because after all you're a spirit being of some sort, you're immortal, you have an immortal soul they say.

So you're living for eternity, being tortured for eternity... What kind of sick perverted God would that be? And yet that's what so many in the world choose to worship – Baal. That's the kind of god Baal was, that's the kind of god Satan is. He wants people to think that way, to feel that kind of torment because *he's* tormented; because *he's* tormented, because he knows that his end is about here, his time of reign is about over with and so he wants mankind to have a kind of fear of God, of this 'unfair God' that's treated him in the way he was, is treated. Sick, sick, sick! God just says when you die, you're dead; you go back to the dust of the earth. Nothing goes on. You don't have an immortal soul like the Catholic church wants people to believe; that when you die you go up there and you're wafting around on some kind of... you know, "he always liked to fish so he's up there fishing in heaven." What a boring life to fish for all eternity! You can't watch soccer and football... well maybe you can up there, I don't know, you can watch that for eternity or something like that.

What do people want to do the rest of their life? Sit around and look on the face of God? That's what some believe. You're just going to be up there somehow and it's like this giant soft beanbag, this great big cloud and you're looking on God's face for all eternity because that's what God wants – for you to just look on His face. Where does that come from? How distorted is that kind of thinking? How well is it even thought out? How does God even talk about such things? But that's the concept people have come up with about religion. No, God desires a Family. What a beautiful thing that God gave to Mr. Armstrong to understand; that the world Elohim used in Genesis... that's why God started using the word Elohim in Genesis... because it means God Family. He shows the purpose from the very beginning – His creation of mankind is for the *God Family!* ...not the angelic family, but to be greater than the angels. That's why I love what it says in Hebrews; that why I love in Hebrews when it quotes Psalms 8 when David looked into the heavens and he said, "What is man that You're mindful of him?" And then Hebrews goes on to show what that's all about and that God's purpose...and it says, 'you're made a little while lower than the angels.'¹⁰ Yeah we are. We're made physical, we can die.

We're not spirit beings, we don't have eternal life in us, we can't live into eternity. We're temporary. That's the way God made us; temporary beings that can die – for the purpose of actually dying. God intended from the very beginning that the vast majority of mankind in the first 6,000 years would live and die, not go off to some place in the middle of the earth... well, I don't know where that is now, and someplace up there, wherever that is, in heaven to drift around for eternity. That was never God's purpose! You live and you die and you don't have life again until God gives it to you because you don't

¹⁰ Hebrews 2:7

have an immortal soul. It says, 'the soul that sins, it shall die.'¹¹ What a beautiful thing; 'the soul that sins.' And who sins? God says every human being except one has sinned so the penalty of life upon those who've lived is death. So everyone dies, in time, that's God's purpose; until He resurrects them, until He gives them another physical life, or spirit life.

That's why I love what it says in Revelation there when it talks about the second death. You don't hear ministers in the world ever touching those scriptures because if you start talking about a second death you think, "How can you die twice?" You live twice, but how does that fit in? And so God revealed to Mr. Armstrong that our purpose for existence is to be made a little while lower than the angels. And that's what it said about Jesus Christ in Hebrews. It says, 'so what do we see now? We see Jesus Christ who was made a little while lower than the angels.' In other words He lived a physical human life. He lived and breathed. He could die. He *did* die for three days! Three days and three nights He was dead in the heart of the earth. Not a day and a half from Friday sunset to Sunday morning. He said the only proof I leave that I am the Messiah; I'll be in the grave for three days and three nights, in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.¹² And so that's exactly what happened. So we see Jesus Christ who is made a little while lower than the angels now given glory and honour; that's inherited all things, all things have been placed under His feet and it shows that that's what's intended for all of mankind, that we too are going to receive that same inheritance along with Jesus Christ. What an incredible thing to be in the God Family – made greater than the angelic kingdom. .. 'a little while lower than the angels' but with God's purpose to be in the God Family. Never to be like God the Father, but to be in the God Family, to be eternal spirit beings far greater than the angelic realm. Beautiful picture! Something that God has been working out for eons. We don't know the time.

Going on with the story here in what is given. God said in **Joshua 1:6 - Be strong and of good courage: for unto this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land.** And in time we receive an inheritance. That's what I just talked about from the book of Hebrews and what God intended for mankind, that we be made a little while lower than the angelic realm and we're almost to the point in time where God's going to have the first part of His Family; not the first one (being Jesus Christ). Jesus Christ is referred to as the first of the first fruits in God's Family who has been in heaven with God the Father for 2,000 years. But now we're at a point in time where God has worked with 144,000 from the very beginning of time, from the very beginning of creation to now – 144,000 throughout time that are going to be resurrected and come with Jesus Christ to reign and rule on the earth in the God Family.

So it says, **only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded you: do not turn from it to the right hand nor to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth.** Again, you're to meditate on it as I read earlier.

Verse 9 – Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; over and over again here. What an incredible message; that we're to be strong and of good courage and you receive that from God, you look to God to make you strong, to help you be of good courage, to go through whatever trial, hardship, difficulty you need to go through in order to be made stronger.

Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, neither be dismayed: We can't afford to have that in our life, to be afraid. We're to have a right awe and fear toward God;

¹¹ Ezekiel 18:20

¹² Matthew 12:40

not of this world, not of time, not of mankind, not of things that are against you. It's a matter of looking to God and keeping your eyes focused on God. ...**neither dismayed; for the Eternal your God is with you wherever you go.** And so that's why we started off talking about some of the things we did; because of a confidence here, a boldness that if God has called you, He's with you. How much do you believe that? When you get into a difficult time – how much do you believe, how much do you look to God and pray to God and say I know You're there, I know You love me, I know You've called me and helping me to love You and learning to love You and we're able to have this relationship; because most on this earth can't have that at this time.

Verse 11 - Pass through the multitude and command the people, saying, Prepare provisions for yourself; for within three days you shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Eternal your God has given you to possess. And now, we know that we are right at 98 weeks...incredible where we are in time.

I'm going to stop there today. We'll continue on with Joshua next week; a very inspiring story as we get into some of the things we're going to be discussing here with Joshua as well. These are all a type for us to live by and if you have that relationship in your mind of things that God has given to you, of a pattern of how God works with you, of something He did with a physical people and understand where we are at the end of this age – that God intends us to grasp this on a spiritual plane of how God works with us. It's a very inspiring thing and it's one of those things that helps you to have the kind of boldness and courage that God wants you to have at the end –time here.

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