

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Testimony of Jesus Christ—Part IV **Jon W. Brisby; 11-11-00**

This afternoon, brethren, I want to continue and actually complete this series on the testimony of Jesus Christ. This will be the fourth and hopefully the final part to complete the comments that I wanted to bring to you. It has not been and wasn't intended to be very comprehensive in covering every single usage in the Bible of the term "testimony" or "witness," and yet, basically, it has been my purpose to give you a synoptic overview—to make certain very key points in summary—which I think are very beneficial for all of us, especially when we evaluate what is meant by this term, "the testimony of Jesus Christ," and its value and its purpose and its intent in our lives now in preparing for the literal return of Jesus Christ.

We've already seen in past sermons that Christ brought in His own ministry something that was actually a formal declaration of Truth. It wasn't just an informal conversation. It was a formal sworn statement—comparable to a deposition before a court of law. That's exactly what He brought. It was His legal testimony—His sworn statement. That statement is an assertion of His honesty and His integrity as a true witness. That's what we're talking about when we're speaking in the realm of testimony. It is a legal witness. And the one making the witness is certifying before a court of law that he is honest and that he is telling the truth. And that's exactly what Christ did.

Those who believe what Christ said and count Him to be an honest witness are those with whom He has a relationship. They are those who hold to His testimony as having value. But those who reject what He said—those who reject the very testimony of Jesus Christ by what they believe and what they practice—are calling Him a liar. They're saying that His witness is not true.

We also saw in past sermons that Christ referred to Moses in substantiating the validity of His witness and His testimony, because that testimony began with Moses. It wasn't that which Christ brought for the first time in His own flesh and blood, in His ministry. No, He only continued by His own words in the flesh that which had already been given way back at the time of Moses to the children of Israel. And it was the same Being—this Being who became Jesus Christ—who, then, was God of the second part, who revealed that Way. And it was a testimony, it was a statement that He carved with His own finger in the stone tablets. That's where that testimony was first recorded. That testimony was first given to Moses. It was preserved in the ark that was later called the ark of the testimony because of what it held. The value of the ark was in relationship to what it held

within it—which were those tables of stone. That ark was also housed—resided within—the tabernacle, which was also called the tabernacle of the testimony because the tabernacle's value was also in relation to what it held.

Moses, we saw, also prophesied of a coming Prophet—one who was called *that Prophet*—whom the people would hear, even though they didn't hear it at the time of Moses. Yet, it was a prophecy of a time when God's people would hear and they would respond to that witness—that which Christ gave. And those who would have an opportunity for a relationship with Him would be those who would believe the witness—the testimony. Let's notice it in Acts chapter 3 and verse 20 just by way of introduction once again:

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

No, they didn't hear Moses, and they didn't hear that God back then, but he said, by comparison, there would be a day coming when the people of God would finally hear.

Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

What destruction are we talking about? We're talking about the second death, because this is referring to the institution of the Church, the ministry of Jesus Christ—who was that Prophet—and that by His ministry He certified the original testimony, but continued and expanded it for the purposes of the Church in the spiritual realm—those who would be called to have their minds opened and given the chance to receive the Holy Spirit which ancient Israel did not have. Those who received that opportunity, who were baptized, who received the Holy Spirit, would be the ones who would become accountable for holding the testimony of Jesus Christ. And those who hold it in honesty and integrity have the opportunity for salvation and eternal life. And those who reject that testimony, once having received it and once knowing it, are those who would be destroyed from among the people—suffering the second death, with no further opportunity for eternal life. That's the warning.

So he said, "Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." But what does that hearing mean? Does it mean just those who heard Him speak? Those who listened to the words? What does it mean to hear Him? It's not just listening, brethren. It means believing His witness, believing what He said, considering Him to be an honest,

trustworthy witness, with integrity—not calling Him a liar. No one thinks that they call Jesus Christ a liar but I'm telling you, brethren, the majority of human beings on the face of this earth who currently, today, use the name of Jesus Christ, do not realize they are simultaneously calling Him a liar by every action they take. Everything they claim to believe and profess is exactly opposite to what Christ brought and what He revealed in His testimony. And those, therefore—even innocently—who are deceived and reject that testimony *are calling Christ a liar*.

The tragic thing is, the majority of those have not even been called to a knowledge of the Truth and are not even at risk, but I'll tell you who is at risk: those of our former brethren who were called out, who were given open minds to receive that testimony as a priceless gift—a pearl of great price—but who have since rejected it for whatever reason, who have begun to challenge. They are the ones who are at risk right now, brethren. And any of us could fall into that same category if we do not hold onto that original testimony to the very end.

We saw last time—in the last sermon that I gave—that Christ also selected men to continue His ministry in the flesh after His ascension. Those who were commissioned to teach exactly what Christ had Himself testified. Remember, we started with Christ, but Christ referred back to Moses. And we analyzed everything that was a part of the origin of that testimony at the time of Moses. But it related and came back full circle again to Christ. And then we analyzed the continuation of the testimony as it was preached by those whom Christ sent. Those who were commissioned in the flesh to continue that ministry were to preach that testimony uncorrupted. Nothing was to be changed. Those men became the ministers to the Church—the equivalent of the Levites, as we saw last time—whose primary purpose was to protect the tabernacle containing the ark and that testimony. And, so, what we found last time is that when you are thinking and when you are speaking of the ministry—God's ministry, the representatives of Jesus Christ—you are thinking of that office of responsibility that is much the same as the Levites—the priesthood of the Old Testament.

And the ministry's responsibility in the Spirit is the same as that of the Levites in the flesh, which was to protect the testimony—to preserve it against corruption by any human being, any force. It was their responsibility. Even their tents and the way that God arranged them and their families in surrounding the very tabernacle speaks of this responsibility because it was their duty to be there to serve at that tabernacle on behalf of the people, and to protect the testimony. And so the ministry's responsibility in spiritual correlation is exactly the same, because it is the same testimony that the Church received. No, we don't have the tables of stone with the writing of God, but we have the words which were written on those tables, and even more, we have the very spiritual fulfilment—the expansion that Christ gave to let us understand the spiritual intent of the laws, those statutes and judgments. And they are as valid today as they ever were when Christ first gave them. And it is the

ministry's responsibility to hold firm to that way—to teach it in an unadulterated manner, without perversion, without personalization of any kind.

Even the majority of men given the responsibility and assigned to preserve that testimony did not do it. They wanted to customize it, they wanted to make it more palatable to themselves and to the people, who clamored for a humanized, and watered-down doctrine. The faithful ministry—as we saw last time—will never change that doctrine because they recognize it, as do the faithful people of God, as the unalterable words of Jesus Christ—His very testimony, His witness, which cannot change because it is Truth from the beginning.

We also noted last time that we ourselves, as members of that church, also became witnesses, just as ancient Israel became witnesses by virtue of the things they saw—the things that God gave to them, showed them. They became a witness, and so did every one of you—as a member of the church—become a witness to the testimony, because we received that very same testimony, and as true Christians, it also became a part of us. Let's notice it in I Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 4:

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. That in every thing you are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.

Is this saying that we received every piece of knowledge that could ever be known? Absolutely not. But, obviously we are speaking of the gift of the body of knowledge which God intended for the Church to have, and for His people to use in order to overcome, in order to become like Jesus Christ, in order to prepare themselves for the literal return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. He did not give us less than what we needed. He gave us everything that was necessary for our salvation.

In every thing you are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.

Think about it. The very sworn statement, the affidavit of Jesus Christ Himself—that which originated even in the codification on Mount Sinai in tables of stone—is the very same thing which has been confirmed in your very life, if you are a member of that Church. How significant is that? "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift." No, it's saying, brethren, that regardless of your station in life right now, regardless of what you have physically in comparison with others, you have been blessed with something that is beyond compare in value with anything on the face of this earth. "That you come behind in no gift." There is no other gift of any kind given to any other human being that can even closely compare to that which you have received—because you received the testimony of Jesus Christ. And I wonder if we really appreciate it, or if we are unsatisfied with it—considering ourselves to be somehow without something that we

need or should have. Or do we recognize that there is no people—not a single person on the face of this earth who has been given more than each one of us have, if we have received that testimony? "So that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"—which is what that plan and testimony is all about.

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." What is this telling us? The gift of this testimony for us who are a part of the Church in the last days will be confirmed by us in valuing it more than anything else and holding onto it until His return. The setting is the future. The value of that testimony is not in the past, it's not just because it was given to an ancient people at the time of Moses, it's not just because it was confirmed at the time Christ walked on this earth in His own flesh. It's not just important because He gave it to the apostles to teach in the early years of the Church. Its value is for the last days and for those who are a part of that Body now and are likely to be the ones who are going to have to stand and defend that testimony even until the literal return of Jesus Christ. And I wonder if we're ready to be those people? If we love it that much?

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." That's the day He comes back, brethren—the day pictured by the Feast of Trumpets. That's the day He comes back to take possession of His kingdom and to set up the government of God on this earth. And our purpose is to hold His testimony until that very day, or—as I have said—until the day we draw our last breath. Are we ready for whatever might face us before the fulfilment of that time? Well, that's what we're going to talk about in my closing comments today on this topic. We're going to talk about the future. We've talked about the past, and as that testimony goes—as we have seen—through its different phases from Moses to Christ to the first apostles who were called to the ministry of the last days. And today we're going to continue and we're going to talk about the promulgation of that testimony—the safeguarding of that very testimony even unto the return of Jesus Christ—an event yet to occur in the future. Because that testimony of Christ also included the prophecies of the last days and those things which would be fulfilled in preparation for His Second Coming. Let's notice. Revelation chapter 1 and verse 1:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ [wasn't it the Revelation of John? No, it was the Revelation of Jesus Christ], which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare record.

Now this is speaking of John who was the recorder—he was the scribe who wrote down the things that he saw in vision. "His servant John, who bare record"—the Greek word for "record" is *martureo*, the same Greek word that we have already seen so many times that is speaking of a witness, of a testimony of a legal nature—a certification under oath. So John—the servant who wrote down the things he saw in vision bear record—he wrote it down as a legal witness of the things that he saw.

"His servant John, who bare record," of what? ". . . of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ." That Word of God is the same, it is synonymous with the testimony. "Of the word of God, and the testimony"—*marturea*—there is that word again. "The testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw." So within that one statement you find that John was a witness—he was a legal witness—by the things that he wrote down. And what was he witnessing? He was a witness and he wrote down the very witness of Christ. Christ's testimony—His legal statement—was that which John saw in the unfolding of all that is a part of the book of Revelation. And he wrote it down just as he was instructed through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and it became a witness as well.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand. [Verse 9:] I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ [for the testimony—the *marturea*—of Jesus Christ, the legal witness, the sworn statement of the living God].

Now, there are those who want to claim, therefore, that the testimony of Jesus Christ is strictly the book of Revelation. Is that true? No, the book of Revelation unfolds in detail all of those events that God intended for the Church to have—a book that speaks of events that occur leading up to His return, all of which is encompassed under seven seals of a book. But that whole book of Revelation is based upon the testimony that was given to Moses. That's where it started. The book of Revelation is only a continuation and an expansion upon that same testimony—it gives more details about that testimony, but it is not exclusively, in and of itself, the testimony. No, the testimony has always been preserved from the time it was given to the Israelites—God's chosen people—all the way through time. It was that original testimony that gave us the Sabbath and the Holy Days. And what are the Sabbath and the Holy Days but those things which picture the fulfilment of God's plan? It pictures God's dealing with man from the beginning of time—the calling of His people. All the way from the Passover to the Last Great Day it shows exactly how God is working and will save mankind. That's the testimony. What is the book of Revelation? It gives you more details about the fulfilment of those things that are a part of that pictured by the Sabbath and the Holy Days. It is all part of the testimony of Jesus Christ—His sworn statement. Revelation chapter 6 and verse 9:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony [*marturea*] which they held.

I gave you this Scripture in the first sermon and commented on that which we know and were taught from the beginning: this fifth seal represents the great tribulation, that time

yet in the future when the wayward people of God will be brought back—those who have been called, and who know better by virtue of their call to a knowledge of the Truth, yet who have forsaken that Truth and have allowed themselves to become deceived by whatever means, whether it's because of their attachment to the things of the world, their frustration over the bad fruits they saw in the ministers and others in the church who did not live up to the things they professed, or simply because they became weary in well-doing. Whichever category they fall into, we're talking about even the majority of the last day church who did exactly what their predecessors—ancient Israel—did in forsaking God, and turning away from the Truth. And yet that tribulation is going to be there as the means by which the Church is going to be brought back out of apostasy—just as God used tribulation and captivity to bring back His ancient people to respect Him and to put first things first in their lives.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

Somebody loved the testimony. It wasn't their own testimony—it wasn't that which *they* created out of their hearts and minds. They were holding the testimony of someone else. It was the testimony of Jesus Christ. And these were those who were willing to give their very lives because they did not value their human lives more than they valued the gift that they had been given in the form of that testimony—that Truth, that Revelation which came even to the last day Church. And so there are those who, from the first century and beyond, gave up their lives under persecution and trial because they were not willing to compromise it in the final analysis.

I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

You see, those who suffered as martyrs for the sake of that Word in the first centuries were not the end, because there is going to be a huge martyrdom and a tribulation that is going to come before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Those are the fellow servants—the fellow laborers—some of which are also going to have to pay that ultimate price in the flesh to prove that they love that testimony more than anything else.

Now there are some who want to confuse that testimony and what we were taught concerning the resurrections, who read this and think, "Well, if these are crying with a loud voice, and yet they're dead people, who are these people and how is it they have life even though they were dead and they are under the altar?" And, of course, the thing we

understood from the beginning is that this is a vision. These are not truly people who have been resurrected at this time and are talking and making statements. John saw these things as a vision, and this book of Revelation is that which was given in vision for him to see—to recognize the things that would occur. In the very same way that, in vision, he was projected to the very throne of God in the third heaven. Does that mean John was literally at God's throne and He saw God the Father sitting on the throne? That's what it says in the book, if you want to interpret it literally that way that's what you have to conclude. No, that's not what is happening. John saw these things in vision. And so these people who were martyred are not in the flesh, or in the spirit—having been resurrected—crying out for vindication. No, this is part of the vision. This is part of the vision that is given. Those who are martyred and are even now in the dust of the ground, in their graves, will be part of that first resurrection. They will come up along with all of those who have died in the faith at the time Jesus Christ returns. And it is going to be a club of those who proved by their fruits that they loved the testimony of Jesus Christ more than anything else that they possessed and they were willing to give their very lives to preserve that testimony because they would not call Jesus Christ a liar no matter what pressures were put on them. Revelation 12 and verse 10:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ. For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him. [Who was it that overcame the accuser? And how did they do so?] They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.

You see, it wasn't that those people were free from sin, that they were perfect in the flesh, without mistakes. No, but because their hearts were right and they would not say that right is wrong and wrong is right, they defended the testimony of Jesus Christ, which gave them eligibility to receive the very blood of the Lamb to cover and to cleanse them of their sins. And because they were cleansed they were given, in comparison, white robes and a relationship with the Son and with the Father. They overcame that accuser. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Whose testimony? The testimony of Jesus Christ—the perfect Law, the statutes and the judgements which are a part of His sworn statement—that which He testified as a faithful witness as being true and without error.

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives unto the death." *They loved not their lives unto death.* They loved that testimony more than their very physical lives, and when the chips were down, they proved by what they were willing to keep and what they were willing to trade, what mattered most. Are we ready for that test yet, brethren? Are we of those who may be called upon in that day—maybe sooner than we think—to lay down even our physical lives because we value the testimony that we were given more than anything else? Are we ready

to pass that test? Are we of those people that are mentioned in prophecy that will stand firm and do exploits, even as it says in Daniel chapter 11, by virtue of their faithfulness?

Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child [that woman being the Church]. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Who is this remnant? It is also a part of that Body which knows the Truth. These are probably those that were forced to go through the great tribulation in order to certify they loved it—because they were shaky along the way and traded it for something else—and, yet, by tribulation they will come to appreciate it and value it, and they will receive their salvation. And it is also likely some of those who are certified to go through that martyrdom for God's purpose, yet are not guilty. Because you remember, one of the seven churches of Revelation is the church of Smyrna. And like the church of Philadelphia—whoever those people are, whoever is represented by that church—we're talking about individuals who God did not criticize as being defective, and yet, their responsibility was to endure persecution even unto death. Read the accounts in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, and you will see that Smyrna did not come under condemnation, and yet, they were still going to be required to endure and make the ultimate sacrifice for that testimony. So when you are talking about those against whom Satan will throw out his wrath and devour, you're probably talking about a combination of both those who need that tribulation and that chastisement in order to come back to the Truth, as well as those—for example's sake, and whatever God's will and purpose is—who yet have been faithful but are still going to be required to make that sacrifice as martyrs.

Now I think all too much, people focused in years past on wanting to make sure they were the ones who were going to get to be in that place of safety for three and one half years. And I full well expect, by virtue of the fruits that we saw when the church crumbled and when the Truth was repudiated, and when 1972 came and went and no fleeing, and Christ didn't return in 1975, that many became disillusioned because those interpretations did not come to pass. And they were only holding onto those doctrines—the testimony of

Jesus Christ, including the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and all of the fundamental things that we were taught from the beginning of this age—and were just "putting up" with those doctrines because they thought it would help them avoid the tribulation. They were afraid of the prophecies of those things that would occur before the return of Jesus Christ more than they respected and loved and hallowed God's laws. And so they were willing to go along with it for a time but when they didn't see the fulfillment of those prophecies, they began to doubt. And then it became evident that those truths, to them, were just a burden, not something that they loved and valued, not those things which really changed their lives for the better, but instead, something that they were just putting up with, hoping it would get them into the Kingdom and to avoid the great tribulation. In essence, to have their ticket to the place of safety so that they could sit on the sidelines and watch the rest of the world go through the problems, while they waited three and one half years to receive salvation.

No, but many people ignored the fact that there are some, even of the faithful, who are still going to go through and be martyred before the return of Christ. Now, I focus my personal time, brethren, on trying to be prepared to be one of those martyrs—one of those that may have to give up my life for the sake of that testimony. Now, if I get protected in a place of safety, that's great, that's fine. But I would rather be prepared for that which may be God's will otherwise, because I don't want to be unprepared. *I don't want to be unprepared.* Any one of us may be ones represented by the church of Smyrna who have been faithful, who have not corrupted the doctrine, who have held the testimony in honesty and integrity, and yet, may still be required—for His purpose and His will—to make that ultimate sacrifice.

But I can guarantee you this: those even who are protected in a place of safety are going to face incredible trials just like ancient Israel—who were absolutely protected in every way in their Exodus from Egypt, and yet, they didn't feel safe at all. God protected them without a doubt. They could look back on it and say, "You bet, look what He did. He saved us. We walked through the Red Sea. He gave us water in the desert. He gave us manna from heaven. He gave us everything that we needed." And yet, didn't they grumble and complain and murmur the whole way? Why? Because they felt their lives were under threat the whole time. Were they really in danger of losing their lives? No, God was protecting them. But did they feel safe? Absolutely not. And so the hope of even being in a place of safety is not going to protect you or me, brethren, from the requirement of faith to believe in God's promises. And whether you are one who might have to pay with his life as a martyr, or whether you end up being one, in the final analysis, who was protected and sheltered by God in a place of safety, either way, there are going to be incredible tests of faith. And to deal with those tests in the right attitude, without turning and denying Christ and His testimony is going to require a belief in the witness—that those things which He said are true, and that they are valuable.

Who is it that will value the possession of Christ's testimony so much that they will be willing to give their very lives to preserve it? Can it be somebody who does not know what the Truth is? You see, because there are a lot of our former brethren who are out there throwing their hands up and saying, "You know, we can't really know what the Truth is. Well, we know some of the Truth, but we can't really know what all the Truth is. Christ is just going to have to make that known to us when He comes back. In the meantime, there's so much confusion among all these different splinter groups, surely God doesn't hold us accountable. We just all have to do the best that we can with what we know." Is that really what it means to hold onto the testimony of Jesus Christ?

I John 2 and beginning in verse 20. Verses 20 through 25 becoming one of my most favorite Scripture passages. I John 2 and verse 20: "But you have an unction from the Holy One." You have an unction from the Holy One, "and you know all things." Again, is this referring to all knowledge available on the face of the earth? Absolutely not. It means we have the knowledge that we need for salvation. God has not left us in doubt—without the things that we need. "You know all things. I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but *because you know it.*" Because you know it. So who are these that claim they don't know, when they've been in this church for decades and they were baptized at the time when that Truth was being proclaimed by God's chosen servant? The fruits of that Body were evident in so many ways in the personal lives of members of the church. And yet, now they claim they don't know. They're claiming that Christ didn't make the sworn statement, and He didn't give it to them, and they're not held accountable or responsible. John says, "I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it." And that means you, brethren. And that means me. We know the Truth. "And that no lie is of the truth." No lie is of the Truth. No, you can't take the testimony of Jesus Christ which is perfect as it was given, and then make changes to it and say that you're not denying Christ, and you're not calling Him a liar. Because you're trying to change His sworn statement and His affidavit to make it better and more applicable for modern times. But you can't update it and you're not going to make it better and neither am I. That kind of orientation is the orientation of anti-Christ.

Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denies the Son, the same hath not the Father, but he that acknowledges the Son hath the Father also. [Verse 24:]
Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning.

"Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning." And tell me, brethren, how any one of these ministers who were in the church for the last twenty, thirty, forty years, who are now preaching their own personalized concepts and calling it doctrine—including a Sunday Pentecost, and a corruption of divorce and remarriage, and a denial of healing as God's method for granting intervention for His people, and all of the other things that were a part of that original way, how are they ever able to claim that they're

holding onto what they originally believed? They cannot. They changed and there is no way around it. The only people who can fulfil that which John recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the very mind of God in verse 24 of I John chapter 2 are those who hold what they were originally taught by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong from the beginning.

Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

We're not talking about a game. We're not talking about something that has no value. We're talking about our very lives, brethren. And if we value it enough that we truly want to be in that Kingdom and we want to have eternal life in God's family with Jesus Christ, then we have to believe the testimony. The testimony is what was given from the beginning. It always starts with the revelation of Truth. God's people are always instructed and exhorted to hold onto what they had from the beginning, at any time when God has done a work. Show me a single instance in the Bible where God's Truth had to be updated and made better over the course of time at the instigation of ministers or lay members of the church. It just doesn't happen and it doesn't hold water. No, the ones who are going to be in the position, brethren, to be able to stand in that day of incredible trial—even to give up our very lives if necessary—are only going to be those who staunchly defend the Truth, who know and know that they know, so that nothing—*nothing*—will cause them to trade it in for something else.

Who is going to be able to stand and defend and hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ in that day? It's not going to be a single one of these who are confused about what the Truth is—those who believe they don't have the Truth, that they were only given partial truth, who have depended upon the scholars of the world in order to teach them what they think is Truth in the Bible. All of that is going to fall like a house of cards on the day they are put to the test and they have to make the choice. Are you willing to give up your life for what you think your concepts of truth are? No, only those who have held onto what they received from a chosen servant that came from the very mind and the heart of the Jesus Christ Himself as revealed doctrine are going to be so resolute in that day that they will be willing to die for their belief. All of these others that are toying with all of these corrupted doctrines and these changes and these interpretations of their own minds and hearts—all of that is going to go away with the first wave of the sea when hard times come.

"Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning." It's the only way, brethren. If we're a part of that group holding onto something, and we value it because we knew it was truth when it was given at the beginning, we can be part of those who will pass those tests of the last days. The rebellious Israelites, you see, are ones who

also claimed ignorance like too many in the church today are claiming. The Israelites, in their own way, claimed that they didn't know either and that they couldn't be held responsible.

Let's look at Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 6: "But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence . . ." Are we confident? Is whatever we're doing, whatever we're professing to believe, so ingrained within us that we can actually say that we have confidence? "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope . . ." For how long? Just until tomorrow? Maybe until next week, or the end of this year? No. ". . . firm unto the end." It has to be strong enough, and it has to be significant enough, and so compelling in our lives, brethren, that it's not just a passing fancy that has us mesmerized for the moment. No, it has to be so real and so valuable to us that we are going to be willing to hold it to the very end.

If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation [that's what the Israelites did. They provoked God in the wilderness. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation], in the day of temptation in the wilderness. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Now that's an interesting series right there. "Tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years." When did they tempt Him first? The temptation being referred to, actually, you might be able to justify it in a certain way. These were people who had not had enough evidence yet—perhaps we can argue they should have—necessarily to prove the veracity of God to save them. So it began with their tempting God, because they were afraid for their lives. Yes, they knew. They had seen the manifestation of the power of God in the ten plagues of Egypt. There was no doubt they were dealing with a Being of such incredible power this God could do anything He wanted. He could destroy or He could uphold. They had seen the certification of the power of that God, but they had not proven yet the veracity of God in helping them and to save them. God said He was their God and He was going to save them—He was going to take them into a land, protect them, and give them all of their needs and their wants, the things that they really needed to be happy and successful in that promised land. But, you see, human beings have trouble believing that God is honest. And so the first time they ran into trouble at the edge of the Red Sea they doubted. They doubted. They knew God had the power. They could not deny what they had seen in the land of Egypt, with that army—an incredible army, the strongest army on the face of the earth—bearing down on them, that had them between the rock and the sea. But they were not confident that God really intended to save them. He had the power to, but, obviously, they had not proved whether God intended to. So they tempted Him, and they accused Moses—even the servant God was using. But what followed? Did they not see the signs—that pillar of fire, and that cloud that moved around behind them and separated them

from that army and protected them from annihilation? And He dried that bed, and they walked through that sea, safely to the other side. The Egyptians pursued them into the sea and God destroyed them. From that time on, they knew, or they should have known, because they saw it with their own eyes. They became a witness. They became part of the very testimony of Jesus Christ by virtue of their experiences. So they started by tempting God.

But it says, "They proved me." "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years." Over and over and over again, over the next forty years, He gave them every evidence to know that His will was to give them salvation from their enemies. Not only was He a God of power, but He was a God of will who loved them and cared for them, and wanted good things for them. They were witnesses.

"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart. And they have not known my ways." Now maybe we should challenge the apostle who wrote this letter, because this doesn't make sense, does it? He just said they have not known my ways. Well, but we all know that God gave His laws and His statutes, and His judgements to the Israelites. How could they not have known God's Way? Weren't they given the laws—the understanding—that they were to keep the Sabbath? They were to keep the Holy Days? They were to fulfill all of the things that were a part of that testimony? How could they say they didn't know? And then it says, "They do always err in their heart. And they have not known my ways." Maybe God only gave them part of it, or maybe He gave them a little bit of error mixed in at the beginning and confused them, and they had a hard time trying to figure out what was really right in the end. Is that what really happened with the Israelites? Did they really not know? No, they knew, because they received that Word, the Truth, on tables of stone—and all of the statutes and judgments that were a further expansion of those ten points of law. They knew exactly what the law said. So what does it mean here when the apostle is saying that they didn't know? "They have not known my ways." Let's read on and we'll find out.

So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart [of what?] of unbelief [in what?] in departing from the living God.

When Israel is said not to have known the ways of God, are we talking about the fact they never received knowledge of the right way to serve God? No, we're talking about the fact they did receive it, because God did give them His testimony—His Laws—but they didn't believe that they were true. The people were guilty of unbelief. And they departed from the Living God. You cannot depart from something that you didn't have to start with, can you? So it's not that Israel didn't know. They would have liked to have claimed that they didn't know—that they weren't responsible. That's what a child will do if He can get away with it, as well. "Oh, I didn't know. I'm sorry. I wouldn't have done it if I had

known." No, you did know. Israel knew. And not only that, brethren, the church knew, because the church was given Truth. The church was given the testimony of Jesus Christ. And the ones that are not following it now, regardless of what they say, are the ones who didn't believe what Christ said when He revealed it by revelation through a chosen servant who preached it. The ones not doing it now—not continuing to act upon the original revelation—are those who are calling Christ a liar. That's just the simplest way I can put it. They can attempt to justify it in any way they want to, and all of the fancy words in the world are not going to change the fact that if you're not keeping a Monday Pentecost, and you are not upholding the sanctity of marriage and all of those other doctrines, you are calling Christ a liar. Period.

". . . an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." Yes, Truth starts at the beginning by revelation, and then the people must hold on—they must believe it—or else they will depart. That's the way it works. We will not die, brethren, we will not be willing to die for something of which we are unsure. Not a single one of us, if we're not so convicted in our hearts about what that testimony is, how it came to be, how we came to receive it, the validity of the ministry of the servant through whom we heard it, if we're in doubt in any way about any of those points, there's a day coming when we are going to trade it away, because we're not going to be able to stand—even at the risk of our family members, let alone our own lives—if we do not love it and believe it with such tenacity that we are willing to make any sacrifice in order to uphold it. No, those who are in doubt, those who are out writing their articles now, repudiating the original teachings that we received through Mr. Armstrong, using their "scholarly abilities" to write all of the fancy words, and the interpretations are not going to be there. Oh, and there are hundreds of them out there. And it makes me sick to see what confusion God's people are in who should know better. No, but all of those things are going to go away in the day when they're put to the test. Because they don't have a foundation to stand on. They don't have something that they believe, and have the string of honesty and integrity that links them back to the very gift of Truth from God. Without that string to connect you all the way back through, brethren, the day is coming when you will give it up. Only those who believe it enough to know the origin of that Way, and to treat it as a pearl of great price, will hold on even unto the bitter end. Revelation chapter 20 and verse 4:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness [somebody who gave up their lives for the witness—which is also the Greek word *marturea*—the legal witness, the sworn statement of Jesus Christ. Somebody gave up their very lives]. I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Who is it that is going to receive eternal life? Who is it that is going to receive offices in the very government of God when Christ returns? It is those who are willing to sacrifice their lives—even to hold the validity of the testimony of Jesus Christ without corrupting it, without putting their own stamp or their own interpretation upon it. They just were willing to love it enough to hold it dear. That's who is going to be there, brethren. It's not those out here who think they know what the mark of the beast is, who think it's just strictly some sort of a computer chip that somebody may put under your skin, or want to. No, this has to do with loving the Truth. And there are a whole lot of very well-intentioned people out there who think they're Christians, and they think they can understand these prophecies, and they think they're never going to be subjected to giving in and accepting the mark of the beast, but I'm here to tell you, brethren, that the only ones who will not accept the mark of the beast are going to be those who understand the Truth. Yes, I'm sure it will have a physical application, but more so, it will have a spiritual application. And, you see, the problem is, those of the church, who are called, who know better, who accept the mark of the beast will pay with their lives. That will be the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin is something that has us breaking the laws of God. It's not just some physical manifestation of economic intent. No, there is something that will be a part of that which will make us compromise the Truth in order to do it—whatever it is, and we don't speculate. But those who think they are going to recognize it are going to be in the same category as those in the church who thought they were going to see the great falling away coming a mile away. Because they thought it was going to be something that would be so obvious that we would certainly spot it, and there's no way—so many of us thought—we're going to be caught up in that. But the falling away occurred, and because it didn't match up to what peoples' preconceived ideas were, they thought it was going to be a threat from outside the church. It turns out, the falling away came from within. How many people were ready for that? Very few. And so all of those standing up and saying, "Well, I would never fall away, I'm going to stay in the organization," were already making the biggest mistake of their lives, because the falling away was a departure from Truth and it happened from within the organization.

In order not to fall away, you actually had to leave. You had to separate from that body in order to continue to hold onto the original doctrines. I'm very well sure the mark of the beast is going to be similar. It's going to be a whole lot more complex and have angles to it that human beings are not accounting for. And the most important one is, it has to do with sacrificing the testimony of Jesus Christ. It has to do with corrupting the Truth. Those who do not accept the mark of the beast are those who love the testimony of Jesus Christ, as we've already seen in other passages in Revelation. It is they who will receive eternal life. They will have their place in God's kingdom. Psalm 27 and verse 1. It's somebody who has a confidence. As Mr. Cole has said for so many years, they know and they know that they know. That's confidence, brethren. That's absolute assuredness—without doubt. A Psalm of David:

The Eternal is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? [This is the orientation of someone who had that kind of confidence. Whom shall I fear?] The Eternal is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Eternal, that will I seek after: That I may dwell in the house of the Eternal all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Eternal, and to inquire in his temple.

"Inquire in his temple." Those who have that kind of confidence have respect for and value that which is called the temple. And who is a part of the temple, brethren? The temple is made up of all those who have been called to a knowledge of that Way, and through baptism, have accepted Jesus Christ and received the down payment of His Spirit. All of you are part of that temple if you are of the called.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.

"In the secret of His tabernacle." What's in the tabernacle? What is in the tabernacle and the temple? Isn't it the ark? The ark of the covenant—the ark of the testimony? And it's the tabernacle of the testimony. What's the source of the Psalmist's confidence which allows him to have such strength even in the face of his daunting enemies? That he is not willing to compromise. It has to do with the testimony of Jesus Christ contained in that temple and in that tabernacle. That's where his confidence lies.

"He shall set me up upon a rock." What rock? Christ is the Rock, the foundation of our faith and our confidence who gives us the strength and the power to endure any trial, physical or spiritual, if we believe it enough to hold on—not to compromise, not to justify things that we want to do in the flesh, in our weak minds. But we recognize that Christ is the one who promised to give us all that we need and protect us in any trial.

And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me. Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy. I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Eternal.

That's for us, brethren. Do we have that confidence of mind and heart to believe it? Is it really first in our lives? Do we value that testimony—that which is housed in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the ark of the testimony? Do we value that Way, that Word, so much that there is nothing that will cause us to repudiate it—now or anytime in those days yet to be fulfilled?

Hebrews 6 and verse 11: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope . . ." Diligence and full assurance, brethren, are manifestations of those who know what they have and are not in doubt. You cannot get that kind of assurance by listening to and reading the kind of garbage that is being put out by these other splinter groups who should know better. They have repudiated the very foundation by which they were begotten as Christians, just the same as if they were taking a pick ax to the very rock that they're standing on, and one by one, piece by piece, chipping it away under their very feet, and yet thinking that they're going to stand in the day of trial. No, they've chipped away so much there is nothing left to support them. And in the day that the strong wind comes, it's going to blow them right off of what's left of their broken rock. But the Rock of Christ is not broken—it is a foundation to those who continue to believe in His witness and His testimony.

We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope [how long?] unto the end. That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

That's what ancient Israel didn't have—the faith to believe the testimony. That's the missing ingredient that we have to have, brethren, if we're going to stand firm.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.

Did that God make a sworn statement? Did He make a promise? Did He give something to His chosen people that He considered a legal, sworn, affidavit? You better believe He did.

. . . he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he [meaning Abraham] obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

Who has the greater oath? Whose oath is worth more than any other being, except God's? Did God give an oath? Did He swear? Yes He did. It's all a part of His witness—the testimony of Jesus Christ—that He preserved for the Church, His people.

For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.

Where are those who were called a part of the Church, who are now teaching all manner of different, perverse doctrines and contradictory ideas? Where is their recognition

that an oath was given by God, and a Way, and a testimony that was the foundation of Truth, that was preserved in this age, as it has been in every other age that God did a work? Where is their recognition of that? Why is their sin so heinous, except that they are denying the oath of the living God, and that which He confirmed and swore, and they are calling Him a liar as sure as I'm standing before you this afternoon. They are absolutely calling Jesus Christ a liar who deny the veracity of the original teachings that we had through the ministry of Mr. Herbert Armstrong.

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie [it was impossible for God to lie], we might have a strong consolation.

What's the basis of our consolation—our confidence—and our ability to walk forward tomorrow, and next week, and next month, and next year, as will be required of us, and to endure whatever may be before us in trials and persecution and tribulation before the return of Jesus Christ? What is going to be our consolation? What are we going to have to hold onto in that time that is going to allow us to stay the course without compromise? It's only going to be the veracity of that testimony of Jesus Christ—that which we received in the Church through God's chosen servant. We're not going to chide with God, and we're not going to chide, even with His servant. Even if that servant in His old age turned away from the very testimony. Yet, our faith is not going to be weakened, because we see the fulfilment of all God intended in those very events to test and purify the Church.

. . . we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

We are looking forward, brethren. We're not looking in the past. We're not fearful, if we're of those faithful people—of that remnant who God is preserving now—because we're looking forward. And the confidence that we use to look forward is the basis we received from the very beginning—even the very testimony of Jesus Christ.

That testimony is continuing to be preached by someone. Someone is holding on even this very day, brethren, preaching it and teaching it in an unadulterated fashion—regardless of what everyone else might tell you to the contrary. God promised that it would be preserved. You know the scripture. Matthew 28, verses 19 and 20. Let's turn to it very quickly.

Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit [and what were they to teach?], teaching them to observe all things whatsoever *I* have commanded you [not those things that they figured out by their own bible study and their knowledge

of Greek and Hebrew, or turning to the scholars—the scholars who don't even believe in a Sabbath and Holy Days].

And yet those were the men that were called upon to verify the proper teaching of Pentecost. And these people don't even teach it or keep it themselves. Now how much sense does that make?

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [the very consummation of the age—the return of Jesus Christ].

Somebody was going to be preserving and teaching that Way because Christ is not a liar, and He promised that someone would be upholding it. Where is it, brethren? Raymond Cole has asked you that for years and years and years. Where is it? No, we're not putting a fence around ourselves. Anybody who wants to preach the Truth, of those ministers who were authorized and ordained to do so, are fully welcome to begin preaching the Truth again. We're certainly not putting a fence around ourselves and saying we're the only ones that can preach it. All we have said is that we haven't been able to find anyone else who is preaching it. WHERE IS IT? But God promised it was not going to disappear. It would be found somewhere of those—no matter how small their ranks were—who were not going to corrupt the testimony. They weren't going to call Christ a liar. They loved what they received from the beginning, and they loved it enough that they were willing to trade anything else for that pearl of great price. Yes, that testimony is continuing to be preached by someone. Whoever and wherever that faithful ministry is now—today—they are protecting the same testimony of Jesus Christ just as the faithful apostles did, even unto death. They lost their lives. All of them, it appears, except for the Apostle John, died as martyrs, defending the testimony of Jesus Christ. II Thessalonians 1 and verse 4:

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

What time period are we talking about now? Is this some time in antiquity? Or are we talking about those circumstances leading up to the literal return of Jesus Christ? Notice it:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance

on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, because our testimony among you was believed [the apostle speaking].

He was a minister of Jesus Christ—one of those commissioned to preserve it in the name of Christ and to preach it in the flesh. And here he's saying that his testimony was exactly that which was given of Jesus Christ. Who is it that is willing to receive that reward at the return of Christ because *our* testimony among you was believed? And what period of time are we talking about? "In that day." What day are those people going to have to prove themselves and make choices, and prove that they believed the testimony that came through the faithful ministry—which was the witness of Jesus Christ? That same very day in which Christ is going to return—that which we just read in the verses above. We're talking about somebody at the time of the return of Jesus Christ who is going to prove they believed what they received.

Wherefore, we pray also for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

How are we going to glorify the name of Christ? How is Christ going to be glorified in us except that we are the repositories of the testimony of Jesus Christ, as we read earlier. It was confirmed in each one of us by the fact that we received it as Truth and we accepted it, and we pledged our lives to hold our hand to the plow, and to let nothing that might come in the future deter us from that goal.

There is also—before that day, that great and terrible day of the Lord, when He comes to take this earth—there's also going to be another witness. There is going to be a ministry yet in the future who will confirm another great and marvelous work within God's plan. Let's notice it quickly in Revelation 11 and verse 3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses." That word witness is also from the root word in the Greek, *martus*. We're talking about a legal witness. We're talking about something that is certified as a deposition—a sworn statement. A representative preaching THE unadulterated Truth.

I will give power unto my two witnesses and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies. And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy,

and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished *their* testimony [*marturea*]. . .

". . . when they shall have finished *their* testimony"—which we already know is not of themselves. It is that same testimony—the very testimony of Jesus Christ—that *they* are going to be commissioned to proclaim.

When they shall have finished *their* testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

And this does end right at the time of the return of Jesus Christ. But there is going to be a witness, and there is going to be powerful signs and wonders that are going to occur. Because this world will have a true witness of God before that day—before the Day of the Lord—and it's not on the order of the puny efforts of these splinter groups who think that they're fulfilling the last day commission of preaching the gospel to all nations by virtue of their television programs and their slick back magazines, and all of these other things that they think they're doing and call "The Work." If that's the work of God, how pitiful is God's effort? No, there is going to be a monumental witness to this world that not a single human being on the face of this earth is not going to hear. They're all going to see the manifestation of the very acts of God before Christ returns, because it is not going to be possible when Christ comes back for anybody to say, "Well, wait a minute, it wasn't my fault. I didn't know. If you had only given me a sign. If you had only shown me something to get my attention, I would have responded." No, every human being is going to have that opportunity. There is going to be no bellyaching about it when Christ returns. They will all have received a witness, and it's going to be accompanied by incredible signs and wonders at the hand of God to get the attention of men—all demonstrated in that book of Revelation in that seven seals before He literally returns. By the time He comes back, all human beings on the face of this earth will have seen the witness of the testimony of Jesus Christ in many, many different ways.

Which ones of us, brethren, are going to be strong enough to hold onto it, when we're hated of the world, and when Satan and all of his followers despise that testimony more than anything else, when it's unpopular to believe the Truth, even among all of our former brethren—the thousands and thousands of them—that use to be in harmony with us? Which ones of us are going to be able to hold onto the testimony of Jesus Christ and to fulfill His will before He returns? In closing, brethren, turn with me to Revelation 22 and verse 16—the very capstone on the last book of the Bible, as it refers not to this book, but to all of those books that we call the Holy Scriptures—the summation of all that God preserved for the benefit of the Church, that we need for salvation, if we hear the ministry who is faithfully preaching it and unfolding these things for our understanding. This is for us:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify [*martureo*] unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. [verse 18:] For I testify [I testify] unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifies [*martureo*] these things sayeth, Surely I come quickly.

"Surely I come quickly." Are we preparing ourselves, brethren? Are we preparing ourselves with the idea that Christ may come back even more quickly than any of us might realize?

Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

That's what's ahead of us, brethren. The day is coming when Christ is going to know. Because not a single one of us is going to receive an office in His government unless we prove that there is nothing that we value more than the sworn statement that He gave from the very beginning and entrusted to us. We do know. Every one of us here, and under the hearing of my voice, we know the Truth, if we know how we received it, and the way that God worked to reveal it in these last days. We know. And, therefore, we are responsible. Don't ever forget, brethren, that we're all responsible for it. Can we hold on? Can we believe it? Can we hold it without repudiating Truth to the very end? That's our mission and how we should be spending our time even now. The day is coming when God will know if we really love His testimony or not. May we all prepare and do our part, brethren, that we will be called faithful servants in that day of His coming.