

Why The Firstfruits

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Greetings everybody. Well it's nice to be welcomed out here, first of all by the Young Ambassadors. They are favorites of mine; and, in fact, last year I became one. [Laughter.] So they bill me as the Forever-Young Ambassador. I don't know that I'll ever get to perform with them ever again, but I did enjoy it.

Well, brethren, today once again as it happens annually we come to the Feast of Firstfruits. It is generally called the Feast of Pentecost. That's because in the New Testament it was a matter of counting 50 days from the Passover time—the Sunday in the midst of the Passover time, beginning with that Sunday. And it was a matter of also 7 weeks. So originally it was given to God's people, ancient Israel, as the Feast of Weeks; but generally it was called the Feast of Firstfruits. And it is the time celebrating THE FIRSTFRUITS of God's reaping of His harvest for His Kingdom.

Now, WHY? Why is it the firstfruits? Why is the Church today the firstfruits? Mr. Kelly this morning was talking a lot about what, and how, and when, and why. Now I remember very well, when I was five years old, I was always wanting to know "Why?" And I was asking my father so many what-he-called "tom fool" questions about why this and why that. I wanted to understand it. I always wanted understanding. He said that someday I would be a Philadelphia lawyer. And, indeed, so I am—because the greatest Law Book in all the world, as I told some of the professors in the law school down at the University of Southern California, is a book that I doubted whether they had a copy in their Law Library or not; and yet it is the greatest book on law of any that has ever been written. And it talks about law from the very beginning, in the second chapter, all the way through the book up to the very last chapter; and it's one of the largest books ever written—THE HOLY BIBLE.

It's a book about law. And "law" simply means the rules of human conduct. The rules of human performance and conduct, and especially in relation to others: first of all in relation to God our Creator, and secondly in relation to our neighbors. That's what law is. The churches today are afraid of law. They say that the law was nailed to the cross. But it was the law that nailed Jesus to the cross for us, to pay our penalty in our stead.

But WHY? Why the Feast of Firstfruits? Why is this Church the firstfruits of God's harvest for His Kingdom? Is God unfair? Is He discriminating against others, to choose us first (and they have to wait and come later)? Brethren, I want to say to you, I think that most of you don't understand that AT ALL. I think that most of you think that it merely means that God chose us to get into the Kingdom first, and then they'll come in later. THAT IS NOT THE ANSWER AT ALL! And I perceive that even our ministers, when they preach, take it for granted that the whole goal is to get us into the Kingdom of God; and that's all we are called for now. For no other purpose, but we'll get in ahead of the others. Then God is DISCRIMINATING against the others.

There is A REASON why we are the firstfruits. And I wish I could drive that home, but I fear that most of you just don't get it. You don't understand it at all. WHY? Why are we the firstfruits? I am going to try to make it plain this afternoon, and still I think you won't get it. So much Protestantism has rubbed off on us we can't get it out of our heads. They think God is trying to save the whole world; and then we think, "Well, He's just saving us first." And that is not the answer at all. We're not saved just because God wants us to be His favorites and get us into His Kingdom ahead of others. We are saved for a very, very great purpose. We are the firstfruits of God's harvest for His Kingdom.

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

Now, what is the Kingdom of God? We read in the very first verse in all the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But Moses wrote that in the Hebrew language; and the word he used for "God" was Elohim, in the Hebrew language. And Elohim happens to be a plural name, meaning more than one person. God is NOT one person. God is a Family of persons. Why did God say...In fact, it wasn't just God as a person; but THE FAMILY said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." (Verse 26.)

The God Family said that, not a God person. Not one person. He would have said, "Let ME make man after My image; but God said, "Let US."

Now, WHO and WHAT is God? That's a great mystery! Most people don't understand it. That'll be chapter 1 in the new book that has just been completed. It's now turned over to the printers. As fast as they can get it out, it will be out. At least there will be a copy for all of you at the Feast of Tabernacles, if not sooner. The greatest mystery—WHO and WHAT is God?

Do you know that no religion on Earth knows who and what God is? Tell me what religion knows who and what God is—except God's own Church. You should know, brethren. We should know, we who are here, because God reveals it Himself in His Word, if we understand His Word. But the churches called "traditional Christianity" don't understand God's Word. I used to think they get their religion out of the Bible. When my wife began keeping the Sabbath, I said, "Well, the Bible says 'Thou shall observe Sunday.'" She said, "How do you know? Have you seen it there?" I said, "Well, no. I don't know much about the Bible." Well, that was about 59 years ago, and I didn't know very much about the Bible then. I know a little something about it today.

I said, "I know because all the churches observe Sunday; and they get their religion out of the Bible, don't they?" And she said, "Well, do they?" "Why, yes, everybody knows the churches get their religion out of the Bible. That's their source of religion." So I began to study. I began to look into the Bible. And I began to find out that they're believing today just exactly the opposite of what the Bible says. The Bible IS God speaking.

Now, we find God describes Himself. Very few people know who or what God is. As I say, no religion knows. Well, God reveals Himself. Now, I quoted Genesis 1:1. Let's quote John 1, verse 1. "In the beginning"—again, the same words; but instead of "In the beginning [Elohim] created" this (John 1:1) says: John 1:1, 3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... (3) All things were made by him.

In other words, He created the universe.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us [and became Jesus Christ].

So Jesus Christ was with God, and He was God. But He gave up His divinity, His great glory as God, and became a human being—more than 1950 years ago. Nearly 2000 years ago now. But it said:

John 1:4 In him was life.

He lived, and God lived. God is one person. The Word, who became Jesus, is another person. And it was GOD who said to the Word (who became Jesus):

Genesis 1:26 Let US make man in OUR image.

God said that to Jesus. Jesus is the Word, the Spokesman, the One who speaks. He is the revelatory thought of God—who REVEALS God's thinking, who REVEALS the mind of God, who SPEAKS for God, and who AGREES COMPLETELY with God. And They are ONE precisely in belief. They are NOT contrary the one to the other. They are 100% in agreement. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed.

Now God and Jesus Christ had existed FOREVER. There never was a time when They began to live and to exist. It says of Jesus Himself, in the book of Hebrews, that He was:

Hebrews 7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but...[has been a high priest continually, forever; and still is.]

HOW GOD LIVED

But They LIVED. Now, if They lived, what did They do? Well, They were Creators. There are a few little things the Bible does reveal that would apply to Them. Jesus became the Son of God when He was born of a human virgin. Prior to that time, He was one with God; but He was not a Son of God. But He became God's Son when He was born as a human. And Jesus said, when He was on Earth, that He worked; and He said, "My Father works." So They were occupied, and They were busy. They had something to do, and what They did was creating. To create you first have to plan, and devise, and design. So They thought it out. They designed what would be created. They planned it, and They worked according to the pre-thought-out plan and design.

Now, another thing is revealed in the Bible: Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Well, They agreed perfectly! First let me answer, "How did they live?" They live THE WAY OF LOVE. When Jesus was being baptized, God the Father looked down and said, "You are MY BELOVED Son." He loved the Son, in

whom He was well pleased. Jesus said He LOVED the Father; and He obeyed the Father, and kept His Father's commandments. So they were in perfect harmony. We just heard this beautiful song, "Harmony." That will go ringing in my ears now, subconsciously. I'll go to sleep tonight to that in my mind. I can't get it out. I love that.

They had harmony. They were together.

There's another thing about two people. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. But two cannot get along together except one is the boss. God made a man and a woman, and He made the man to be the leader over his wife. Women don't like that very well. At least, some of them don't. A woman says, "I want my marriage," as she's going to the marriage altar, "I don't want to promise to obey my husband. Our marriage is going to be 50/50." Well, that makes me think of the old judge over in Gladewater, who drew up the first contract of the property deal that purchased the Big Sandy property for us, and our college campus over there.

He said that he settled this matter about who would be the boss on the day of his marriage. He said, "On the day we were married, I laid down the law to my wife. And I told her that I would be the boss. And I wanted that understood from the beginning. I said, 'Now, as the boss, I would allow her to make any little unimportant decisions; but any of the important decisions I would make.'" Now, he says, "That has worked out very well all through these years. No important decisions have ever arisen, or problems." [Laughter.] I'm afraid that's the way it is in so many marriages.

Anyway, there has to be leadership. There has to be a way of life. Now, a way of life and rules regulating a way of life simply become a law. And a law is the foundation and the basis of government. And a government is merely the code, or based on a law. And the law is merely the rules of conduct. And the government merely is the administration of the regulation of that law governing conduct. And so that becomes a government.

And so GOD and THE WORD were in authority over Their whole Creation. And there was government because God was the head. It is stated in the Bible that there is one Lawgiver, and that is God the Father. And Jesus obeyed His Father's commands. He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." He said, though He was the Word of God (the Spokesman), He said, "I have spoken nothing of Myself. The Father which sent Me gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak." He didn't come just alone, of His own accord. The Father sent Him. But He willingly came. He did that of His own accord, after His Father sent Him.

ANGELS WERE CREATED

Now, first of all, They created. And the first thing They created was angels. There was no Earth. There was no sun. There were no planets, no stars up in the air, in the sky out in the universe. No matter had ever existed. God is composed of SPIRIT. In [John 4:24](#) you read, "God is a Spirit." And in the first chapter of Hebrews, you read that angels are spirits. God made angels out of spirit. And angels are messengers of God—to serve God and to do His will. And God is the Ruler who governs over His whole Creation. The angels were His first creation so far as He has revealed to us.

And then, after He had created angels, the time came that He created the universe. In the first chapter of Genesis, and also in the second chapter of Genesis (I believe it's about verse 3 or 4.), God created the heavens and the Earth in the same day. Now that doesn't mean twenty-four hour day. But in the day that He created them both—in other words, the general area of time—He created the heavens and the Earth all at the one time.

When He created the Earth, the angels were already here. I believe it was this morning or else last night (this morning's sermon, I believe) we heard the 38th chapter of Job quoted. The angels were shouting for joy and singing when God laid the foundations of the Earth, and first created the Earth. Now, at the same time, He created the whole universe. And He put angels on this Earth. That was their first abode.

And He put one super archangel...There are three kinds of angels revealed in the Bible: ordinary angels, and they look like humans; but they are composed of spirit. They don't have wings. Then there's another kind of angels (we don't read too much about them in the Bible) called seraphs, or seraphim. They do have wings. And then above them all, with greater power and superior minds, were the cherubs [or cherubim]. And only three of them are mentioned in the Bible. If God created more, He hasn't revealed it to us. One of

them was Lucifer. The other two are Michael and Gabriel.

But He placed Lucifer on a throne on this Earth. Now, a throne means ruler over government. And it was God's government, and the government is ruled by God's law. And God's law is summed up in one word: LOVE. But it is out-flowing love—flowing out from God towards others. God is the great Giver. It's the way of giving, the way of serving. Jesus came as a servant, not just as a lord and master. He was a Lord and Master. He says, "You call Me Master and Lord; and...so I am" in one case. {1} And yet He came as a servant, and He washed His disciples feet even. That was the lowly duty of a servant. But this Lucifer had to build character. There's one thing God cannot create by automatic, instantaneous, fiat; and that is CHARACTER.

WHAT GOD LOOKS LIKE

Now, let's get back to God Himself for just a minute. What is God, above all things? I say no one seems to know who and what God is. Well, God—They are two persons. They are formed and shaped exactly as we are, because God made us in Their image. And Jesus was God, and He looked like any other human being. Someone asked Him, "Show us God the Father. What does God look like?" And He said, "Well, have you been so long time with Me, and you ask what does God look like? If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. He looks like Me."

Now, what did Jesus look like? Like any other man! Otherwise, why did the Pharisees and the high priests and the rest of them pay Judas 30 pieces of silver to point Him out, which one He was, so they could take Him? He looked like any other young Jew of His time, between 30 and 33 years of age. Between 30 and 34, and He looked like any other human being. So God has the same form and shape as we do.

THE CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD

But, now, these angels had free moral agency. They had to make a decision. Again, what is God? God, above all, is SUPREME RIGHTEOUS PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. Character is doing what is right, and what has a right result—and rejecting what is wrong, and will have a wrong result. Even though you might want to do the wrong, it is resisting it and doing only the right. So there are different ways of living, different ways of going, different ways of conducting yourself.

God's government is simply the rules of His way of living, the way He and the Word had ALWAYS lived; and that was the way of love. They loved one another, and Jesus served His Father. It's the way of serving, the way of giving, the way of cooperating, of helping one another. Not the way of taking away from one another. Not the way of competition or strife. Not the way of jealousy, and envy, and retribution, and hostility.

God put this super archangel, Lucifer, on the throne to rule the government ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF GOD—and THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD—that was placed on this Earth. Lucifer rebelled! And he became an adversary of God. Now, his name became Satan; and Satan means adversary—an enemy, an adversary. He became hostile. He became jealous of God. He became envious. He became resentful. And then he said that he would rise up, with his angels, and pull off a coup; and throw God off the throne. He would take over in God's place and rule the whole universe! He wanted to head the government of the whole universe.

And he refused to administer the government of God on this Earth, the government that was based on law; and the law was love. But he turned to the opposite way of life {2}. He turned instead of construction to destruction. Instead of love, he turned to hate, and jealousy, and envy, and competition.

Then God said, "Let US make man in OUR IMAGE." (Genesis 1:12) And so:

Genesis 2:7 The [Eternal] God formed man of the dust of the ground, [Now He took the dust of the ground, and He formed a man; but there was no life in him. He was just a hunk of dirt, but formed in the shape of a human being. Then...] God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL

The Hebrew word is "nephesh," for soul. And three times in the first chapter of Genesis the land animals, 4-legged animals, are called "nephesh." But the translators—believing that man was an immortal soul, which is not true; because they don't believe the Word of God, and they think that a soul can't die, that a

soul is immortal—the word "nephesh" they translated into creature. That is, "living creatures" when it comes to animals. It's the same word, nephesh, however. "God formed man of the dust of the ground...and man became a living [nephesh]," same as animals. Now, nephesh or soul means "the life of animals."

The man was not a soul until God breathed the breath of life into him. He was just a hunk of dirt with a certain form and shape. But when he came into consciousness and life and the breathe of air, he became a living soul. NOT AN IMMORTAL SOUL! Now, of that soul, God said, "If you take of the forbidden fruit of the tree that I forbid you to take of, YOU WILL SURELY DIE! That soul would die!

Satan came along, confronted mother Eve, and he said, "Oh, you won't surely die. God knows better than that. You are an immortal soul." And Eve believed him. Adam seemed to believe it. And their children have been believing it ever since. They sill believe we are immortal souls.

God speaks through the Bible. Jesus is the Word of God. The Bible is the same Word of God in writing, exactly the same Word that Jesus spoke; and Jesus is the author of the Bible. And Jesus speaks only what God the Father tells Him to speak, so it is still is the Word of God the Father as well as of Christ.

Adam had to make a choice. Why? Because God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." And what is God's image? It is PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. And that meant character, and God cannot CREATE character automatically. That cannot be done. That requires the decision and even the effort of the created being in whom the character will be formed.

Now, God wanted this Adam to have character, but He didn't give him immortal life. He didn't make him immortal. He made him of the dust of the ground and gave him a temporary chemical existence through the breath of air; and it was supported by food, or fuel you might say. By food and water that came from the ground, and he came from the ground. Incidentally, his wife Eve did not come from the ground. God performed an operation, put Adam into a deep sleep they call anesthesia in the hospitals today; and God performed an operation, and cut out one of Adam's ribs and formed a woman out of that. So the woman came from the man, not from the dust of the ground. The man came from the dust of the ground. The woman came from the man.

INCREASING THE FAMILY

And then they two became one, just like Jesus (or, the Word) and God became ONE GOD. One God Family! And God is a Family! Now, THE GOD FAMILY said, "Let US make man in OUR image." And He wanted man to become a family, but ultimately he's to become THE GOD FAMILY. And so God said to Adam and Eve:

Genesis 1:28 Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Now, Adam alone couldn't do that. That's why God had to make a wife for him, because a man can't have children all by himself. But the two together could, and so they began to reproduce themselves. GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF. When the angels sinned, God saw that no one but God could be depended upon to rule with the law of God, with love, and never deviate from it. That's why He said "We'll create man in Our image." In other words, ultimately after God's character. And once man has been finally created in the character of God, you read in John 3:9, that when we reach that state and we become BORN OF GOD, we'll be composed of Spirit; and it will be impossible for us to commit sin. In other words, to do any wrong. We will simply live the way of God's law, the way of love, the way of giving and sharing and cooperating and helping. And it will be IMPOSSIBLE for us to live any other way, because we will have decided not to live any other way; and God will simply give us the power to not do contrary to what we have decided. So it'll just be impossible.

It's impossible for God to sin. And once we are born of God, it will be impossible for us to sin. But it wasn't impossible for Adam, because he was not born of God yet. He was only created as a flesh and blood being, made out of the dust of the ground. He had a temporary chemical existence.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND GOD'S SPIRIT

Now, there were two trees in the garden. If Adam had taken of the Tree of Life, he would then have received the Spirit of God. There's one thing I want to mention right there. When God created the human being out of the dust of the ground, He put something in him that He did not put in the animals. They are nephesh, and man was nephesh; but there is one difference. In the man, He put a spirit with his brain. It is a

human spirit, not a divine Spirit. Not an angel spirit, a human spirit.

Now the human spirit, of necessity, is a self-centered spirit. But, nevertheless, it is SPIRIT. And the spirit in man empowers the human brain with intellect so that he can think. Now animals don't have that spirit, and animals can't think. They can't reason. They can't philosophize. They can't analyze things and come to conclusions. They can't exert wisdom and judgment. They have no concern for art, and literature, and music. But man, having a spirit with his physical brain, does appreciate all those things. And man can think. At least, he thinks he can think. But most of them don't think very soundly.

Now, the man was incomplete. He was physically incomplete. He needed a wife. So God performed an operation, and made a wife for him. But now he was still mentally and spiritually incomplete. He had one human spirit, but that human spirit didn't give him his life. It was the breath he breathed that gave him his life, with circulated blood; and the blood is the life, oxidized by the breath of air in the lungs (as the blood flows through the lungs, on the way back to the heart again).

The man was mortal. He had a temporary existence, like a clock wound up that will run down and it will stop when it runs down. But man was incomplete. He had a spirit that gave him an intelligence that animals don't have, gave him a mind that animals don't have. But to come to have the perfect mind and spiritual character, he needed the mind of God. If he had taken of the Tree of Life, that would have connected him with God. And then he would have had a direct contact with God, and the Spirit of God would have come into him. That is THE MIND OF GOD. That is THE LIFE OF GOD. And that would have impregnated him with GOD LIFE. That would have opened his mind, like the Mind of God, to comprehend spiritual truths that God could reveal.

Now without the Spirit of God, he couldn't understand spiritual truths, only physical things. That's why the great scientists, who do not have the Spirit of God, cannot understand spiritual knowledge. It is foolishness to them. They can understand only what they can see, taste, feel, smell, or hear—the five senses. So they just deny there is anything else. And that, of all things, is ignorance! So the most intellectual, with the largest number of PhDs and other letters after their names, are of all men most ignorant; because they don't have the Spirit of God and they can have no spiritual knowledge. And spiritual things are so much more real than material things! They'll go on lasting; but the material things are only temporary, and will soon be gone.

Adam had to make a choice. He chose rebellion against God, the same as Satan had done; and that put him under the captivity of Satan. He became kidnapped, and his children after him were kidnapped. And Satan, who is a spirit, was in-tuned in the same wavelength as Adam's spirit. So he could simply inject his spirit into Adam, which is the spirit of rebellion, the spirit of jealousy, and envy, and competition, and antagonism, and controversy.

So that came into Adam and Eve, and into their children. The first son of Adam was Cain, and the second son was Abel. I presume they must have been about teenagers when this certain event happened. Cain became jealous of Abel, his brother; and so he rose up and slew his brother and killed him. God said, "Where is your brother?" And he said, "I don't know." He was a liar! Now he lied to God about it. And humans have been doing it, and we've all come from Adam and from his children. This world has developed. Developed with a carnal mind, a self-centered mind that is self-centered, loves only self and what it considered that belong to self. Now, some love their possessions because they belong to them. Mothers love their children because they're hers. It's selfish, but it is good. Nevertheless, it is self-centered. God loves more than just His own. He loves everything—everybody, rather. And so this world developed.

When Adam sinned, God CLOSED UP the Tree of Life. And that means He shut humanity OFF FROM GOD! God is the Lawgiver. Man had broken God's law, and the penalty is death. All humanity was shut off from God UNTIL Christ should finally come and sit on that throne. He had to first come and qualify to do it, and remove Satan from that throne. As long as Satan's there, he had kidnapped these children; and he was going to rule over them (instead of God). And so they are shut off from God until the Second Coming of Christ, when He will come as Ruler; and Satan will be banished.

WHY CHRIST CAME

Now, there was one exception. Jesus Christ said, "I will build My church, and the gates of [the grave] shall not prevail against it." The Church were the firstfruits. Now why did Jesus say, "I will build My church..."? In

the first place, why did Jesus come? He's called "the second Adam." He came to do what the first Adam should have done, but did not; and that was to have contact with God, and obey God, and live God's way—be filled with God's love, with God's mind, and with God's power; and reject the wrong way of Satan. Jesus did that. He had to contend with Satan. Satan tempted Him; and He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin. He met Satan in immortal combat, and Jesus Christ conquered Satan. In the end, He snapped out an order and told Satan to get away; and Satan had to obey Him.

Jesus Christ came for a number of reasons. One was TO QUALIFY to replace Satan on the throne of this Earth, and TO RULE THE EARTH AS A KING. He was born to become a King, and He came to qualify to be the King and replace Satan on the Earth. The churches have lost all knowledge of that! They don't preach Jesus Christ as the coming King, as a Ruler and Someone to obey. They have lost all knowledge of it. It is all in the Bible, however; but they don't follow the Bible. They get their religion from other people before them, and people have just made it up in their minds. They don't believe what the Bible says.

I was hearing on the air this morning looking for the Antichrist to come. The Bible doesn't talk about some one Antichrist coming. In first or second John, whichever it is, it says that there are many antichrists and have been. But they have certain traditions that Protestants have had, and they simply follow the teaching of these Protestant traditions. And, as I say, they have rubbed off on us a great deal.

They think that God is trying to save the whole world. The world is lost. They really picture it this way: God created man immortal, an immortal soul. Satan came along and wrecked God's handiwork. So man fell, but he's still immortal. And God's plan of redemption is merely God's effort to repair the damage that Satan did, and restore the human race back as good as Adam was before he fell. If you believe that, please erase it from your mind and get rid of it because it is a lie. It's Satan's lie. It is not true.

Jesus Christ came TO QUALIFY! When He comes to rule, He's going to rule over the world; and He's going to teach the world the law of God—the way of living OF GOD. All that's wrong in the world is the way people live! I've said that to kings. I've said it to presidents and prime ministers over the world. I've said it to audiences in capitols all over this world. That's all that is wrong with the world. It's the way people are living! THE WAY WE LIVE is causing all of the troubles. And the way we live is rebellion against the law of God.

But the churches say the law of God is done away. I was listening to a religious program on the air this morning. This was after our program was on the air. They were saying how God will just forget about your sins. There wasn't one word said about repentance. They were saying the law is done away. And it was from the ministers of a church that I know who believe the law is done away, and they will debate it with you any day (that God's law is done away). Well, God's law is the right way of living. And all that's wrong in the world is the wrong way of living. Whatever we sow, we reap; and we're sowing the wrong thing because we live the wrong way. It's just that simple. But people cannot seem to understand that, because they are deceived by Satan. And Satan is the Great Deceiver.

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES

Well, Jesus said, "I will build My church." Now what did He do? He called twelve disciples; and they became His students, or learners. A "disciple" means a learner or a student. Jesus started a school, and Jesus was the Teacher. And He started teaching these students—twelve that He had CALLED. Later He said to them, "You didn't choose Me. You didn't volunteer." Peter didn't volunteer and Andrew, his brother. They wanted to be fishermen. Jesus saw them out there on the Sea of Galilee in a boat, fishing. That was their business, their job. He said, "Come and follow Me, and give up the job you've got. I'm calling you to a different job." They forsook all, and followed Him.

He called others. Later He said, "You didn't choose Me. I've chosen you. I've drafted you! I didn't plead with you to 'Please accept Me. Please give your heart to Me.'" Brethren, you cannot find any place where Jesus went around saying, "Please believe on Me. Please give your heart to Me."

A young man came to me one time, several years ago, up in Oregon. He said, "Mr. Armstrong. I gave my heart to the Lord last night." Well I said, "Did you? Where was that?" "Why down in the First Christian Church." "Well," I said, "that must have been a wonderful event. Was there a physician there with anesthetics; and did he put you in an operation, and open up your body and take your heart out?" "Well, no. No," he said. Well I said, "Did you get hold of your heart and hand it over to Jesus? Was Jesus there?"

"Well, no." "Well, what did happen? What did you do? You said you gave Jesus your heart." He said, "Well, I guess I just don't know." He didn't know what he did do. It didn't mean any thing. No, it didn't.

A Methodist preacher came to me up in Oregon. He said, "I've just married a wife. She's got some money. And I'm just too proud to let her support me. I'm an ex-minister; and the only thing I know, that I've ever done, is to preach. But," he said, "I haven't had a job, and I haven't had any pulpit." He said, "Do you know of any vacant pulpits in Lane County, Oregon here. My wife wants to live in this county, and I have to get a job right here somewhere." I said, "Yes, I do know of one vacant pulpit. But," I said, "that won't help you any." "Well, why?" Well, I said, "Because that's a Church of Christ, or Christian Church; and you're a Methodist. And," I said, "They have different doctrines than you do, and different beliefs." "Oh well, that doesn't make any difference," he said, "if I can have the job, I'll preach whatever they want me to." That's the average preacher today. "I'll preach whatever they want me to." Yes, I've met all kinds. And this world is full of them.

Jesus came TO QUALIFY to sit on THE THRONE and RULE. He called out some students and began to teach them—to teach them the way and the law of God, to teach them God's plan, to teach them God's purpose and what God is going to do with us. That God is trying to make us HIS OWN CHILDREN, to be BORN OF HIM. And He taught them that which is born of God will be SPIRIT. God is a Spirit! We won't be human; we won't be flesh, any longer. We won't be made from the dust of the ground. We'll be spirit beings. And He taught them. After He had taught them, He also came to die for not only them but the sins of the whole world. And so He did that. Then He went to heaven and established the Church after He had arrived back in heaven.

Now we spent a day over in Munich, in southern Germany; and I found it was a holiday. I hadn't heard of that holiday before. They call it Ascension Day. Well, it probably was the same day of the year that Jesus ascended to heaven, which is ten days before the day of Pentecost (which is today). It seems to me they had the wrong day. It must have been more than ten days ago. Anyway, there is nothing in the Bible that says there is any such day as Ascension Day that we are told to keep. And I hadn't even heard of it, because I've been living according to the Bible and not according to men's traditions.

But Jesus taught these people. He called them OUT of the world, to live His way—to live by the law of God, and live a different way than the rest of the world was living. And to teach them that WAY OF LIFE, about the government of God. And to teach them of God's purpose, that we would become God; and that God is reproducing Himself. After He had taught them, He gave them a great commission. He said:

Matthew 28:19-20 Go... [into all the world] and teach [in] all nations, baptizing [people] into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy [Spirit]; (20) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

LEARNING TO BECOME TEACHERS

So Jesus came to start a school. And He taught them the way of God, the way of GOD'S CHARACTER, so they could be born of God. Then He told them to go out and become teachers themselves, like He had been a Teacher to them; and teach others. And the others that they were to teach were also to be taught, to learn, so that they could become teachers. And the whole purpose of the firstfruits was to call some people out to become teachers; so that, when Christ comes to save the world, they could be kings and priests under Christ. That's why, to those called into the Church (the firstfruits), Jesus said: {3}

Revelation 2:26-27 He that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: (27) and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne [when He comes and takes over the throne of the earth, away from Satan.]

In other words, Jesus came to QUALIFY TO RULE in the place of Satan. He came to call a firstfruits out to become teachers and to become rulers and governors (like He is, with Him when He sits on the throne); and rule the others, and teach the others when God starts to save the world. He didn't come to teach us just to be saved. He came to teach us TO BECOME TEACHERS!

Now, we are concerned with a certain project over in Jordan—just outside of Amman, Jordan. It is a school for the mentally retarded. The first time I saw it was two years ago; and they had a fine new facility, new building. It was very modern, very nice. And they had little children there, from the ages of about four

years old up to thirteen, all mentally retarded. And they had to even teach them to put a button in a buttonhole. They even had to teach them to sit on the toilet, because they didn't know anything. And I said, "Is this all of the mentally retarded people in Jordan?" "Oh, no. This is a small fraction of them. Why, Mr. Armstrong, there are thousands of them." Well, I said, "Maybe we could raise money and build a bigger place, and you could take in more of them. Let's get more of them." But they said, "Wait, Mr. Armstrong. We can't do that. Even if we had the money to buy the buildings, and more buildings, we couldn't take in more of them here until we first train more teachers."

God cannot start the Kingdom of God until He first trains teachers. And He has called you and me to become those teachers! **THAT'S WHY WE'RE THE FIRSTFRUITS. WE ARE CALLED TO BECOME TEACHERS!** And it is, let's see, I believe it's the 5th chapter of Hebrews (Isn't it?), where the apostle Paul says to them, "You ought now to be able to be teachers, and you have to be taught just the kindergarten truth about the Kingdom of God. You haven't learned. You should have been better students."

WE are NOT CALLED just for salvation; and, if it were for salvation, we wouldn't have been called at all. You wouldn't have been called at all just to get you into the Kingdom. **THAT'S NOT WHY YOU WERE CALLED.** You were called to become a student. You were called to learn how to save others when God's Kingdom comes, when Jesus is sitting on the throne on this Earth. Brethren, **YOU DON'T GET IT.**

I've heard ministers speaking as if they never heard of that! I've said to some of them, "I don't think our people understand that." And they say, "Oh yes, they do, Mr. Armstrong." Oh no, you don't. Brethren, you just don't understand that. We're not called to just be the first ones to get into the Kingdom of God. We are called for a special mission—to become teachers. We are not called to become some to go out and convert the world now. We are called to learn how, in the resurrection, we can be rulers and teachers.

TO THE CHURCH—and not to anyone but the Church—Jesus said, "If you overcome (you that are studying to be teachers, if you overcome) I will grant for you to sit with Me on My throne; and help Me rule the world and teach the world." Jesus is the Teacher, and Jesus is a Ruler. Revelation 5:10, we will be "kings and priests; and we shall [RULE] on the earth." Brethren, I don't think you'll ever learn that.

Has my teaching been in vain, brethren? Sometimes I wonder. I get terribly discouraged. I don't think you get it. I think so much Protestantism has rubbed off on you that you just don't understand the truth when I give it to you. And it is really Christ giving it to you through me, because I'm certainly not competent to give it to you. Of myself, I could not do it at all.

WHY THE FIRSTFRUITS?

Why are we the firstfruits? **WHY?** I'm not talking about what, when, or how, or anything else; but why? We are the firstfruits to become teachers to teach others. The Church is school. And we are to be taught the way of God, the way of life; and to be taught of God's program—of God's program to reproduce Himself. And He's not trying to save the world. You wonder why you can't convert your relatives and your friends; and so do I, and I still do. I can't get over it. I can't see why they can't understand any of the Bible whatsoever. They can't, and they won't until God calls them. Jesus Christ said:

John 6:44 No man CAN come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

Predestination was discussed this morning in the sermon. Predestination has nothing to do with who is going to be saved and who is going to be lost. Predestination means that God predestinated that He would call certain people out, after Christ came to qualify; and we have to do the same thing. If we are going to rule, we have to do the same thing. We have to overcome Satan. Far from being "teacher's pet," far from God discriminating against the others, He's giving us a harder job than He'll give the others. **WE HAVE TO OVERCOME SATAN.** And when God does call others, that can't understand the truth now, there won't be any Satan around. And there won't be a world with television that is filled with smut, and with violence, and with rotten sex; and that is what your children are feeding on today. That'll all be gone. There won't be any of it. But the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Eternal God, as full as the waters cover the ocean beds; and you and I are the ones that are going to be teaching that knowledge and making the world full.

Now, it doesn't include just us here. We're just a little group in Pasadena, California. It doesn't [just] include all of us, just those in the Church all around the world. It includes those that were called in the early Church, back in the 1st century, 1900 and some years ago—53 or more ago, 54 years ago. They will all be

resurrected. They are "the dead in Christ." And the dead in Christ are those who have learned to be teachers and rulers. They have learned HOW, and they are qualified to teach and to rule.

The Church of God is the school of God. Now, we have something more than just a school; we have a college here at Pasadena. And we have a sister college over at Big Sandy, Texas. There we teach some to be ministers. Then they go out, and they teach others (week by week, on the Sabbath) that God has called and that are in the Church—so that they come to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now I wonder if you get that? We have to GROW IN KNOWLEDGE! We have to learn God's program. We have to learn that God is calling us not just to be saved. He's calling us to learn to be rulers and teachers. Brethren, sometimes I get discouraged. Can I beat that into your heads and your minds?

They talk about so-and-so "had it made." Are you sure he had it made? Is he going to be a teacher? Is he qualified to sit on that throne with Christ? Does he know about God's law? We're the Philadelphia Era of the Church, and we have to be lawyers—students of God's law, God's government, God's way of life. All that's wrong with this world is the way of life they're living. It's all that. And we are called out of the world to live a different way of life.

WE MUST GROW

Peter said we must grow. Not just in knowledge (the knowledge OF our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ) but in grace. What does that mean? Grace is unmerited favor, or gift. But the Holy Spirit is God's gift. And growing in grace means growing in the character that comes through God's Spirit. Are you growing in character day by day? Are you growing in the knowledge that God has? In other words, are you a good student? Are you learning? Are you going to be able to teach others? Are you qualifying to be a teacher, and to go out and teach others? IF NOT, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME! You don't BELONG in the Church. Maybe God hasn't called you yet. Or maybe you haven't opened your mind to understand? I don't know.

I just know, brethren, that I do want you to learn. God has revealed this truth to me. It isn't known in any church in the world that I know of. It's precious knowledge. It's so precious and so valuable! Don't trample it under feet, as if it was insignificant and didn't mean anything. It is the truth of God.

There's something else I want to say about Pentecost. I think if I'd keep talking here to one o'clock in the morning, some of you still wouldn't get it. Jesus called us "sheep." And sometimes I think some of us are pretty dumb sheep. I wish we could understand it, and I'm trying to make it plain.

You are students. How much are you learning, and how much are you developing your life? To grow in grace is to grow in the character of God. That's not only the knowledge, but it is living that way—to grow in love. That means in how you treat others in your own home. That means in how you treat neighbors, and how you treat people. How kind are you? How loving are you? How much do you encourage others, and try to help others? How much are you developing the character of God in your own life?

Just knowledge alone isn't going to do any good. You can hear the Word of God. You can have the knowledge. But not the hearers, but THE DOERS OF THE LAW are justified before God. Are you A DOER? The only reason you need the knowledge is to learn what to do; and it does you no good until you put it to work, and do it!

Now the one thing I did want to say (and I think I do have a little more time to say it in) about Pentecost: On the day of Pentecost there were many who had followed Jesus, and who did believe; and they wanted to know what they should do. [Peter] said, "Repent everyone of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." And repent has to do with not only being sorry and remorseful for the past but changing your mind to the extent that you won't do it any more. You will change your way of life, and live God's way from on now. You'll try and not repeat the sins. And with God's help, you will succeed in overcoming. Now you won't overcome all the sins at once. That's why it is a gradual process. It's the overcomers that are going to reign and rule with Christ. Not those who have made it, not those who are perfect all ready. It's a gradual process.

SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

But on the day of Pentecost there were many there from many different nations, speaking different languages. And something happened on that day. That was the day the Church was born, 1954 years ago today. This is the anniversary of that day. And the Holy Spirit came with a rushing sound, like a rushing

mighty wind. Have you ever been in a hurricane? I have, right out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. And let me tell you, when you hear the winds whistling and roaring like I did, it's a terrible roar.

They heard the sound of the Holy Spirit coming; and they saw it, like flames of fire (or, tongues of fire) sitting on each one of them—the 120. There were 120 there that received the Spirit of God. And people could see the Holy Spirit, like tongues of fire; and then they began to speak in other languages, in tongues. There were people gathered there from nation all over. Some from Parthia, some from that were Medes, and some from...well, some spoke Greek {4}, and some the Parthian language, and some the Median language and other languages. But EVERY ONE OF THEM, thousands of them, and every one of them heard them (the 120) speaking in his language.

They didn't speak in a lot of gibber. "La, la, la, blah, bla, ayre, waa, weer, blu, uuaaa, uuaaaa." I can do that. What did I say? You don't know. Neither do I. [Laughter in audience.] The tongues people that call themselves "Pentecostal" are NOT Pentecostal at all! They are poor DECEIVED people that don't know any better. They say that they are aping that same thing, and they are copying it. You don't see any tongues of fire on their head. You don't hear any roaring sound, like a rushing mighty wind. And they don't speak with the languages that other people from other nations understand every word they're saying while they're there.

Now, there's one other case where they spoke with tongues. That's when Peter had taken salvation to the first Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, up at a (Oh, where is it?) just north of where Tel Aviv is today. They were devout people, and they wanted to serve God; they just didn't know everything. God had Peter go to them, and that's when salvation first opened to Gentiles. God had to show Peter, in this vision of letting a sheet of unclean animals down—telling him to "go eat." He didn't mean eat unclean animals. He was simply showing him that he should call no man unclean because the Jews wouldn't have anything to do with Gentiles. So, Peter went to Cornelius' house. They were devout. They had repented. And when Peter told them the way of the gospel, then they believed. They'd already repented. And the Holy Spirit came on them—as on the day of Pentecost—and they did speak...They were of different language, and they spoke the Hebrew and the Greek language.

But, in the 14th chapter of I Corinthians, Paul said he would rather speak five words with understanding than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. This speaking in gibberish and an unknown tongue is a deception of Satan, the devil. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of a sound mind—not of just a lot of gibberish and doing foolish things, nonsensical things. I think we understand that in the Church of God; but I just wanted to mention that, since this is the day of Pentecost.

NOT YET SAVING THE WORLD

This is the day of firstfruits. We are the first. We are the ones who are being taught to become the teachers, to rule with Christ, and to be kings and priest. Now priests are the teachers. And that is when Christ is going to try to save the whole world, when He comes again. He didn't try to save anybody [when He came the first time]. At Jacob's well, a Gentile woman... John had said {5} that she knew Who she was talking to. He could give her the living water, and she would never thirst. Well, she asked Him for those living waters. He's speaking of the Holy Spirit. And she said, "Give me then of the Holy Spirit." That's what it meant.

Wasn't that a wonderful opportunity for Him to try to convert her, right then and there? Instead, He said, "Go call your husband." Well, she kind of gasped for breath. She said, "I, I, I don't have a husband." And Jesus said, "Well for once, young lady, you've told the truth. You've had five husbands, and the one you are living with now is not your husband." She was amazed that He knew that much about her. He'd never seen her before. But He didn't try to convert her.

You can't find a place where Jesus went about and said, "Please accept Me as your Savior." And yet the churches think that is a whole thing that we should be doing. I guess they think—when I visit foreign kings, and presidents of nations, and prime ministers who rule nations—that I ask them, "Have you given your heart to the Lord?" Why they'd pitch me out of there so fast I wouldn't know what struck me." [Laughter.] I even think some of our ministers, the way they talk from the pulpit, think that's what I'm doing.

I'm carrying the gospel into those nations, but I'm not trying to convert the heads of the nations. I try to speak to them as far as they can understand. But God isn't trying to convert them. NO MAN CAN COME TO

CHRIST except God the Father draw them, and God hasn't drawn them. That's why you can't convert your own relatives that think you've gone crazy when you've accepted God's truth. You just can't. You see THEY'RE NOT BEING JUDGED! The Judgment Day is coming.

Judgment is ON THE CHURCH OF GOD. Judgment is on US. We're being judged, brethren. The world hasn't been called, and the world is not yet judged. And God isn't trying to save the world yet. Not yet. The way to help save the world, brethren, is to learn to be a good teacher—so that, when God's time comes, then you can be a real POWER in helping to save people when God's time has come. But God's time hasn't come for them yet. God's time has come for you to learn how to be a king or a priest. God help you, brethren, to understand.

Note

{1} Editorial note: Corrected order of titles, which were transposed from [John 13:13](#). - The original said: "You call Me Lord and Master, and...so I am"

{2} Editorial note: Wrong word used, "love" instead of "life." - The original said: "But he turned to the opposite way of love."

{3} Editorial note: Jumbled scriptures corrected. - The original said: "Jesus said in [Revelation 2:26-27](#), 'He that overcometh will I grant [Let's see, is that...] to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame and sat down with My Father in His throne.' I don't know if that's in [Revelation 3:21](#), which says... No. In [Revelation 2:26:27](#), 'give them power over the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron.' And in [Revelation 3:21](#), the same thing except that it said 'He that overcomes will I grant to sit Me in My throne'"

{4} Editorial note: Mr. Armstrong said Greece (the country) when he meant Greek (the language). - The original said: "and some spoke Greece"

{5} Editorial note: John had recorded the incident of the Samaritan woman at the well. ([John 4:5-29](#)) - The original said: "Peter had said..."