

## 870414 Holy Days in Reverse HLH

Good morning to all of you.

Apart from Imperial AM where I regularly attend, my wife is over there.

She presented the offering check for our congregation.

I thought that was fair.

I'm asked to speak here and she leaves the money there.

We do appreciate what all of you have meant to the work for these past now 15 months when we have new responsibilities in a few cases on new shoulders and other cases on shoulders who have responsibilities of similar nature for some time.

But I think we should say at this festival time that without, of course, the loyal, the quiet, the full of effort support that has been rendered from January 1986 here into April 1987.

We would not have achieved all that has been achieved, especially in terms of coming to the attention in a discreet and wise manner on television where more and more people are listening and fewer and fewer people are making remarks about the work in the religious columns of the newspapers because their attention is focused somewhere else.

I think it's important for you to realize that now that we are dealing with the superstructure of the work, Mr. Armstrong, you remember, left with Mr. Ducott's an important analogy.

That was what he had not really realized until near the end of his life that he had been called to lay the foundation of the work that is being done now.

I didn't say the foundation of the church, but of the work that is being done.

And we have yet to finish that work.

But now we are entering the point where he defined it as the superstructure, and of course that becomes more and more visible.

Now our program is becoming on television more and more visible, but it is important that it does not upset the world.

So the world, of course, has its focuses on the problem of drugs, the problem of AIDS, the question of the U.S.-Soviet relationships, the ongoing and interminable problem in the Middle East.

Not to mention, of course, the religious problems that have affected those who are called the electronic church.

A term that I don't prefer to use.

I don't object to electronic.

It's the word church.

I hope you understand that that's the proper way to look at the problem.

In any instance, we have made notable achievements.

We have learned in a sense how to be more effective with the distribution of the magazine, how more and more people respond to subscriptions without having to increase the quantity of publishing by a redistribution, not simply a distribution geographically, but a redistribution geographically on the basis of time.

Then I certainly would like to say we appreciate very much the tremendous effort that does not show up on television by the entire staff.

You see, you perceive three individuals who have worked and labored hard to make themselves effective without having that experience fully that would have been expected in this world for such a challenge.

But without a question, the behind-the-scenes effort to enhance the words that are spoken has been of tremendous work.

I think we also have to realize the importance of publishing in making possible the scheduling of the literature because we are, in a sense, creating material most specifically for the visual needs of television.

And we are only slowly re-adapting the booklet material that Mr. Armstrong wrote generally to be seen after you take it out of an envelope in the mail.

That's how it was originally designed.

It was not meant to be shown on television.

Now, we did put a cover, but we're learning that when you flip something open and show what's on the inside one page after another, people will respond in a way that if you merely hold it up and only see the cover, they don't respond as effectively.

But we cannot change the format in terms of merely putting a picture inside.

We have to do some good graphic work.

Maybe we have to combine another article so we, in a sense, have two titles within.

And you can open and hear something and open and there is something else later in a booklet.

So all of that will take time, but we're learning how to be more effective as the superstructure goes up.

So it is important during this festive season that we express formally from the pulpit here the word of appreciation about the total backing and support of everyone, including some of the remarkable contributions of young people in the church and even significantly outside.

And I want to mention something about that briefly.

We could not do what we're doing.

We are, in fact, accomplishing something that is interesting.

Mr. Armstrong was called to reach a generation that had witnessed, either verbally or by direct experience, World War I and World War II.

Some of those were young people and some of those were older individuals.

Now that generation is slowly disappearing.

I doubt that we fully realized how long ago the United States entered World War I.

For some of you who are younger, it may seem long ago, 1917, that's 70 years ago this year.

70 years ago may, in a certain sense, but not the specific sense, there isn't any specific sense, represent a generation.

The bulk of the people who lived and fought in that war are now dead.

It's finished.

The chapters closed.

And you would be surprised how soon it will close on the generation that fought in World War II.

Sooner than you realize, because if you look at the lapse of time, just let me illustrate a point.

1972, end of 38 years of the work at the beginning of the groundbreaking of this remarkable building.

This is 1987 or 15 years ago.

From 1972, go back 15 years.

And we're back to 1957.

Let me ask you a question.

How many of you were not born before 1957? All right, do you understand what I'm saying with a passage of time? That's the majority in this congregation.

Partly we have a collegiate atmosphere.

But I think older people do not fully realize to what extent we are in another generation than the one Mr. Armstrong addressed in the 1930s and 40s and 50s and 60s.

And if you please, 70s.

We're in a generation that must be addressed now in the 80s and forward until this superstructure, that is, until that part of the temple.

We draw an analogy where the church is like a temple, as the individual is, is completed for this time.

When the number of people that have been chosen to be called and to understand, to believe, to repent, to be baptized has been complete for the work of the church while it is day.

We happen to be assembled here on the days of Unleavened Bread, the first day of Unleavened Bread in the morning service.

I want to thank Mr. Tecache for the opportunity to address the headquarters congregation because there are important things for you to learn from these festivals from year to year.

And in a sense where I will say this morning is intended to be a kind of foundation of the things that you ought to be studying during this festival that you ought to be considering.

We are never to be stagnant.

We're never to say, I have heard this before.

Now, a part of this solution to that is that when we give a summary and let's say open an understanding of the festivals because Mr. Armstrong regularly gave an overview at the beginning of the days of Unleavened Bread like he gave a review at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles.

It's of course incumbent also on us who do speak to you to do it in such a manner that it will give a different light or a new view or emphasis in the clarification.

So let us say this festival of Unleavened Bread represents the 1957th time that the Passover, which was observed on the 14th of this sacred month, we won't refer to the Roman month of April, this is the 1957th sequence of the Holy Days.

This in fact is a significant period of time.

It is also the 34th, I'm sorry, the 3430th festival time since the children of Israel were given the festivals of God while they were in Egypt.

And once we understand how important these days are, we will see how significant it is that God has a people still doing it, still doing his work.

In the world, if you listened to the program this last Sunday by Dr. Albert, you will note that he did not deny that there are things that we are reminded of about the Messiah.

But as he pointed up, by having the world substitutes and calling the world substitutes Christian, they have overlooked the really important things that are in the Bible that is lost to them.

At the beginning of this festival, we should examine therefore the whole picture to repeat for us an understanding of the plan of God as represented by the annual festivals which are not represented by the world's holidays.

You'll notice the confusion.

The world's holidays, let's say it starts with Christmas for a certain reason.

You know, the year used to begin around Christmas time when they went to Solstice.

And then it was different times in the year.

Sometimes it was the spring and now it's January 1 in the world.

But the Messiah is pictured as being born when he was not.

He was not born at Christmas, but they remember that he was born, but they're confused about the time of the year.

And then the most remarkable confusion about this time of the year, they will celebrate, mind you, the resurrection of Christ with the symbols of his death.

Now that is a strange thing.

You would think they would celebrate his resurrection by the symbols of his resurrection, wouldn't you? But they do it with red and wine.

And they're even confused as to whether it should be white, red, and leavened or grape juice.

But we're not concerned about that.

But the interesting thing is, they are taking symbols that Jesus said represented his flesh and his blood that would be offered on that 14th day in AD 31.

And they take those symbols, which from their point of view, Jesus introduced Thursday night and Friday from their point of view, and they use those symbols to represent the resurrection on Sunday morning when they have some kind of communion, or every Sunday morning, or it will vary in some churches, quarterly, or in fact, hour by hour in the Sunday, depending on which hour you attend.

But such is the confusion of the world.

We are among those whom God has called.

He's called many others around the world, and he has yet to call others before this work is finished.

The festivals were given to an ancient nation, to whom God gave the privilege also of being his church.

Today, festivals are still observed.

Now in this case, by a church that Jesus has called out, to whom he is privileged to give a spiritual priesthood and to make a nation the kingdom of God.

We are called to do what ancient Israel did not.

When I look back on the Old Testament, in some ways I have to marvel that of all the tribes of Israel, there were 12, if you want to count Joseph as two, there were 13, the overwhelming number that gave assent at a little later time in the year than now, whatever the Lord commands, whatever Yahweh tells us, that we will do.

And then they did not keep their word, they turned their backs, and they sought to copy the Gentiles.

I think we have to realize that God called a nation.

That, as Jeremiah later said, did something that no other nation has done, simply to abandon its religion and adopt somebody else's.

Abandoned is God. Jeremiah marveled at that.

Having traveled in certain parts of Southeast Asia, I really marveled that after 2,500 years, approximately, there are nations who still follow the teachings of a teacher who was born in Nepal near the border with India, Siddhartha, whom we know simply as the Buddha today in history.

They have kept the religion, but the overwhelming number of the children of Israel departed, wanted to live as the Gentiles, came to think of themselves as Gentiles, and only a tiny fragment stuck with it, and said, we gave our assent.

And whether all of us obey, there will be some of us who will.

There was a remarkable people, whom the world today uses as an epithet, the Jews.

That is, when you want to get advantage of somebody, you Jew somebody down, you know, that kind of a usage of the term.

Of all the tribes, there were really only two.

Now, in this case, Benjamin was joined initially to Judah, but Levi did not count among the twelve, and the bulk of the Levites came with the house of Judah, because they were driven out of Israel when Israel departed.

It is important then to realize, you see, that God ultimately had His law preserved among a people that we know today as the Jews.

And whether they have understood it spiritually or not, they have not neglected the preservation, both of the Hebrew Bible, and of the calendar that determines why this is the fifteenth day of the month, and why this is the first month.

They have preserved a knowledge of the seventh, by which we know which is the seventh day of the week.

But God did not choose that tribe to be by itself, the kingdom of God, when it is restored.

He decided to choose only a part of that tribe, that no one should boast, and that part became the foundation of the New Testament church.

But then there were to be added many others, Syrophenicians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, certainly the Greeks and the Latins, and many peoples, including remnants of the children of Israel who thought of themselves as Gentiles.

And they are all in a sense grafted into an olive tree that Paul draws as an analogy for our understanding of our relationship.

Christ is in a sense the root of the trunk, and we are all branches.

And when we become a part of that tree, we also partake of the Spirit of God, and the revelation that is in the Bible, what we call today the Old and New Testament.

And when all the branches are put in, when the coming of Christ occurs, not only will our part of the work that we're doing have been finished, but even the work during the time of the two witnesses will have been finished.

And who are these who are put in? Well, those are Jews inwardly.

We're to become Jews inwardly.

And whether you may be descended from people whose ancestors lived in Africa or Asia or what we call Latin America or Europe, it does not matter your tribal or ethnic ancestry.

You are all asked today to become inward Jews because you will compose the house of Israel spiritually born again, by which I mean the whole house of Israel joined with Judah all twelve tribes.

Now in the millennium, there will be people who will be called Chinese.

They will be of the nations.

But today God is calling out of the nations many different people.

Some you recognize such names as Chinese, Germans, Russians, some you may not recognize.

I met a man in the church who's a Bonobon.

Unless you know or read in encyclopedia, I doubt that any of you would know where the Bonobons lived.

They lived only on one island in the world.

And nobody lives there anymore.

It's Ocean Island because that was taken up and now has been industrialized because of its natural resources and the people were scattered.

But from the tiniest remnants of people to the great nations of the world, God has selected a certain number and brought them into Israel.

The spiritual Israel.

The Israel of God.

Our twelve tribes that earnestly serve God day and night, as Paul said in one of his testimonies.

Now when Paul said this in the book of Acts, he was not talking about your carnal neighbors who not only don't serve God, but certainly don't serve Him day and night.

He was talking about that Israel, which has begotten again and will be born again, to whom the promises of a spiritual nature ultimately pertain.

And because Israel as a whole by nature departed, the particular word used to represent a spiritual Israelite is essentially in New Testament terminology, using the English language, a Jew inwardly, because the Jew represented the only remnant of Israel that was willing to obey.

And so the church today is made up of inward Jews.

We are called to be inheritors of the Kingdom of God.

We are called to understand and to announce the message of God, the good news of the restoration of that Kingdom, and to understand and clarify and teach to the church the plan of God as revealed in the festivals.

Now it is typical when we look at the plan of God, we start from the Passover, move along through the spring, to the end of summer and early autumn until we come to the eighth day of that autumnal festival season around the Feast of Tabernacles time, where there is a seventh day festival and an eighth day.

I thought today that I would do something different, and instead of starting at the beginning and going the other way, I would start at the end and work back where we come to the beginning.

And then Mr. D'Coth will pick up the story at the beginning this afternoon.

Now I have a reason for doing this.

One, it will make you think backward and forward.

It's good for you to know how to go back and trace the reasons why, so you can see God's plan from either direction.

Furthermore, if we're announcing the message of Christ, you will note that Christ's message didn't focus on himself, not nearly as much as the world thinks, and he focused on what is to come.

So we're going to look at what is to come and then ask why the problem until we get back to the beginning.

That is, we'll start with the eighth day.

Now that eighth day after the Feast of Tabernacles is the last holy day.

It is the seventh festival.

It's a separate festival.

It's called the eighth day because it follows seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

We have a very important verse about this day.

Jesus explained this day, John 11-24.

I have a lot of verses in John for this morning.

Now, there may be a reason because when John had already seen and heard what God chose to reveal in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he fills in the gaps, so to speak, that had not yet been touched upon that the church was teaching.

So let's look at John 11-24.

Martha says to him, I know that my brother Lazarus, I'm referring to the previous verses, shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Now, she knew that.

The last day to her was the fulfillment of this eighth day at a time when there will be the, what we call in traditional Christian literature, the general resurrection.

In other words, Martha had been instructed in a manner that even the Jews as a whole today do not fully and clearly grasp.

She was instructed by Jesus that there would come a time when there would be a resurrection, and this resurrection would occur at the last day, and that eighth day is the last of the holy days.

And she was using it as a term in terms of the 7,000-year plan.

It's the very climax of it that follows the very end of things that pertain to the world as we now know it physically.

I don't mean in terms of civilization.

But Jesus explained to her that Lazarus has an opportunity of something different than rising at the last day.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection in the life.

He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die that second death.

So he was expounding something that indeed is possible through the Messiah to live, and when that time comes, we'll have to turn to another verse.

But before we come to the story of that first resurrection, let me point out that Luke chapter 10, turn to it quickly, defines Jesus' message in terms of that last day.

Luke chapter 10, it shall be more tolerable, verse 12, in that day, for Sodom then for this Jewish city to which he was speaking.

If these works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, verse 13, they would have repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes, and it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

So we can go on.

Chapter 11, 29 of Luke continues the thought.

When the people were gathered together, he said this is a tragic and evil generation.

The Queen of the South, verse 31, will rise in the judgment.

The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment.

We can go on to the other gospels we want.

That's sufficient for the moment.

Jesus addressed in an open and public manner the matter of the judgment of the great day and the fact that it begins with a resurrection.

Now, this tells us something significant.

Here are people who are going to rise in the judgment, and that judgment will last through jubilees or a century, a hundred years, when we rightly and correctly and clearly understand Isaiah 65.

It's a period of time in which people of many generations should rise.

Ezekiel 16, a 16th chapter, defines it also.

So Jesus spent significant times in the gospel accounts to show that there's coming a judgment of many nations and people, and for some it's going to be easier than others.

Now, since this represents the world from Adam till the coming of Jesus Christ and into the beginning of the millennium when some elderly people will be dying, whose time had not come to be called, they will all rise in this resurrection, defined in Revelation, clearly in chapter 20.

Jesus spoke of that resurrection at the end of the millennium.

That was a fundamental part of his message.

The good news is that everyone who's lived and died in the past is going to have an opportunity for the first time to come to understand.

This is not a second chance.

This is good news.

They're going to look back.

If they were a little older, they were younger, they'll simply have to read about it.

But they will look back and recall what kind of a world they lived in and how different it is from the recorded evidence and the testimony of millions of people who lived for 1,000 years, God's way.

We're going to be there with Christ, assisting Him in judging the nations.

Perhaps I should use the term nations right there in judging the world because nations is a more modern term, so let's leave it for another purpose and then I will come to in a moment.

But we're going to be judging them and we're going to be guiding them, people who have been misguided in all through history.

Did you know that we're not going to start judging the people who've lived these past near 6,000 years? That will not take place until we've had training in advance.

That is, you would not know how to deal with Charles Darwin.

You would not know how to deal with Benito Mussolini.

You would not know how to deal with the great minds of this world and the lesser minds just starving out.

We're not going to deal with any of these past 6,000 years, nearly, and all the twisted minds until we've had a thousand years of training working with people.

So let's come now as we go back in our story to the millennium.

And here we are introduced to Jesus' story in Matthew 25, 31.

There he says that when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, He's going to gather the nations.

Before I want to use the term, the nations in front of Him, because the world today is divided into true nations as we use the term.

There were many times city-states in the past for which the word nation would hardly be appropriate.

So in the second resurrection, we're dealing with a different group of people, those who lived essentially to the coming of Christ from the time of Adam.

In the millennium, these are the people who survived the end of this civilization and all their children who will be born in that thousand years that will represent the nations.

And these nations shall learn to serve the spiritual Israel of God, the nation that God has chosen.

There will be nations such as China, Japan, many nations making up the Soviet Union, not just the one nation, because there are numerous people there.

Undoubtedly, there will be break-up of some areas and unions of others because the present structure of nations has often had simply a political background that is not basic to differences.

They're going to be judged.

Some will be placed on the left hand like goats and some on the right hand like sheep.

It's the time for the nations to be judged.

This is not the time God is judging the nations.

Now, Revelation 11-18 introduces that time.

And there, we want to just take a quick look.

I have cited this again and again and I want to repeat it because I think it is important not to be forgotten that in fact the Greek text here has a very significant message that is missed in all modern translations into English without exception.

And not until you go back, not even to an interlinear but to the authoritative text approved by the patriarchate of Constantinople at the end of the last century, the beginning of this century, do we recognize what one word here should have been? And the nations were angry.

11-18, book of Revelation, and your wrath has come.

And the time of the Greek says not, the dead.

But toneeth known that they should be judged.

The time of the nations that they should be judged.

The time of the dead to be judged pertains to that second resurrection.

The rest of the dead didn't live for a thousand years.

It's tragic, but even the Greek nation drifted into the direction of thinking there was only one final resurrection and judgment.

Not at all.

But when they were compelled to have a printed text, the Greeks went back to their finest manuscripts and found the scripture reads that Christ is coming back and it's the time when the nations will be judged.

So the nations are going to be judged in the millennium and you're going to have the experience of dealing with people who want to be rescued from the tragedy of this world.

Those who go about trying to destroy this world and corrupt it, we had a personal in the plain truth on that, they're going to disappear.

God is going to destroy those who would like to destroy the world.

You can destroy the world with the bomb, you can destroy the world with drugs.

And God is going to simply get rid of all those who want to corrupt our society and leave those who would like to be left alone and left at peace.

So now we begin to have a picture.

We're going to deal with the hard nuts to crack after the second resurrection has occurred.

We're going to have the easier experience first, where we deal with the innocents who have survived who were willing to repent of all the nations.

Then we're going to be trained in that remarkable period to deal with every imaginable problem that people will let enter their minds.

But we're going to be learning and learning so we'll be prepared.

And we'll know the difference between the way the world goes.

You know, today we only can talk, let us say, we can talk theoretically about the sabbatical year.

We can talk theoretically about the Jubilee.

We can say, well, it should produce this and shouldn't be like it is today.

But we don't find the world keeping the sabbatical year of the Jubilee.

And so for people who say, well, I think there's another solution, not that solution, we're going to be armed with the evidence because we're going to show what the world really was like that did God's way for a thousand years and compare it with anything that human beings have ever dreamed of.

But we're not armed with all of that.

Now, you and I may be armed with the Sabbath with respect to Sunday, but we're not armed with respect to a lot of the law of God that can only be applied on a national level and not merely an individual level.

And we're going to be dealing in the second resurrection with people who have lived and died and had power in government, power and finances and economics, social decisions.

And we're going to be trained and show to them how much better God's law was, and they're going to be forced to live it whether they want to agree or not at first.

And then they're going to be able to make their decision.

But before we're given the opportunity to work with a world that wants to live at peace, the devil must be removed, who has incited the world.

Now we move back to the day of atonement, and Jesus had a message there in John 1231.

Let's look at it, John 1231.

Now is the judgment of this world.

Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Here the word world is used. This is not the nations.

God did not say through Christ, now is the judgment of the nations.

No, the time of the nations to be judged is in the millennium.

The time of the dead to be judged, that's after the millennium and the second resurrection is the last day.

This is the time when Jesus was judging the world as to whether this cosmos or order of things that the devil has established that has led to all this tragedy should be allowed to continue forever.

Or whether it should be replaced.

And the prince of this cosmos or present age or order.

The prince of this world shall be cast out.

Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Let me explain one thing briefly.

We're told we're to judge angels.

You remember this statement that Paul said, why shouldn't you then be able to judge the smallest matters? We're to judge angels, don't you know that? Now when are you going to judge the angels? Well when did Jesus judge the devil in this sense? The answer is not until the end of his work when he proved how he could administer God's will.

But was he in a position to say that I have demonstrated that I can handle God's office.

I have given every word that the Father has given me.

I have done his will and shortly he will say that I have finished the work in entirety.

But only after he had in fact parted the devil behind him and said about doing his work and showing that he could carry it out.

Could he say that this world that the devil has created in the prince of this world be judged.

And finally removed.

But now the removal didn't take place then.

The removal will take place later.

When Jesus Christ returns and the devil is put in prison with angels.

But we're not going to judge the angels.

No, listen carefully, not even after you finish this life.

Not at the first resurrection.

You're not going to judge the angels until after the millennium before the second resurrection.

After you have proved that you can administer God's government correctly and bring about the results that the angels themselves who sin should have done.

So now we learn something that is we're tracing the steps backward.

I'm doing it to give you a little different perspective of how to approach a problem sometimes.

That is, Mr. Armstrong had to weave his way back through the whole sequence till he got the picture at the beginning.

He didn't start at the beginning as if it were clear.

That's where he finally ended up.

Those are the things he said last in life, not first.

So how are we going to transform the world in the millennium? Well, first of all, the devil has to be removed and the demons and they're going to be imprisoned during that time.

And we're not going to sentence them to prison.

That's only the place of restraint.

The final decision will be made at the end of the millennium, Revelation chapter 20.

But now, in order to do this, in a world in which the devil is the God of this world and you have this world of societies, and believe it or not, there are people in this world who really don't know what civilization should be like.

But they're leaning on the present civilization.

I've talked to a person, a very fine friend of many years, who in a sense said that this society, this civilization, is what we lean on because we don't know of any other and it's survived all this time despite the ups and downs.

What a statement I thought.

No knowledge of the kingdom of God, no knowledge of the laws of God.

Listen, this world is resting on the premise that since society going man's way has survived, and let's say after collapsing again and again, has come back only to collapse once more, they think that this must be the way it ought to be.

Because despite the problems, it keeps surviving.

Well, there's coming a time that if God wouldn't intervene, it wouldn't survive at all and that's what the world is going to have to face.

That this civilization was all wrong because it will not survive.

So we necessarily come to the Feast of Trumpets.

I'm not even going to turn to a verse here because there's so many, I'll just cite one.

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be the day of the coming of the Son of Man.

That is, we are in a world in which the world is unconscious of what is about to happen.

They were eating and drinking, marrying, planting, giving and marriage, everything imaginable, socially, economically.

On the premise it would go on and on.

But it didn't. It was wiped out.

So we are in a world in which today we think, despite the shadow of the bomb, that it will go on and on and for those who are not sure, there's always a substitute called drugs.

Because a lot of people are on drugs today because they really have no hope or anticipation of ever making it to the end of life.

And it gives them at least some feeling or high while life is still here.

Instead of having a real understanding, an understanding of the real world as it should be, as distinct from this false world that we call the real world.

Under drugs, people have illusions. They don't know reality.

While the fact remains, the real world around us is not real either. It is a delusion.

The Feast of Trumpets represents, as Mr. Armstrong has said, every evidence that it is the time that God will intervene by sending Jesus Christ.

In that sense, we anticipate, and perhaps this is a statement, we anticipate that as the millennium will begin with the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles, so Satan will be bound on the Day of Atonement and the Church anticipates, I will use that term, that Jesus Christ himself will come with all the holy angels.

And there's no reason to anticipate it may not be the Feast of Trumpets.

But who are these people who are ready when that trumpet is blowing the seventh one? Who are these people who are ready? Well, the answer is they represent the first fruits that are pictured by the Festival of First Fruits, or Pentecost, which is named after the method of counting to arrive at that festival.

So we're moving back now to the later part of spring.

And we're at that festival that we most commonly call from the Greek term Pentecost, which is the Festival of Weeks after the Weeks.

We're out the 50th day.

It's this festival in which the first fruits are celebrated.

In other words, if we're going to know who will judge the world, we're going to know that they must be replacing the devil and his demons, and they will be there when Christ comes back at the first resurrection.

We now need to go back to Pentecost to find out who these people are.

These people who will rise at the seventh trumpet when Christ returns, who will judge the nations, and finally judge all who have lived and died in this great day of judgment after the millennium.

These are those whom Jesus Christ calls the first fruits, whom the Old Testament calls the first fruits.

That is, we're dealing with the fact that only a selected number of people are being selected or grafted in to that olive tree that I spoke of earlier.

This is not the time that God is seeking to save the whole world.

Now is not the only day of salvation.

In fact, for most people, it doesn't even exist because they've never heard or had the opportunity.

We anticipate that probably the majority of people in the United States, for some decades, have known about us a little, and a minority have known about us more, and even a smaller minority have known all about us wrongly.

And only a very few really know who we are.

You are a part of those, or most of you, because not necessarily everybody in every congregation has God called to reveal his truth to.

We sometimes have friends or relatives who God simply is not choosing.

That will come later.

The first fruits represent the conclusion of the first harvest.

For in Palestine, there was a spring harvest, and the spring harvest essentially centered on the barley, the winter wheat.

And as the harvest went on, you had the later spring wheat, you had the fruits that got ripe.

Finally, you had the most famous of all, the wine grapes toward the end of summer into early autumn.

And of course, there were other harvests.

Your olives occur later in the year and late autumn to the beginning of winter, something like that.

And your citrus often in winter, let's say January, February, all through the spring and summer, just to give you some perspective.

But the focus was on the grain harvest in order to have a certain symbol.

And the feast of Pentecost represented the conclusion, represented the conclusion of the selection of people who would ultimately be first harvested in the world.

And those in that first harvest constitute the first resurrection.

This choice of people is of God.

It climaxed on the 50th day.

It was preceded by seven weeks of harvesting.

Now, just as the Feast of Tabernacles, a day in God's plan, was made up of seven days in order to have a complete number to represent that day.

So it is interesting that for the period of time or the day of this first harvest, there are seven weeks.

Seven weeks, ending each with a Sabbath day when no harvesting was done.

And then the first day of the week following the seventh Sabbath, they had the celebration.

And that celebration involved, and we'll look at it more closely later, two loaves that represent those who were selected in what we call the times before and during the Old Covenant.

Those represented by that other loaf represented those being called and selected during the times when God opened up the proposal through Christ of the New Covenant, when the New Testament is in force.

The New Testament, of course, is Christ's will in which he said, that if I die, I want everything that I have inherited as the heir of Abraham who is perfect.

If I die, I want this to be distributed to all who are willing to accept my death, to pay the penalty for their sin, who are willing to repent and want to receive the Holy Spirit that they may inherit this kingdom that is promised.

That's the subject that's worthy of a whole sermon, so I won't go into that.

Most people do not adequately understand the New Testament.

Christ enunciated what he was heir to.

Abraham was heir to the whole world.

Christ was heir to the whole world, but he also said that should I die, I want others to inherit this.

That's what the New Testament is about.

Most people have little or no understanding of that.

So here are seven weeks during which the harvest takes place that represents only the beginning number, the small number to constitute that first resurrection as we have said.

Those two loaves were made with leather, unusual because this was not typical of the rituals of Moses.

That was to symbolize the fact that indeed the church, even to the time of death, is not made up of people who are without some weakness and some sin.

We all have something to overcome.

Jesus said, he that overcomes or she that overcomes to the end, the same.

Shall be saved.

You have to be willing to keep going.

There are people who want to drop out and drop away who simply said, I have done God's will long enough.

I'm getting tired of it.

I don't want to go on resisting myself.

That's happening a little here, a little there.

That's why Jesus said what he did.

He said what he did that no one should ever quit.

But even to the time of your death.

And mine, there would be none of us who were or are perfect as the Messiah himself was.

But you have to be in an attitude that is perfect.

You have to be in an attitude that you want to be.

Even if you have not had all the strength and the power to resist.

Now remember, there's a difference.

Christ had to resist the temptations, but he never let the devil logic.

The devil has no part in me, he said.

But all of us grew up in a world of ignorance.

The world around us and many of you grew up in a world even in religion that was ignorant.

Some of you have been privileged to grow up in knowledge in the church.

But nevertheless, we've been affected by the around.

So that we have the devil's influence and habits established.

Jesus had only good habits.

We have all established good and bad habits.

I have met people who have established so many bad habits, it was hard to find a good one.

And I've met others.

There was a man who was a neighbor when I grew up.

It was doubtful and I counted often that he could say three words without introducing something profane.

That was an awful habit.

You know, he could hardly open his mouth anymore without having suddenly to stop it because the thought would come out if he was ever going to be called.

It's far more difficult for people who have established these wrong habits.

It's a lot easier if you establish right habits.

And of course, God understands that and you're judged accordingly.

But it's a lot nicer to have lived as a result of the good instruction of parents than the tragic instruction that some had or no instruction at all.

So Jesus recognizes the uniqueness of those who are going to be made immortal.

But finally, all the bad habits established in the flesh in our neural pattern, all that is going to be transformed and we're going to be composed of spirit.

We must establish the right attitude here and now.

Now Christ set the pattern.

He is called the first of the first fruits.

And here we are introduced to the wave sheaf.

In the days of unleavened bread.

Now for many years the church did not correctly understand this through 1973 in fact.

We didn't realize that the Jews themselves had a controversy.

They didn't quite settle correctly.

And we did not have it fully and clearly in mind.

That is why we assumed for many, many years.

We assumed that Mr. Armstrong's premise was reasonable.

And of course some things are reasonable but he didn't see the whole picture until around 1974.

We assumed that the Sabbath day which precedes the day that the wave sheaf was cut and later offered must be during the days of unleavened bread.

That's the way the Pharisees viewed it and that's the way the Sadducees viewed it.

That was the error.

Now the Pharisees were correct when they said that the wave sheaf should have been cut and later offered during the days of unleavened bread.

The Sadducees sometimes allowed it to happen after the days of unleavened bread were over on the Sunday following.

That's whenever the Passover or the 14th is the Sabbath day.

And the days of unleavened bread were the natural week and the only Sabbath was the last day.

So the Sadducees erred and we erred in the sense of having adopted the Sadducees method.

That was an error.

Now the Pharisees method was also an error because they don't count from a weekly Sabbath which is the clear intent of the law.

They count from the first holy day in order to have the wave sheaf always cut and later offered on the 16th.

But we won't go into that.

We will say that Mr. Armstrong and the church came to realize on the basis of the last verses of Joshua as well as Leviticus 23.

The last verses of Joshua chapter 5 that when the Passover is a Sabbath day the Sabbath day preceding the wave sheaf is the 14th or Passover day in which case the wave sheaf ceremonially is cut on the first holy day the 15th which then would be Saturday night, Sunday, you see that period of time.

Now it means then that the harvest begins the next day, the Monday, the second day of the week because you don't do your regular harvesting on the holy day, any time for pending cost.

No matter when these days fall, when the first and last day of 11th bread falls you don't harvest on that day.

But you may ceremonially cut that first sheaf which represents the Messiah.

He's the first of the first fruits.

So let's focus on this first of the first fruits matter.

Christ was called setting us an example.

He was called to set this example.

He is the first one who, as Mr. Armstrong said, has been born again.

He has been born again.

We have only been begun because we are not yet composed of spirit.

And he who was ultimately born again is spirit.

Jesus announced that.

Now let me explain a bit about the wave sheaf.

The wave sheaf was properly cut when the Sabbath was over as the twilight was waning and the old day was passed, the Sabbath day.

At the beginning of the first day of the week, early the first day of the week, the wave sheaf was cut. It had been selected.

It was prepared during that night and in the morning.

At some reasonably early time, it was offered.

I won't go into details here, but only to say the word translated sheaf is really referring to a quantity.

And Hebrew and over is referred to.

It's not talking about the shape of something that's a sheaf that you could carry on your shoulders.

It's talking about a quantity.

It says an over.

I don't know why they ever translated it a sheaf.

What they should have said is you must cut a sheaf the equivalent of an over or simply call it cut an over's quantity just to use a simple term.

And that was offered sometime in the morning.

Now, let us understand the meaning of that.

John 20 verse 17, Mary was told by Jesus, Do not touch me yet.

I am not yet ascended.

Later that same day, Matthew 28 and 9, the women held Jesus by the feet.

And, sir, he ascended to heaven, was accepted as the first of the first fruits, was approved of God and returned to earth that same first day of the week to continue 40 days with the disciples in final instruction.

When the wave sheaf was presented, that was like Jesus Christ the High Priest presenting himself as the sheaf.

Christ was High Priest, the over represented Christ, the Messiah, the first fruits.

So he presented himself on that Sunday morning.

But the wave sheaf was cut the previous evening, shortly after sunset.

It was cut when the Sabbath day was over, when the twilight was waning at the beginning of the first day of the week.

And the church has never clearly understood why.

I would like to state something here because it is time you realize what should be understood.

I first want to draw your attention to an important fact.

When it comes to the question of the death of Jesus, we have focused on three days and three nights.

As if three days and three nights after three days, the third day in all these terms are referring to a singular period of time.

The reason we have done this is that we were focusing on the era of Good Friday, Easter Sunday.

Now the fact remains, Jesus said in many areas that he was referring to such a period of time, and he defined it in one case, not the only time, that the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The church has always correctly understood that Jesus was three days and three nights in the tomb.

But the church has not clearly understood what Jesus said very, very precisely in John 3.14.

Let us turn to it so we understand.

John 3.14.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

Here we are introducing the story, of course, of Christ and the crucifixion.

And at the end of the crucifixion, shortly after 3 p.m., according to the original Greek text, where there is a missing verse in Matthew 27.49, Jesus was spared in the sign.

It was not until essentially the fifth century that the Greeks, under a mistaken premise, ordered that verse out of the text.

It is in the Mothic translation correctly.

And another took a spear and pierced his side, and Jesus cried out with a loud voices in there.

But nobody knows why he did.

The answer is that someone had spared his side at the time that the Passover lambs were slain in AD 31, because he was the Passover lamb of God.

But now that we are dealing with the time of his death on that 14th day of the month and have seen it clearly, let us look then to what is elsewhere written.

Jesus said with respect to the temple.

We want to sign, the Jews said.

Jesus said, verse 19 of chapter 2, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.

Verse 21, he spoke of the temple of his body.

Now listen carefully.

When that temple was destroyed and the life was removed, it was shortly after, not apt, shortly after 3 p.m.

and that afternoon.

In three days I will raise it up.

Jesus did not rise from the dead at the same moment he rose from the tomb.

You understand what I am saying? Are you listening carefully? Jesus rose from the dead three days and three nights after he died.

That was not the moment of his burial.

He died when the Passover lambs were slain.

In AD 31, shortly after 3 p.m., one of the soldiers spared his side instead of the way most people were crucified where they had their bones broken and finally collapsed.

This was, of course, to fulfill the scripture.

Jesus came to be alive in the tomb three days and three nights, not later, after he died.

When evening came, late in the day, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus.

And Pilate said, you could have the body to bury it.

And so Pilate took the body down.

You remember, when even was come, he proceeds to go to Pilate.

Then he takes the body down.

Matthew 27.57.

You start there.

It was late in the day.

He brings the body to the tomb.

He wraps it with the appointments.

Then he finally has completed that task.

And as the Sabbath had begun, he completes the rolling of the stone shutting the mouth of the tomb.

The correct translation of Luke 23.54 is in the revised standard version.

Not that the Sabbath was about to begin later, but that the Sabbath had already begun when Joseph of Arimathea had rolled that stone and the tomb was closed.

And if the Sabbath had already begun, it was after the preparation of the Passover day, or the 14th, you see, after that preparation day when the crucifixion occurred and all those things, the Sabbath had begun.

That's the translation.

Three days and three nights later, the first day of the week had begun.

Did you hear me clearly? Three days and three nights later, from Wednesday night to beginning of that first day.

Thursday night to beginning of that second day.

Friday night to beginning of that third day.

Saturday night after the Sabbath, after three days and three nights when he was in the heart of the earth.

He rose from the tomb with that stone still over it from all the evidence we have at the very moment the wave sheaf was cut early the first day of the week.

The wave sheaf was cut, not at the time Jesus rose, became conscious and rose from the day.

He remained in the tomb a brief period of time from the time three days and three nights after he was killed.

The wrappings lay there, the cloth which was over his face.

He took that cloth and put it elsewhere and the angels were with him.

The angels were later also there, but he was gone in the meantime when the women came the next morning.

Now you can better understand the church has only understood the last part of that ceremony of the wave sheaf.

We have only focused on when it was presented into heaven and never focused on when it was cut.

And this explains of course Mark 16 9 early the first day of the week.

Now let's look at that and get the correct translation in simple Greek.

There is no problem whatsoever in translating it.

The standard way it ought to have been translated and any scholar would know this.

Unfortunately the authorized version doesn't have it quite clear.

When Jesus was risen early the first day of the week.

Now the Greek normally should have up front.

The Greek has a structure that's best translated in English.

Having risen early the first day of the week.

Having risen early the first day of the week is the introductory clause.

He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

Now let me tell you, when does the first day of the week begin? Well it begins Saturday night.

Early the first day of the week was the time the wave sheaf was cut.

And any normal translation of this verse implies clearly that it wasn't Sunday morning which was midway in the day.

In the 24 hour day Sunday morning was halfway through.

Mark in fact is talking about the time when Jesus was risen from the tomb.

Early the first day of the week when the wave sheaf was regularly cut.

So Jesus Christ fulfilled.

Not only the story of the wave sheaf at the time it was cut.

He also fulfilled the sign of Jonah.

He was also three days and three nights dead from the time he was slain when the Passover lamb was slain in AD 31.

This has not been clearly understood because we've been arguing against a Good Friday Easter Sunday tradition instead of looking at the whole picture that is here.

Now we see the wave sheaf as a very important ceremony.

And not as the church had to say before it was strange why the wave sheaf was cut after the Sabbath day was over.

When in fact Jesus rose from the dead before the Sabbath day was over.

The cutting of the wave sheaf is talking about Christ leaving the tomb no longer trapped in this world.

It is now free to rise as a spirit being in the family of God.

And this during the days of Unleavened Bread.

The days of Unleavened Bread that we are celebrating now.

Picture the putting out of sin.

And this putting out of sin is the first thing that is required of people who are willing to do God's service.

Repent and believe the gospel was Jesus' message in Mark.

To repent means to turn from sin.

And we have seven days of Unleavened Bread to picture in a sense the completeness of life however short or long it may be for you.

Proceeding that of course we reflect back on the Passover which we celebrated.

The Passover lamb.

Jesus Christ.

Gave his life.

That Passover lamb who gave his life made it possible for us to be forgiven of sin.

And furthermore as Mr. Tkach has clarified and given us a greater understanding.

I'll summarize it in these terms.

You don't have to compartmentalize what happened to Christ's body and compartmentalize the spearing of his side and his act of death.

It is one grand sacrifice which makes us understand better the following.

Not only is the wages of sin death.

That's why Christ had to die.

But what you reap along the way is all sorts of suffering.

Sin produces not only death it produces before death misery and suffering misunderstanding and problems of all sorts.

Christ suffered physically and emotionally in his body mentally too.

What these people were doing and he was bearing their sins while they were beating him.

Sin can affect us spiritually and sin can affect us physically.

So that we can be healed spiritually and we can be healed physically.

But Christ was also beaten in order that we could have even the penalties of spiritual sin along the way.

I use spiritual because the law is spiritual that is defined by its penalty or sin.

So when we took yesterday or this time goes by the evening before that but it was the eve of the 14th when we took that unleavened bread and that wine.

We symbolized what happened when the Passover lamb was slain.

So we symbolized something more.

We symbolized what happened to the Passover lamb of God before it was slain in a way that the Passover lambs never were dealt with.

For Christ was beaten before he was slain the lambs were never beaten.

So we have a whole new understanding of the gravity of sin by all the things that we commemorate with that bread to represent what Christ endured before.

To show the depravity of sin while we're living it as distinct from and in addition to the rest of the story which we have clearly understood.

And that is the wages of sin is death and Christ had to die in our sin as symbolized by that blood.

Now I've taken us back in the story deliberately and I hope that you could reverse the process and begin to...

I'm doing it in order to make you see that one effect is preceded by a previous cause back and forth and you can run it the other way from cause to effect.

But I hope it gives you a panoramic view of what we are beginning in these days to celebrate now in April through October of this great year.

1900 and 56 years ago we are entering the 1957th year of celebration since this church was founded.