

Mr. John Jewell

Sermon Transcript

March 17, 2001

The Church, Europe and Christ's Return

Now the sermon this afternoon, it's sort of hounded a little bit by the words of the second hymn we sang this afternoon, number three in the book, you don't need to turn there because you sang it earlier, when it said in the second verse, "*Every land must hear the word, all of the world must know the king will come and save His people from the time of woe. Knowledge of His righteous ways over the earth shall be, as deep and wide and wondrous as the waters of the sea.*" I hope when we sing those words next time, we will keep what they're really saying to us very much in mind.

Now this afternoon I've divided this split sermon into three parts, the first part is an update on where we are as of now with the work in Britain, then to parallel that and focus secondly upon the development of Europe as it's taking place today and then winding up with the third and final part, I want to focus upon the great and only hope for mankind, an event for which Jesus Christ told us in Matthew 6, and you don't need to turn there, but Mr. Kirkpatrick mentioned a few of the words from it a moment ago, it was the model prayer that Christ gave us and these were the words He started with: "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done.*" We are to pray brethren for the return of Jesus Christ to establish God's kingdom on this earth - and why are we to do that? The reason is so that the next phase of the plan of God may move forward and that then there will be peace for this world, this suffering world, the tormented is the lot, day by day, endless day by day for the majority of the people of this planet.

Now as you know, in 1998 the Church suffered yet another attack and Mr. Kirkpatrick was focusing very much upon the enemy of all of us and how he works and what he is doing. We suffered yet another attack, another effort to further divide and splinter the Church and thus render the preaching of the gospel that much less effective. Divide and conquer is what the adversary was intending to do, to try and in some ways was very successful. In United Kingdom we were hit dreadfully with 13 out of 15 ministers leaving, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Church and

rendering the preaching of the gospel there almost non-existent. Many of these, along with many of those in other groups are still part of the extended Church of God and I hope we won't forget that they are, but the United Church of God in Britain today has just 120 people now attending. Some years ago there were 4,500 or thereabouts, we're down now to 120. As we went through that particular trial, there was another one in just a very few years, we found we had lost our entire infrastructure including the offices and the mailing list and in 1998 we managed to put together a mailing list of around 400. Today, and I have to say brethren, that only through God opening doors which we would not have thought were opened and through the wonderful group of dedicated and converted people that we have, the mailing list we have is now around 7,000, just in a couple of years. We've advertised in Reader's Digest twice, one of these ads went nationwide. Something, which was quite out of our ability to achieve, we never even thought to ask Reader's Digest, we couldn't afford it and it was extraordinary the way everything came together and we were literally given nationwide advertising which would otherwise cost us 60 thousand pounds and we paid just six thousand for it - it was a miracle. It was an injection, an encouragement the work in Britain really needed because we didn't see how we could achieve anything of any substance, it was impossible. But brethren, we learned very quickly that to our Eternal Father, nothing is impossible and that was achieved. We've advertised in a number of newspapers and magazines, notable among these being the Sunday Telegraph, which again is extraordinary because we're getting responses to that particular advertisement in the Sunday Telegraph six months after it's publication and you know and I know, who keeps newspapers around for very long unless you're one of the squirrels and this is another nut? If you gather up too many of them you may be...no, I shouldn't say that!

We had a two-week campaign of spot ads on satellite television, never believed we could do that, that that could be achieved. In May 1999, something else that we did not realize could be done, but it was achieved anyway. We began a radio broadcast which as of today is on Manx radio from the Isle of Man, twice a week on AM and FM on two short-wave stations, four times a week and on satellite radio five times a week and also our programs are archived on the web. We now have office facilities for our general mailing and a major advertising project in the United Kingdom which we undertook from September to December which brought us over 1,500 responses which was a major impact upon our mailing list. We started to count our pennies and opened up the piggy bank to see if we could afford the postage because there's a whole infrastructure that's needed and support system that has to be put in place as well. We have just started a second round of this particular product as of this month and the first responses are just now coming in. At this time and to our amazement, when we counted up the nations that we are now mailing literature into, it totals 33 nations of Europe, Scandinavia and the Middle-East. Again, something which we never, two years

ago, believed could be attained or achieved. We have five churches at this moment, or meetings -and we have plans for three further locations as we can get to it and God is certainly making it possible for these locations, for these meetings to be manned and to be served because it's no good preaching the gospel if we don't make provision and are aware of those that God may call. We don't know who He'll call or how many, but He is the one who calls, not us. Our responsibility is to get out there and preach the gospel.

We realize that we cannot and must not be parochial in our thinking; we have to raise our eyes to the world outside the United Kingdom. Accordingly we have just had an advertising product in Sweden running from the beginning of this year, this brought us over 2,000 responses, which is an amazing total, maybe now within Sweden it's 2,500. For Scandinavia, just a few years ago the mailing list for the four nations of Scandinavia was around 15,000. I would not be at all surprised if God is willing, and we hope He is, that in two or three years time, we may well exceed that. We do hope so.

We also this month in the Swedish Reader's Digest, we were in it last November and plan, as God makes possible and as we please Him and as He opens those doors, we hope to continue the Reader's Digest in Sweden twice a year and then come the fall, or autumn, we're going to do the same thing in Denmark and then proceed next year into Norway. We plan to continue with the Reader's Digest as I said, in each March and November.

We're also looking for other radio opportunities. Now God has blessed us wonderfully brethren with our income. In the first year of our restructuring of 1998 we received somewhere around 50,000 pounds income. That's not a lot I know in Cincinnati terms, but on the other hand, Cincinnati finds a lot more things to spend it on! On the other hand, we could too! In the second year we received around 80,000 pounds, which is remarkable. This present year our treasurer tells me it could well go over 100,000 pounds and this from an attendance of just 120 people - no paid ministry and just two part-time employees. And you tell me there's no God in heaven whose interested in what we are doing - whose interested in each one of us? There is a God, there is our Father who is interested in every single one of us and concerned for each and everyone of you and for me. There is no way humanly speaking, any of that could be achieved, it just couldn't, not with the abilities that all of us have.

With the development of the circulation of the Good News, we then anticipate public campaigns, maybe toward the end of next year or the year after, depends on how it goes and how the dialog develops between us in the office in the United Kingdom and the rest of the European Union, Middle East and Scandinavia. So we would then anticipate public campaigns, both in the United Kingdom and in those other areas because we're going to the English speaking parts of Europe and of course because Scandinavia, I'm sure you know, does speak English very

well indeed. It's quite remarkable really, I've got a postcard, I wanted to post a card, so I went into the Post Office in Stockholm and straight up to the desk, I never thought to use the Swedish language, well I wouldn't, because they don't speak a word of it! I just spoke to him naturally in English and he was already speaking to one of the staff in Swedish and the Swedish language to me brethren, when you look at it, makes no sense or has no relationship to anything that I am familiar with. You look at two letters put together, now you have to come up with the pronunciation for that in English, but try it in Swedish and it comes up...?...if you know the Swedish language, you'd know what I'm talking about. Or else, another set of letters, it gets...I'm sure it means a lot to them but I'm not surprised they all speak English, there's no way anyone visiting the country is going to try to learn Swedish, they'd need a job or something. Anyway he responded to me immediately in perfect English, which is very reassuring when you come to any public campaign, see we're not going to bother about the Swedish language, nor the Norwegian, the Danish or the Finnish. If you ever take the "k" out of the Finnish language, you have no language left!

So that's what we're planning, God-willing and we do hope, as I said, that He is and while there is a new dynamic within the Church in Britain, which there is, there is also an new dynamic in Europe. From the ashes of the Europe of 1945, brethren, has risen a union of 15 nations which will shortly be enlarged by 13 more, stretching an unbroken chain from the north, from the Baltic, right down to the Black Sea and tracing the Eastern border of the Union and in my view it will perform a function that Poland performed for Nazi Germany in the Second World War, it provides a buffer, protecting the Union from the threat, as it is still perceived, of the East.

The BBC recently said in a radio documentary, in fact the radio documentary was a ½ hour of a series of four and they said in that particular broadcast, they actually focused upon the European Union and they focused upon the new Union. They said very definitely and categorically, that the roots of the new European Union are to be found...where do you think, any guesses...the roots of the new European Union are to be found in the old Holy Roman Empire under Charlemagne of the 8th-9th century. That was a categorical statement, not by the United Church of God, but by the BBC in a radio four documentary, played at prime time, middle of the evening. Many trips today are made by European statesmen to worship, virtually worship and take inspiration from the tomb of Charlemagne in the Cathedral in the Cathedral city of Aachen. The Union brethren, is progressing at a colossal speed, there is today a first class system of European highways, a first class system of high speed trains running throughout the Union on dedicated tracks, trains which customarily and normally travel at approximately 200 miles an hour and rarely have a crash. There is a new competence and pride pervading the whole Union.

We have spent quite a bit of time over the years in France and I know the France of twenty years ago, the France of twenty years ago brethren has no resemblance to the France of today. Four or five years ago, my wife and I were driving from the southwest of France back to one of the channel ports to return to England and we suddenly realized, There's something wrong here, something strange, what is it? We sort of scratched our heads, metaphorically speaking and then said, You know, there's no litter, no bits of paper tossed around, plastic bottles, empty beer cans - nothing. So we said, Let's see if we can see some litter, it was about 45 minutes later and two or three towns further up the road and we said, Aha, there it is, look, these people, what do they mean, throwing all this litter around? One small piece! And so it progressed and this last year, last summer when we were in France down near Toulouse and then we drove in and around the general area of France and I had the opportunity to meet with the Church in Bordeaux on a couple of occasions, they did translate the sermon, thankfully. My French is not for sermons. But there, through that whole area, town after town, beautifully kept, beautifully maintained, the trick of the flying proudly from the town hall of each town, of each village, every village with it's civic hall, the hall where the senior citizen, the mayor has his offices and represents the community. There is a pride in community, there is a pride in the nation and there is a tremendous confidence brethren which I find is rising throughout the entire European Union today. A confidence that we're going to have to reckon with in the not very distant future, there is a pride that is there.

In the United States there is a worry about the economy, in the United Kingdom, as you know from watching CNN maybe or Fox News, we do have many and other worries and we really do have some problems. At the same time, the European Union drives on to the inevitable federal super state - 440 million people. Already and for some time now, there is and has been a European flag, an anthem, a passport, shortly there will be a common drivers license. Some people like to say, Oh there isn't going to be any super state - no federal system. But as William Hague, the leader of the Conservative Party in Parliament said recently, he said, *"If it looks like an elephant and it behaves like an elephant, there's every chance it is an elephant."*

Now what do you say about a nation or group of nations that has a common flag, a common passport, going to have a common driving license and has an anthem, what else can you say? It does look like an elephant. A grouping of nations within the whole, we'll see the coins and bank notes on a European currency come into general use and general circulation on the first of January of this coming year. Come June, all the national currencies will be withdrawn. Everybody said, Look, the euro is collapsing, it is low, it isn't a success. They forgot the nations that are behind the euro, there is no way it was going to collapse. It was expected, nobody in Europe got uptight, got excited about the fact that the euro had dropped against the dollar and had faltered against the pound. It suited the Union extremely well, as a result a lot of the unemployment that was there in the Union

has been soaked up, the exports have risen, the economies of the entire Union have benefited because of the low euro, meaning that imports from the United States have gone down, imports from the United Kingdom have gone down because they're all that much more expensive and the exports from the Union have risen, thus benefiting the economy of the entire. Come next year brethren, I would suggest that you should keep a very close eye on what happens once the bank notes and the coins hit the streets.

Let me just read for you some quotes from an article in The Economist from February 3, just over a month ago. This was an article, this was in The Economist, all about the European Union, just some quotations from it, just taken randomly, you'd need to read the whole article to get them all in context. It begins, *"The European Union is still bent on ambitious changes that would alter its very nature. Can they be achieved all at once? Not quite, but quite rapidly."* The first paragraph says, *"In the course of this year the European Union will try to tackle three vast and radical tasks all at once. First on January 1, 2002, Europe's single currency will at last start circulating as notes and coins among some 302 million people, (And what's the population of the United States? About 280 million.) in twelve of Europe's fifteen countries. Secondly, the European Union will make a big push and to strive to nearly double its membership within five years, moving it up to around 440 and more million. Thirdly, there's debate about writing a constitution. (It's federal systems that have constitutions; it's nations that have constitutions. What are we doing writing a constitution for the Union?) They hope it will get going in earnest and the hope of finally settling the division of power between the European Union, its nation states and Europe's regions."* They're sorting out who does what, who drives the whole. It continues, the head of the European Commission says, this is another quote *"These days the Commission feels more and more like a government."* You bet it is, that's what's intended!

"They unveiled their work program for the year, much of it is the sort of legislative...listen to this...much of the work for this coming year is the sort of legislative and administrative business that would be familiar to national governments, to do with food safety, telecommunications, liberalization, foreign aid, immigration and so on. But also on the agenda those three matters that touch on the European Union's very nature, launching the Union, the euro, enlarging the club, writing a constitution."

Further down in the article - *"The disappearance of historical currencies, such as the German mark and the French franc may be the single most tangible act of European integration since the second World War."* If it all goes well, which it is and will...*it may be the single most tangible act of European integration since the second World War. The euro will do a lot to promote the creation of a genuine pan-European consciousness among those in the Euro Zone. We are all Europeans now."* Continuing further down in the article - *"We can expect a*

renewed tussle over the placing of power in two particular areas..." and I've been focusing upon this particular point for a long time now because these have to come into being if there is to be a federal state...taxation, common taxation and defense. We already have a Colonel of a European army and the rapid reaction force. People say to me sometimes, That's not an army. Oh, isn't it? Oh no, and Mr. Blair, our Prime Minister said, It's not an army, it's not a European army, they have no European cap badges...but you know, while he said that, you know what they did have? European shoulder flashes, no cap badges, they didn't talk about the shoulder flashes. We are looking at the beginnings of a European army, whether we think it is or not, it is happening.

A couple more quotations from the article: "*Germany has rarely if ever been seen...and you'd sympathize with this, I know...as the natural guardian of the smaller of Europe's countries. But as other European Union countries monitor the wobbling Franco-German relationship...which is losing a bit of it's wobble now, but this was written weeks ago...some of the small little countries are now looking to Germany to safeguard their interests.*" It's like asking the fox to take care of the chicken house. Down toward the end of the article: "*Britain as ever is uneasy.*" We have been uneasy about the rise of power in Europe for five hundred years and for five hundred years we have prevented this power or that one dominating the whole. Unfortunately we can do that no longer and we will do it no longer. Our teeth have been drawn, we no longer have the . Grey hairs are upon Ephraim. Sweden and Denmark are cautious as well and it continues, "*So Germany is at the Union's pivot.*" It is driving the whole.

Now as we have looked at that, we should now look at the third part because everything leads to this third part. Jesus Christ's return. When He first came, the disciples said to Him, they asked Him, "Will you now at this time re-establish Israel?" They didn't understand. But in **Matthew 24** they asked a question of Him and you know the question as well as I do, you're probably ahead of me, aren't you, you're already saying what the question was they had for Him.

Matt. 24:3 - *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"*

That was their question. He then spelled out the conditions, spelled it out for us and then in verse 32 He said something else, which is very critical, He gave us a parable because people liked to say, We don't know when the return of Christ will be...and by the day and the hour we don't because the bible tells us we won't know the day or the hour, but we will know the general time frame, we will know. How can I say that? Well because of the parable - it's right here:

< >< r> Verse 32 - *"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branches already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that...winter is near...it doesn't say that does it? It says that...summer is near."*

I mean what else do you do? I don't know if your gardens are like mine, but we've got crocus in the garden and daffodils and it all at the end of year, disappears and you don't see them anymore and the leaves are all dead. You don't then look at the dead leaves, Here you go, spring's close. No, you don't do you? You know winter is around. But then come March, in our neck of the woods, we begin to see the crocus appearing, the daffodils and we say, Hey, spring is close and summer won't be far behind. Just as an aside, you know the difference between summer and winter in Britain by the fact that in winter, the rain is cold and in the summer it's warm! But He went on with the example in the parable of the fig tree:

V. 32 - *"...you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the very door."*

That's what He says, when you see these things happen, that He spelled out in Matthew 24, at an intense we've never known before and do we have that or do we not? Water is dissipating and being lost from the planet at an incredible rate, we will be seeing water wars in the not too distant future. I mean I read what is happening in California, they're extremely worried about what is going to happen in California in the summer when all the air-conditioning gets switched on. What is going to happen? More brown-outs and black-outs, it's a serious situation. But He said this is at the very door.

< >< r> V. 34 - *"Assuredly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* And they won't.

He said something to the disciples, or they experienced something, He didn't say it, but an angel did. In Acts 1 when He left the surface of this planet and ascended to heaven as it says, as the section heading says.

Acts 1:9 - *When He had spoken these, while they watched, He was taken up and the clouds received Him out of their sight.*

V. 10 - *And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you also stand gazing up to heaven? This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." He is to return to this planet, to this earth.*

I must just turn briefly to **Daniel 2** and again, you know the passage. Here is the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. All the way through it's explained that the king

talks to Daniel and says he's had this dream and he wants to know what it is. Daniel explains the dream and then interprets it and indicates for Nebuchadnezzar and for all of us that it concerned four world-dominating empires. Then he said:

Daniel 2:40 - *"And the fourth kingdom...in succession...shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others."*

V. 42 - Then he goes on and talks about the toes...*partly of iron and partly of clay*...so the kingdom shall be partly strong, partly fragile.

V. 44 - In context he says this: *"In the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed and the kingdom shall not be left to other people."*

Has that happened? You know it hasn't happened. This then is yet future, it is yet up ahead and has to be seen in context with the other scriptures and with the events we see taking place around us in front of our very eyes. At this point we have to look at all of these things in context. Maybe we can't look at any one particular item and say, "Ah, that's that, that fits that verse." We get a little bit unwise when we do things like that, but we need to be able to see the whole context, to put the thing into perspective.

"In the days of these kings..." In Revelation 17 there is a parallel to the ten kings, they give their and power to the whole. Is that what I'm looking at when I look across the Channel from where we are in the United Kingdom? It could well be. I'm going to place no bets. In **Matthew 24** He said this:

Matt. 24:36 - *"Of that day and hour...He indicated we would know the general time frame, but He said, "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But...I love buts, I can think of one individual some years ago who didn't like buts, but I like buts...But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of man be."* What was it like in the days of Noah? Well He says this:

V. 38 - *"For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came, took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of man be."*

Now what were the days of Noah like? Let's just quickly turn to **Genesis 6:5**. It spells it out for us a little bit, well we already had it spelled out somewhat, right there in Matthew 24. But here in Gen. 6:5:

Gen. 6:5 - *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Pray tell me if this is not true of this time? You know it is, it is very true of this time as we look around this earth today, we would really identify it as being as the days of Noah. How much worse is it to get? Probably can get a little worse and it won't be long before it does. The same time, life will be going on, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, nothing changes, but there's this rapid degeneration downwards, but life is still going on, trade is still going on, commerce, we know that from these verse in Revelation. Let's turn to **Revelation 6:12**. Well, I won't take the time, I'll start in Verse 15:

Rev. 6:15 - *The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men...rich men? Yes, these are the days of Noah, commerce, people are rich, wealthy, they're there. The mighty men? They're there too...slaves, every free man hid themselves in the caves and the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

Tremendous wealth is typi f that time. It is also typi f this age. There's a lot of fat upon some nations and very little, if any, upon a huge number of others.

Revelation 19:7

Rev. 19:7 - *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife...or His bride...has made herself ready."* Then He continues:

V. 9 - *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."* Then from v. 11-15 we read of Christ's return:

V. 11 - *Then I saw heaven open and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.* The returning Jesus Christ. In **Revelation 18:9**, and this is a tremendous passage:

Rev.18:9-10 - *"And the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously...as of the days of Noah...with her will weep and lament for her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'"*

V. 11-13 - *"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her for no one buys their merchandise anymore...it's all come to a grinding halt...merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horse, chariots...chariots? BMW's? Porche? Mercedes? Germany today has three major mass producing car companies. In Britain we have none, France has two...bodies and souls of men.*

V. 14-15 - *"And the fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things have become rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing." It has come to an end.*

Revelation 18:17 - why described as Babylon?

V. 17 - *"For in one hour such great riches came to nothing."*

Why Babylon? When we would look at what the original Babylon was like, it was powerful, wealthy and this is the same sort of system, it has a certain nature. The system we're looking at which will be extant, in existence at the return of Christ on which we've just been reading, it isn't the original, but it is described as Babylon, the city standing for the whole. It's a bit like government statements - in the United States you may read or hear on radio and watch on TV and hear the sentence, "Washington said today..." Oh did they? All how many millions of them? "London said..." all 8.5 million, all at once? They didn't did they? Of course they didn't, the part stood for the whole and we're seeing much the same thing again. It has the nature of the original Babylon - powerful, wealthy, dominating and world dominating and with a nature which is aggressive, this is what we are looking at across the Channel from the United Kingdom at this point. It is interesting to read **in Revelation 17:12**, this is a terrific passage, I alluded to it earlier, mentioned it.

Rev. 17:12-14 - *"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. They are of one mind and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them for He is Lord of lords and King of kings and those who are with Him are called, chosen and faithful."*

V. 15 - *"And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the prostitutes sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.'"*

What today do we see in the Union? What is the Union comprised of? What is the European Union? It is a collection of peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues! That is what the Union comprises today. It is not like the United States where English is officially the first official language, probably will become the second official language before long, but that's your problem! But he said, multitudes, nations and tongues! Languages. So how today would you describe the Union?

Brethren, Jesus Christ is going to return, we can and will know when the time of the end is upon us, remember the fig tree. In **Luke 21** He says something else to us and we overlook these verses, brethren, at our peril. See what He says to us.

Luke 21:33 - *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away but take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and cares of this life..."*

Is there anybody here who has no cares, no worries, just go through life without a care in the world, your credit card bills all up to date, utility bills all paid, a high income flowing into your bank account and you sort of exist in a sort of little bubble of zero inflation. Is that life for all of us? No, we do have the cares and the worries and the concerns, we all do. We all worry about our children, doesn't matter how old they get, we still worry about them and then children worry about their parents, parents worry about others in the family. Within the Church we have a concern for one another, we're worried about the Church and we're worried about this and worry about that. We could worry about so many things we end up by missing the eminent return of Jesus Christ! And we mustn't do that, we must be very well aware of what is happening in the world around us. In v. 35 it says:

V. 35 - *"For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth."*

As a snare. Now if a rabbit knew where the snare was and what it was, it would go around it, wouldn't it? But it missed it, went straight through it and - hung. That's a snare. Is that to happen to us as individuals? Are we to be caught by the snare? We shouldn't, we don't have to, He spelled it out for us, it is there. He went on:

V. 36 - *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass and to stand before the Son of man."*

We should be expecting it. Why? Because we're looking at the fig tree. I won't turn there, but in Matthew 25 He has the parable of the Ten Virgins and don't

forget, they all slept, it's just that half of them woke up in time and had the holy spirit very much within them, the others didn't.

Brethren, Jesus Christ is returning to this planet to establish the Kingdom of God. We have the opportunity to be part of that, to be part of reconciling not only the people but the very planet to God. Throughout the millennium, we read about it, we hear about it, we have the sermons given to us at the Feast of Tabernacles, about the reconciliation. We focus upon the Day of Atonement - reconciliation to God, reconciliation not only of people, but of the whole entire environment - the planet. This planet is sick, it is dying, it is to be restored to health and we are to have a part in doing that. Wouldn't that be just wonderful? And to be there as a spirit being, knowing that finally, at last we can do something about those things that we agonize over in this age, in this life.

Now the same time, to know the love of God that pervades everywhere, that surrounds us, encourages us, comforts us, warms us. A love that surpasses...as it says...all understanding, and to have that as a concept in this life ought to lift us and help us to keep moving onwards and to stay at one with each other, always avoiding the trap that we read of, and I won't turn there, but in Romans 16 where he says, *Mark those who cause divisions among you.* Don't be part of that, let's stay together. Our duty - **Matthew 24:14**.

Matt. 24:14 - "*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world...He doesn't say here, in the entirety of California, He doesn't say this gospel will only be preached in Scotland - there aren't many people up there and the sheep that are there are getting less and less so it wouldn't be effective...*in all the world as a witness to all the nations and then the end will come.*"*

Did the preaching of the gospel end with the death of Mr. Armstrong? No, it did not. It is the duty of all of us to part of that preaching.

V. 45 - "*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.*"

The gospel has to be preached. If there was not a person called by the Eternal, we have still got to preach that gospel. So often people attempt to measure the effectiveness saying, Oh we're not doing anything, it's not a success, nobody is coming into the Church. God will call - and I feel sure and actually certain that He will call people into the Church. I'm not so sure we'll see people coming into the Church in the tens of thousands. I think the Church will be added to. Our duty is to preach the gospel. You know something? I don't know if you've thought about it, but when Christ returns, do you know there won't be anymore United Church of

God? Funny that isn't it? You know you think United Church is going to go on and on...no it's not. When it comes to an end, at the return of Christ and so does every other group and Church, there will be one body of Christ. One family, hopefully all of us. No reason why not, we all can be part of that. But He says, you've got to keep going, keep doing that work until I return and that is our duty. If we never had another social, never had another youth camp, we have got to continue to preach that gospel, that message of hope, that message of warning to this world and then to pastor and nurture and welcome in to the family, those whom God will call.

How often, somebody new, whom God has called, comes to attend a church service for the very first time and what happens? Nobody knows quite how to handle it, so everybody goes and talks to everybody else and the person who is there for the first time wonders, What did I do? I couldn't have said anything, nobody has talked to me. We should welcome them in, they are being drawn by the Eternal God Himself has called them - He selected them, He's chosen them, they've responded, they're now part of the family. Hopefully we will do that. Let's turn very briefly now to **II Timothy**, and I've got one scripture after that, Mr. Smith will be happy, I'm watching the time very carefully. You put a big clock there at the back didn't you, I can see that!

II Tim. 4:2 - *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...has that come or not? You know it has come...but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.* Things which are not true.

I mean how can anybody be in the Church of God and then leave it and then go and keep Christmas? When every children's book I've ever read...well, not every book, that's a bit of an overstatement, but I mean I have read children's books about the holy days, the religious days and under Christmas in the Ladybird book for children, in that book which only cost me about fifty cents, that book when through the Christmas customs and showed how pagan they all were and where they generated from. How can anybody, having been called by the Eternal in God's Church, have His spirit, leave and then keep Christmas? This is what it says.

V. 4 - *They will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.* And it happens! Don't let it happen to you. He goes on and he's talking to you, each one of you and me, because I'm down there too. He says:

V. 5 - *You be watchful in all things, endure afflictions...*these things do happen, we don't live a charmed life, things will happen that we don't like, we do run into difficulties, problems, difficult human relationships.

When we got back from Sweden, I won't go through the whole catalog, but it's unbelievable what happened, I mean it's just one thing after another, in about a 24 hour period. It all sort of ended a few days ago. I was talking to my wife and she said, "Guess what?" I said, "What?" Then she told me what...the washing machine is terminal! And if there ever was a disaster for people in the Western world, it's for either the dishwasher or the washing machine to go terminal. This I can do without. But if that was our only problem, wouldn't that be wonderful? But it isn't, is it? He said:

V. 5 - *You be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Brethren, we are all part of this message, we are all part of preaching the gospel, not everybody can preach sermons, not everybody can conduct public campaigns, public meetings, but we're all part of it. The body cannot function without everybody fulfilling the function, the responsibility that God has called them to. I mean just write letters to people to encourage, all kinds of things we can do if we just give ourselves to the Creator, to our Heavenly Father and say, Father, please use me in whatever way You feel and wish. And mean it. There is a lady in Pasedena, she developed a whole ministry of writing to people, all over...Mrs. Mauck, that's who it was...she developed a whole ministry of writing to people all over the people and it was wonderful, such encouraging letters. Can you tell me she wasn't doing the work? She was doing the work, that was part of it.

Let's just turn finally to **Romans 10**, I see I have one minute before it's gone overtime and you're going to sing the final song in overtime!

Rom. 10:13-14 - *For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? Well you can't, can you? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? If you've never heard of Christ, how can you believe in Him, because you haven't heard of Him. How shall they hear without a preacher? Now there's a point?*

V. 15 - *And how shall they preach unless they are sent?*

Can't, if nobody is sent to preach, nobody will preach and if nobody preaches, nobody will be called. When you project that a little bit, it brings an interesting concept, at least to my mind, maybe not to yours, but it does to me. That is, we could be very responsible for people either being in the first resurrection or not. If we do not preach the message, do the work, God has chosen a method of calling people. Now I know and fully understand that He may call people specifically, He's done that, but this is the generality. He calls as a result of the preaching.

The preaching is because somebody has been sent, that may be through mailed Good News magazines, booklets, it could be a public meeting, who knows? Whatever way we find to do the work, but without that preaching, somebody may not be called at this time and may then come up in the second resurrection that could have been in the first - could have been, but we didn't do the work, and so they weren't called. It's just a thought. Conversely, there are people who will be in the first resurrection because we did do the work. So it's very important, the concept of doing the work and preaching the gospel.

Brethren, Jesus Christ is returning to this earth. We need to prepare for the vocation that we have, the calling that we have and sometimes it may feel a little selfish. It's not, is it? We should want for ourselves and for everybody else, what God wants for us. Who are we to deny His will, it's His will that we should all be there, as His children, born into His family and then to take part in whatever He has in mind for us, up beyond. It's a wonderful concept, it's a wonderful future brethren. Let's be sure that when Christ returns to this earth, we're all ready and there and we all go out to meet Him and return to this earth with Him to then take part with Him in the restoration of this planet and in the reconciliation of it and of everybody and of all of mankind and then we can all go into a wonderful wonderful future that we can only just glimpse - but it's there. Let's be part of it.