

Handpicked By God

Our Spiritual Ruts

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I want to ask you a couple of questions before I get started. I think there is kind of a consensus within at least this body of Christ (us here) that we are living at the end of the age. How long do you think, in your mind, we have before Christ returns? And more important, how long do you have to live if you die before Christ returns? Put that in the back of your mind as I go through this because we will come back to it.

You and I are handpicked. All of us have been handpicked, all of us older people and all of you young people over here, every one of you have been handpicked by God for a special job, a special purpose for a part in God's plan for mankind. We have an awesome future, brethren, that comes with a very heavy, big responsibility. That is for all you young guys, too. It is for all of us.

God's plan started with Adam and Eve. But I want to skip down to the time of Abraham. God handpicked Abraham just like He handpicked all of us. We are in good company with the people that have already been handpicked.

Genesis 12:1-2 Now the Lord said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing."

Abraham and his family are part of it. The family of Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Jacob were handpicked by God for a special job and a special purpose. In verse 2, God told Abraham that He would make a great nation that would come from his and Sarah's family, the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We all know the story of the nation that came out of that marriage. The nation of Israel—the Israelites—were God's people. God worked miracle

after miracle for them. He gave them His laws, the way He wanted to be worshipped. The nation was to be of one mind and of one religion. God was at that time working with one family, one nation, one people. When you were born in Israel, you became part of that religious system. The majority of the Israelitish people were never handpicked like we were. God was working with one family or one nation that ended then with the death of Christ. From that point on God would handpick who He wanted from all nations and all people to be His people. Big change.

Acts 10:34-35 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "Of a truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation [not just in Israel] whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."

Ephesians 3:6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.

So now the holy nation of God is us. It is the church, brethren. It is not a physical nation. It is made up of people from all nations and tribes and all ethnicities from all over the world that God handpicked. Now, that does not mean that God is not still blessing the modern day nations of Israel. He is. He is because of His promise to Abraham. But we—all of us—are now the handpicked nation of God and He is working with us, the church.

I want to talk a little bit about how you and I were handpicked and I want to start with all you young people that were born into God's church. All you guys were handpicked completely different than a lot of the rest of us older people because you were born into God's church. You did not lose jobs over the Sabbath. You did not have to give up Christmas, Easter, birthdays, and Halloween because you never celebrated them. You did not alienate your parents with your crazy religion because they were already part of that religion. You did not have to change your eating habits because most of you have never eaten unclean meats. You all had the opportunity to marry within the faith because you were so young so you would not become unequally yoked and have to deal with the problems that comes from a lot of those types of marriages. You did not lose friends over not being able to do things on the Sabbath, like hunting, fishing, camping, water skiing, and a whole array of other things because of friends you made when you were younger.

God handpicked you in a different way than He handpicked the ones of us that were not born into the church.

God works in families and that is how He is working with you younger people that were handpicked that way. The story of Noah's family is recorded in the Bible, in Genesis 6-11. I am going to read from chapter 9.

Genesis 9:1 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them:
"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

Now, God handpicked Noah and his family to do a very specific job, to repopulate the earth. God also has handpicked all of us for a specific job. God also handpicked Abraham and Sarah and that family to do a specific job. Do you know how blessed we are, brethren? We are tremendously blessed. God picks who He wants and all of us have been handpicked by God. What a blessing!

Genesis 21:12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad [Ishmael] or because of the bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called."

God handpicked Isaac for a specific job, not Ishmael. Just like we were handpicked, not our neighbors.

Genesis 25:28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebecca loved Jacob. [even though Isaac loved Esau]

But God handpicked Jacob.

Malachi 1:1-3 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. "I have loved you," said the Lord. Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" said the Lord. "Yet Jacob I have loved [just like He loves all of us or He handpicked him]; and Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness."

That is how special you guys are. God handpicks who He wants and He wants all of us for a specific job. We are in very good company. I already said that.

Back to all of you young people. Just because all of you were born into God's church does not mean that your handpicking and your sacrifices were any easier than the rest of us. Peer pressure is hardest when you are young. When you get to be old, fat, and ugly like me, there is not much peer pressure. I do not care what they think. But when you are young there is a lot of peer pressure. I had it too.

All of you who were born into God's church who went to school and college experienced peer pressure from classmates, friends, coaches, and teachers. That is normal. You could not play most sports due to the Sabbath. I could, you could not. You could not go to most school dances because of the Sabbath. I did, you did not. Other kids thought your eating habits were crazy. They would say, "What's wrong with a good ham and cheese sandwich?" They did not understand. Some of you were harassed and looked at as different, funny, or weird even.

All of us have been handpicked and being handpicked brings on different lifestyle changes and different sacrifices. But we have all made sacrifices, brethren. You young people have all made sacrifices in your lifestyle, and your lifestyle is different from your peers, which brings on problems for you, especially when you are in school. Just because you were born into God's church does not mean that you were not handpicked. All of you young people were. You made sacrifices in your life, just like the rest of us. Remember, young people, God works in and with and through families.

Those of us who were not born into the church were handpicked in a different way. God started to handpick me with the Sabbath through my wife. My wife was handpicked a year before me and she told me that I needed to start keeping the Sabbath. I was not interested in religion at all, and no one could ever make me keep the Sabbath. That was not going to happen. Do you know what happened on the next Sabbath? When the sun went down on Friday evening? I turned into a noodle. I was tired, I felt fine but I could not do anything so I did not do anything all day Saturday until the sun went down. When the sun went down on Saturday—the Sabbath—my

energy and my strength returned to me. This went on for several weeks and at one point my wife said to me, "Do you realize that you have been keeping the Sabbath all these weeks?" Well, that is not what I wanted to hear. I got mad at her, but that was the first thing that God did with me in handpicking me.

I lost all my friends once I started keeping the Sabbath. There were three or four of us. These were buddies from school, and their wives. We all went to school together and we were inseparable on the weekends and always together. We went fishing, camping, and water skiing. We loved to do all the same things. Some Friday nights we would go to the pizza parlor and order a pitcher of beer and play some pool. Some Friday nights we would go to parties with our other friends from school. Well all of this ended for me and Debbie once I started keeping the Sabbath. We could no longer participate in activities on the Sabbath. My friends still liked me and Debbie but we could not hang out with them on Friday nights and Saturdays anymore. So we grew apart and we lost track of each other.

These were the kind of life-altering changes we all made when God, through this great miracle that He worked, started to work with us.

You know, some of my friends within the church they had different experiences than I had. We all gave up different things. But one friend of mine gave up a very good paying job over the Sabbath. He was a fireman in Los Angeles. He had four kids and a wife to support but he quit his job when God called him. He never made the money that he made again when he was a fireman. In fact, he struggled financially after he quit that job and started living by God's laws for the rest of his life. He is dead now. He was handpicked and he made the necessary sacrifices to become a firstfruit.

Another friend of mine from church married young, right out of high school. But in a few years they got divorced. They did not have any kids at that time. They both remarried and went their separate ways. Guess what happened? God works miracles in all of our lives. He worked a miracle on both of their lives and He opened up their minds and He called them. Now, what do you think happened? Well, they both felt compelled to get divorced. They divorced their new mates and they got remarried. That is exactly what they did, brethren. They remarried each other. They were willing to make that

kind of sacrifice. Right or wrong, it does not matter, they made it. They went on to have three kids and they stayed married for the rest of their lives. The woman is still alive, and the three children, but my friend did die.

A lot of us alienated our parents and our siblings, even our aunts and uncles.

Matthew 10:34-38 (Living New Testament) "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! No, rather, a sword. I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's worst enemies will be right in his own home. If you love your father and mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine."

Some of us really had problems with these verses. I did. My dad had a couple of things that really bothered him with God's religion and God's laws when I was called. One of those things that bothered him was that we tithed ten percent to go to the Feast. Can you imagine that bothering somebody? That bothered him, drove him crazy. When he heard that Debbie and I saved ten percent of our gross to go to an eight-day event and spend it all, it pushed him right over the edge. It blew his mind. He told me that I was crazy and he asked me if the whole church did that. When I said, "yep," he had a fit. He said there was no way that the whole church could do that. He said that during the year things happen, and they do. He said your car could blow up and you need to replace it or you might need a new roof on your home or a new washer or dryer or you might have medical bills. He said that nobody should do that and go to the Feast and spend that kind of money.

Well, you know what he said next? He said, "Where are you going to the Feast?" And I said, "We're going to Squaw Valley." And he said, "I'm going to come up there and check this thing out." And he did, he came to Squaw Valley. He only stayed two or three days. He never went to church. But what he did do is he drove down to the parking lot to see if there was any other crazy people there. Well, that year there was 8,000 other people. The good thing for Debbie and I was that he never brought that subject up again. That was the end of it.

But Debbie and I had an ongoing fight with him over Christmas. My dad really liked Christmas. He and my mom made Christmas real nice for me and my sister when we were celebrating it. A big reason for that was my dad's dad died when my dad was seven years old. My dad was the oldest of three kids. They struggled financially and my dad and his brother and sister never had much for Christmas even though they celebrated it. So my dad really tried to make Christmas special for me and my sister.

So when God handpicked Debbie and I and we stopped celebrating Christmas, it was a big deal to my dad. And what he did was, when we stopped letting him give presents to the kids, he moved them out two weeks before Christmas. And then I said, "Hey, that's not going to fly, dad" then he moved them two weeks after Christmas. It was always still Christmas to him. And when I told him that was not going to fly either (and this went on for a few years, we had an argument every time about it), he just kept moving the gifts out farther and farther. But to him it was always Christmas.

When I told him that we would not accept the gifts anymore, he would really get upset and finally I told him that we would not accept any gifts from November 1st through February 30th. I also said to him that, "I know you love your grandchildren and you know that we come and visit you four or five times a year (at least four or five times we would drive up to his place), I said, "Why don't you give them money then and go down to the mall or the grocery store and let them pick out what they want?" Because kids never pick out what you think they are going to pick out and they really like what they pick out. Anyway, he finally went along with that and that problem went away.

Here is the problem with us. We have made all these sacrifices, which is good, and we are here right now, but we live in ruts, brethren. That is the problem. We live in the Feast rut. We are all here, we live in that rut. This is my 50th Feast. And so I have lived in this rut for a long time, just like all of you. We do not think about the Feast. We just make plans and we come here. I mean, there is no second thought about it. So we live in this Feast rut. We live in the rut because God commands us to.

We live in the Sabbath rut, brethren. We all have our Sabbath routine, we get up, we eat, we get showered, we put on our Sabbath threads, we assemble ourselves for church.

We live in the tithing rut. We get our paychecks and we send in our tithes. We do not even think about it. Then we save another another ten percent for the Feast rut. Then every three years we give another ten percent for the widows, orphans, and the poor among us. We live in the tithing rut. It is what we do. We do not think about it, we just do it. When we are first handpicked the tithing rut, though, becomes very difficult, does it not, brethren? The tithing rut is really life-changing for most of us at first.

In the early eighties when my family and I lived in Loveland, Colorado for three years, a family in God's church invited me and my family and a couple other families over on a Sunday afternoon for a barbecue. We were all sitting around talking, watching the kids play, and someone brought up tithing. Then third tithe was mentioned. One of the families that was there had only been handpicked about a year or a year and a half earlier. They were new in God's church and when third tithe was mentioned, their heads whipped around and they said, "What's third tithe?" Well after third tithe was explained to them, they said to the rest of us, "We're already struggling with first and second," and they said they did not have any idea how they were ever going to pay a third tithe.

You know, when we are first called, tithing is usually a life-changing sacrifice for us because we have got enough bills to go along with the money we made. Debbie and I struggled with paying our bills for about the first three or four years after we were called, just like a lot of us do. But after a few years we learned to live in the tithing rut, it becomes second nature to us as time goes on. It is part of our lives just like eating and sleeping.

You see, we have all been handpicked by God for specific jobs within the government of God. We have all made sacrifices that were life-changing with our families, our friends, our jobs, our income, and many other things. Now we lived in the Sabbath rut, the holy day rut, the tithing rut, the Feast of Tabernacles rut. We are living in these ruts correctly, brethren. There is nothing wrong with them. It is a very good thing. It is very pleasing and very

necessary to God. But is that all there is, brethren? That is the question. Is that it end of the story?

We should have the ruts down now. They should be, like I said, we do not even think twice of them. The rut should be second nature to us, but that is not all there is. It is only the beginning, the tip of the iceberg. We should now be working on our minds and our hearts. That is where the real battle is—the big battle. Let us turn to Romans 8, verses 7-8. I will read this out of the Amplified. This is this verse is telling us that we have a huge battle to fight within our minds.

Romans 8:7 (AMP) [That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law; indeed it cannot.

If we do not get our minds right with God, with the help of daily Bible study and prayer, and the help of the Holy Spirit, we will never please God or be accepted by Him.

Romans 8:8 (AMP) So then those who are living the life of the flesh [catering to the appetites and impulses of their carnal nature] cannot please or satisfy God, or be acceptable to Him.

We have a huge job to do, a huge responsibility. Now this next verse is telling us what is going on within us once we have been handpicked and how hard this battle is going to be. But it is a battle well worth fighting.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Because of our carnal mind and our sinful passions, which from repeated gratification, brethren, have become in us habit or ruts, this war goes on in us. We know what is right, but we struggle within ourselves to *do* what is right.

We have three enemies which affect our minds and our hearts. The world we live in, Satan and his influence, and our carnal minds, which have us right here by the gizzard. Brethren, that is the hardest one—our own carnal minds. We like to put it on Satan and the world we live in. They are influences but our own carnal minds, brethren, is the real enemy.

Let us turn to Jeremiah 17 and look at what God says about the heart in conjunction with our minds.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

You do not think we have a battle to fight? We do. Our hearts deceive us into thinking that all we need to do is live in the Sabbath rut, the tithing rut, the Feast rut. And if we do, everything is great, it is all good. Living in the ruts *is* good. It is *very good*. But there is so much more. Working on our minds and our hearts is so difficult that it takes a lifetime for us to change.

The next verse tells us how we conduct ourselves. Even now within the church to one degree or another this battle we must fight here.

Ephesians 2:3 (AMP) Among these we as well as you once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of the flesh [our behavior governed by our corrupt and sensual nature], obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind [our cravings dictated by our senses and our imaginings.] We were then by nature children of God's wrath [where we do not want to be] and heirs of His indignation, like the rest of mankind.

Then in Matthew 15, verse 19, this is what comes from our minds and our hearts, everything starts in our hearts and our minds, brethren. (That is what Mr. Ritenbaugh was talking about in that great sermon he gave on the opening day. It starts here [in our mind] and in here [our heart]. That is what we have to change.)

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

Do you know how we can tell that the battle has not been won yet? It is in Proverbs 6.

Proverbs 6:14 Perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord.

And there is discord among the brethren in the churches.

Proverbs 6:19 A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

And that goes on, brethren. We are not right yet in our minds and our hearts. Do you think that the greater churches of God are all at peace with one another and within our own congregation here? Do you think that we are all at peace with one another? We are not, from time to time.

Brethren, just coming to church and keeping the holy days and tithing is not enough. We must be working on our minds and our hearts. That is where the critical battle must be fought.

Matthew 23:27-28 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

These words of Christ are very hard to take. They are very condemning. These words were spoken to people who kept the Sabbath, who kept the Feast of Tabernacles. They kept the holy days and paid their tithes. They lived in the ruts, which was good, but they never worked on their minds and their hearts. That was the problem. They fell short. We cannot afford to do that. In these next verses Christ is not just talking about adultery. He is

talking about all sin. All sin, no matter what that sin might be, starts in our minds, brethren. Where does covetousness start? Where does murder start? Where does holding grudges start? It all starts in our minds.

Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Christ is telling us that just going to church is not enough. We must be cleaning up our minds and our hearts. Working on our minds and our hearts is very, very difficult. It is hard, brethren. Coming to church and tithing and keeping the holy days is a cakewalk in comparison to cleaning up our minds. I know I have bad thoughts from time to time, I will tell you. Do you know where God wants our minds and our hearts to be?

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies [Are you kidding me, brethren? I do not want to love my enemies, but that is what He says. I want to punch him.], bless those who curse you [He says again. Do you want to bless those who curse you? I do not.], do good to those who hate you [Really? Do good to people who hate you? You know, I would like to make them miserable too. They hate me.], and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

Somebody is really pulling our legs, are they not? Pray for those who persecute you? No way, I only pray for my friends, do you not? Christ wants us to love our enemies and to pray for them and do good to them. We can work on our minds and our hearts like Christ instructs to or we can come to church week in and week out with the carnal mind and responses to Christ's teachings like I just gave us. See, we get to choose.

Brethren, the big battle is the battle for our minds and our hearts.

In I Samuel 13:14, Samuel tells Saul that his kingship in Israel is over and God would raise up a new king over Israel who would be a man after His heart. This man we know was David. Then in Acts 13:22, God says, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who do all My will."

While David had his share of human faults, he did have an attitude of submission. He was not a stiff-necked Israelite and he worshipped God, not golden calves, frogs, the sun, and those type of things. David sinned greatly with his adultery with Bathsheba and then the murder of Uriah the Hittite. And I do not know if you all realize that, but Uriah was so loyal to David. I mean, he had a good friend of his murdered, and Uriah was one of the mighty men. That is talked about in II Samuel 23:39. Uriah is listed there. What makes his murder even more sinister is that Uriah was fiercely loyal to David. David also, in his sin, got Joab, general of the army of Israel, to sin by ordering Joab to send Uriah to a hot spot in the battle and then to withdraw the other soldiers that were with him, causing Uriah's death.

But in spite of David's sins he always had an attitude that tried to put God first. That is what we have to get to. David always brought his mind and his heart into subjection to God and to God's laws. The book of Psalms testifies of David's worshipful heart and mind towards God. As you and I work on our hearts and minds we need to work on these ten characteristics of David's mind and his heart. These ten characteristics are a big part of why David's mind and his heart were after God's. This is where we need to be. I will just read these. You do not have to turn to them.

1. David was humble.

Psalm 62:9 Surely, men of low degree are a vapor, men of high degree are a lie; if they are weighed on the scales, they are altogether lighter than vapor.

2. David was reverent.

Psalm 18:3 I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.

3. David was respectful.

Psalm 31:9 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief, yes, my soul and my body!

4. David trusted God.

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of life; of whom shall I be afraid?

5. David loved God.

Psalm 18:1 I will love You, O Lord, with my strength.

6. David was devoted.

Psalm 4:7 You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increase.

7. David recognized God.

Psalm 9:1 I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.

8. David was faithful.

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

9. David was obedient.

Psalm 119:34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

10. David was repentant.

Psalm 25:11 For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

Brethren, we have all been handpicked by God. We need to get to where David was.

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that should go and bear fruit [He chose us to bear fruit], and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

We all made life-changing sacrifices in our calling, huge ones for some of us, like my friends. This is good, it is very good, but we must bring our minds and our hearts into the same ruts that we live in right now. You know, we do not even think about the Sabbath, we just do it. We do not think about tithing, we just do it. The holy days are second nature to us. We need to get our hearts and minds in complete alignment with God and this way of life, or His way. It is really critical for us to get our minds and our hearts in the same rut God's mind is in.

Ancient Judah had some very good kings and when they did they worshipped correctly. But they always went back to paganism when they had weak kings because they never got their minds and hearts right. They played the game but they never made changes in their hearts and minds. We must be mindful of this and really work on our minds and our hearts and make the necessary changes because our carnal minds and our sinful passions, which from repeated gratification have become in us habit. This war goes on in us, brethren. We know what is right, but we struggle within ourselves to *do* what is right; and we have the three enemies I mentioned.

Now I want to talk about something here for just for a couple of minutes. We all know that Josiah was the most righteous king the nation of Judah ever had. Now the two kings before Josiah were evil men, bad dudes. One of them was his father, who was assassinated in office, and then Josiah became king and he was a young man. He was a youth, in fact. And what did Josiah do? This is for all you youth. This is a young guy that started out doing this. He went out and he cleaned up the nation because Judah was pretty evil at that time.

He went out and he killed the pagan priests. He broke down their altars, he destroyed all the idols, and he was even so zealous for God he went into Israel and did the same thing. He could get away with this because he commanded the army of Judah, which was fairly strong at that time, and the only army in that part of the world, and the people listened to him because he

controlled the army. They were not going to go up against the army, so they made the changes. They found the Book of the Law, he cleaned up the Temple, restored Temple worship, and the people started worshipping God again. The nation looked good and the nation prospered.

Then what happened? He went out and he fought the Egyptians at the battle of Megiddo and he was killed. Egyptian archers killed him and that was the end of his reign. And then after him, there was four more kings before Judah went into captivity. First there was Shallum. He reigned three months. Evil king, bad dude. Then there was Jehoiakim. God allowed him to reign 11 years. Another bad king, bad dude, evil man. Number four is Jeconiah and he reigned three months. Again, another bad guy. Then the last king was Zedekiah and he reigned 11 years.

So there was 22 years and 6 months after the most righteous king reigned and the nation looked so good spiritually. Do you know how bad they were at the time of Zedekiah? They were killing their kids and sacrificing them to idols. Same thing we are doing in America. We are not sacrificing to idols, we are sacrificing to pleasure so that we can do what we want. We do not have to be responsible. We want to have sex with everybody and anybody and as much of it as we can get, and we do not want to pay a price and nobody wants the kids. So, we are sacrificing our kids too.

After 22 years and 6 months they came to that point. But do you think it was really 22 years and 6 months? Or do you think maybe they started sacrificing their kids five years before the end? So then it was only 17 years and 6 months. Or maybe it was 10 years before the end. So then they are sacrificing their kids 12 years and 6 months after this righteous king.

Brethren, I asked you when you thought Christ would return or when you might die. The reason I asked you that is, the end came for Israel with Assyria. It came and tens of thousands of them were killed, their women were raped, their kids were killed, and the rest of them went into captivity. The same thing happened to Judah. The Babylonians came and they did the same thing to them and they went into captivity.

Christ *is* going to return. How much time do we have to get our minds and our hearts right? That is the question. How much time do we have?

Remember this in closing. All the virgins were asleep. All of them! Five of them did not have enough of the Holy Spirit, of oil. Why did they not? They did not because they never got their hearts and minds right. Just like the Israelites, just like the Jews. They never got them right.

Brethren, we cannot afford *not* to get them right. We cannot afford to have Christ slam the door in our faces. Because five of the virgins get the door slammed in their faces. Let us get our minds and our hearts right. And let us start working on it today.