

Welcome to this Sabbath, brethren.

You often hear the term, "I trust God." There are many people who believe and say they trust in God. As we live during this last (final) 3½ years of man's self-rule, we in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, will have to live our faith. To live our faith will mean trusting in God. To do the work of God we will have to trust in God.

Now, what does it really mean to trust God? God's word tells His people to trust in Him, and that term is often used in scripture. What are the possible outcomes of those who place their trust in God? Today we will look at the answer to this question, "What does it really mean to trust God, or to trust *in* God during the final 3½ years of man's self-rule under the sway of Satan?"

The title of the sermon is *Trust in God*, and this will be *Part 1*.

You may have heard the saying, "Just trust God and everything will be okay." There is a Protestant thinking in the world, which thinks, "Just trust in God." They will be personally safe. Knowing they don't understand at this time helps us come to realize that their trust in God is physical. They believe they will be personally safe when they say, "I trust God."

So what does God say about this matter? The truth is "trust in god" could mean that a person suffers physical loss, suffers great pain, suffers physical sorrow, and even physical death, plus the death of loved ones around them. Now, that is not what man would think. Man would think, "Well, I trust God, therefore, I will be physically protected," or, "I'll be physically safe." Mankind is known to trust in many things. They believe that if they trust in these things it will provide them physical protection, and that's what they believe. They believe they need a physical protection in this life, in this world.

So mankind trusts in many things. Now, mankind trusts in going to *their* god, to worship their god, whether it's Catholic or whether it's Protestant, Hindu, Buddhist (it makes no difference). They believe that they are going to be protected by God, and hence, when a tragedy happens, people go to pray to god. And the most important thing that they pray about for themselves is for themselves. They pray for themselves, for their protection and the protection of their family. But they don't necessarily go and pray for protection for others, otherwise they'd be in their particular church all the time, because there's so much death and sorrow throughout this world, every single minute of the day, that a human mind can't actually comprehend the amount of sorrow and suffering that is actually taking place in this world today.

Mankind does not understand what it *really* means to trust in God. Well, we've been called out of this world, brethren, for the purpose of coming to understand this very topic that we have to actually *trust* in God. Now, the answer to this particular topic is given in Romans 8:28, so we'll cut straight to the chase

today and look at the answer from a Biblical point of view, which is, "What does it really mean to trust in God?"

Now, to understand this particular scripture (while we're turning there, Romans 8:28) it requires God's holy spirit because this is actually spiritual in nature and is not physical.

Romans 8:28—We know, so we know spiritually, we "see" on a spiritual level, **that all things**, that is *everything in our life...* Now, this "everything in our life" can be everything physical, **work together for good**, so this "all things," that's everything that happens to us, whether we see it as a physical thing, (but really it has a spiritual component), well, we know that "all things," that is *everything* that happens in our life, "works together," or "work together for good," our good on a spiritual level, **to those who love God**. Now, "to love God," means we have God's holy spirit. An individual that has God's holy spirit living and dwelling in them is somebody that loves God. Now, mankind would think that they love God, but they don't. They love themselves first, only they don't know it.

So this is, we understand that *everything* that happens to us works for our spiritual good *because* we love God, **and to those who are called** (to those who are *the* called) **according to His** (God's) **purpose**. So now, *this* is trusting God. We understand that no matter what goes on in our life, irrelevant to the decisions we make—now, we make lots of bad choices, we make bad decisions—but we still understand that God is still working *with us*. So even though we've made a wrong choice in life, God will still work with us to develop holy righteous character. So everything will work to our good (to our spiritual benefit) because we have God's holy spirit, and it's because we have been *called* for this very purpose.

Now, what is this purpose? *His* purpose? God is creating a family. It's a spiritual purpose. So God's purpose is that no matter what happens in our life, we have the opportunity (we have the potential) to develop holy righteous character. We have the potential to develop the very thinking, the mind of God. Why? Because we've been *called* to love God. We've been *called* to love one another. We've been called and we have the gift of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. Therefore, because of the fact that God's spirit lives and dwells in us, we understand that *everything* will work to the good, to our spiritual benefit. It will benefit us if we have that opportunity to make right choices. So this is what it is about. We have the opportunity to make right choices by yielding to the very power of God.

So if we look at it, no matter what decisions have been made in life and we find ourselves in, whether it's in the choice to be single, choice to be married, choice to live somewhere, choice, no matter what it is, where we work, we understand that God is still with us. No matter what it is, God is still *with us*. It doesn't mean to say that God made the choice—we made the choice. But God says He is working with us. So here we are in these particular environments. Well, God is now with us. And no matter what happens, we have this opportunity to develop holy righteous character because we've been *called* to this purpose.

Now, mankind is not given this opportunity. They do not understand and they do not know that *everything* that's happening in life is going to work to their good on a spiritual level, because they don't understand it. So mankind would read this and they would say, well, because they're whatever, Catholic, Protestant,

whatever religion it is, they would say, well, *they* understand, *they* think that everything that happens to them on a physical level is working to their good on a physical level because they love God and that's His purpose. They've been called to a purpose. They don't understand what it is to "be called," but they think they've been called to be a Catholic or whatever it is. So they don't understand what this is really about. They look at it on a physical level, when in fact it's all spiritual.

So we can understand, brethren, we can see that no matter what happens in our life we have the opportunity (we have the potential) to develop holy righteous character *because* God is *desiring* to have us *choose* His thinking over our own selfishness. So we have that opportunity because we *have* God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us and we have access to God's *thinking*, therefore, we can make these right choices. And therefore, by making these right choices—which is the thinking of God, using the word of God as our guide—we then can develop holy righteous character, which *is* God's purpose.

So no matter where we find ourselves or what situation we are in, this is what this scripture is referring to, that everything is going to work to our good, *if* we yield to God's purpose, if we *yield* to God's holy spirit.

Now, let's look at this Psalm 56:1 in the light of this understanding, that no matter what happens to us on a physical level that it has to potential to work to our good if we learn to and if we choose to yield to God's holy spirit.

Psalm 56:1—This is David when he was actually crying out to God because he was actually taken captive. **Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up**, man would destroy him. **Fighting all day he oppresses me**. Now, this is man oppressing David. And this, of course, is the Philistines who had captured him. But here, we can look at this on a spiritual level: "Be merciful to me, O God." This is talking now on a spiritual level, "for mankind," which is influenced by Satan, "swallows me up." Now, mankind's system is out to destroy us on a spiritual level, not a physical one, a spiritual level, because Satan, who influences mankind, is out to destroy us, to turn us *away* from God, to take us back into captivity, the captivity of the mind. "Fighting all the day he oppresses me." Well, Satan and the demons, *they* are out to destroy members of the Body of Christ. Satan understands that man has a potential, depending on what he does, whether he's set his mind against God or not (with or without God's holy spirit or having access to it at some point in time). The point is at this very time Satan is out to oppress us, which is to pull us back, to draw us back *spiritually*. Physically, it doesn't really matter, because no matter what happens to us on a physical level, it makes no difference. If we lose our life it makes no difference. Because? God has a purpose for us. The main point is we're not to be destroyed *spiritually*! Now, that's what Satan is doing. He's out to oppress us, to wear us down, often using physical things that will distract us so that we can then *turn* against God on a spiritual level.

Verse 2—**My enemies would hound me all day**. They would be out to destroy him all day. Satan and his demons are out to destroy us all day. They will hound us. They will distract us from what is important in life, which is the development, or the choice to develop holy righteous character. And that's our choice.

God desires it, but what will we choose? Will we yield to God's spirit or will we just go on believing we can resolve or solve the problems ourselves *without* using God's word as our guide.

Continuing on in **verse 2—For *there are* many who fight against me, O Most High.** Well, we understand there *are* many. Satan and the demons *will* and *are* continuing to destroy us. Their desire is to destroy us! So we understand that Satan and his demons are out to destroy us and there *are* many and they will fight against us (members of the Body of Christ) because we've being *called* according to God's purpose. The purpose is to create holy righteous character. God's purpose is to create a spirit family, Elohim. We are begotten sons of God and we've been called for a purpose, and that purpose is to put on the mind of God, to develop holy righteous character. It's a very exciting process!

Well, here it is, David is saying that there are many out physically to destroy him. We know that Satan and his demons are looking for opportunities to destroy us on a spiritual level, for us to choose wrong attitudes towards others, choose wrong attitudes about many things in life. Now, we don't always succeed in choosing a right attitude; we *often* fail. That's why God has created the gift of repentance, this ability for mankind to change, to humble themselves to change. Well, we've been given that gift. Mankind is going to have that opportunity when called to it. We've been called to it now, to change our thinking.

Verse 3—When I am afraid, I will trust in You. Now, mankind would think that they trust in God. They get into difficulty and they'll say they'll *trust in God*. Well, here David's saying he was afraid. He was in a difficult environment. He'd turned to God to trust in Him. So what is it we would do? Well, when we are afraid... Well, the thing we should be most afraid of is sin because sin will lead to death. Sin, unrepented sin, can take us out from a relationship with God. That relationship that we've been called into, well, we can be taken out from that relationship because of this *unrepented* sin because of this attitude that we choose, which is one of selfishness. We enjoy the sin and we *won't* repent of it. We're *not* disgusted with ourselves. So that is something that we need to be aware of, brethren, which is when we are afraid of sin, we need to repent. When we have sinned...when we *have* sinned we need to repent.

"I will trust in God." Well, what is it we trust in? We trust that God will forgive us. Now, God has promised in His word that He *will* forgive based on repentance, based on genuine, sincere repentance, which is a spiritual matter. It's not a physical thing. Because we remember that when Jonah went to Nineveh that the people repented. Well, that was something on a physical level. They had a change of thinking and they demonstrated a form of repentance, but it wasn't spiritual repentance. They could see an outcome, that if they didn't change their ways that they would be destroyed. They *believed* Jonah. Well, that is physical. Now we have to look at this on a spiritual level. "I will trust in You," therefore, that's exactly what we do. When we sin, God has created repentance for the very purpose that those called for a purpose (which is to change, to change the way we are, to change the way we think by choice, by our choice) that we can trust that God will forgive us. So we will trust God, and we demonstrate that we trust God by the fact that *we are repentant*. Now, if we are repentant we can trust God because in His word He says clearly that if we're genuine and sincere and that we do hate sin within ourselves and what

we have done, knowing that it has been set against God (because sin is against God) that we can trust that God will forgive.

So here it is, David is saying, "When I am afraid, I will trust in You." Well, that's what we can do, brethren. When we *fear* sin, because of what we have done, when we're afraid of sin, we can trust God that if we make a mistake, if we err, if we miss the mark, we can trust God that He *will* forgive us of our sin and it's forgiven and forgotten. It's washed away. We don't have to go back over that sin. We can now walk in boldness because we *trust in God* on a spiritual level. It's something that is spiritual.

Verse 4—In God (I will praise His name) which is in brackets, **In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?** Well, the answer is absolutely nothing. Go back over this: "In God I put my trust." Well, we, brethren, can trust God because we can trust His plan of salvation. We understand the Holy Days, for example. So we can put our *trust* in God. As we come up to the Passover season we can put our trust in God that He has provided a covering for sin. Jesus Christ is a Passover sacrifice for sin. God ordained it. Jesus Christ fulfilled it, so in God we can put our trust that if we take the Passover in the right attitude, holding no ill will to anybody, and we humble ourselves, demonstrate that humility (by the footwashing service), take the symbols of the Passover (the bread and wine), symbols pointing to the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, we put our trust in God, in the relationship we have with Him, the fact that He has provided Jesus Christ as our Passover sacrifice, we have nothing to fear. Sin has been forgiven. Sin is covered. We demonstrate yearly (annually) this very worship of God, our trust in God. So the Passover service, when we take it in the right spirit, is a demonstration of our trust in God, and we have *nothing* to fear.

Now, what this statement goes on and says, "What can flesh do to me?" Well, the answer is nothing. Nothing can happen to us without God's knowledge. Nothing can happen to us without God's knowledge. Does this say that nothing *will* happen to us? It's not saying that. It's just simply a question that God is asking. He's saying that he puts his trust in God. He has nothing to fear because he knows his life is in God's hands.

Well, it's the same for us, brethren. Our life is in God's hands. We trust in God that no matter what happens to us, it doesn't make any real difference, because we *know* we are in God's care, that God cares for us. So what can flesh do? Well, flesh can do a lot of things to us. Flesh (mankind) can punish us. They can cause sorrow and suffering. They can actually put us to death. But what can man really do on a spiritual level? Absolutely nothing because God is almighty and God is all-powerful.

Now, we understand, if you looked at this and you thought this was just a physical thing, we would say now, "I put my trust in God. I will not fear anything on a physical level. What can flesh do to me?" You'd have to say, "Well, they can do a lot of things." Because they've demonstrated towards God's apostle mankind can do a lot of things. "According to God's will," is the answer. Everything has to be according to God's will. So, "What can flesh do to me?" What can flesh do to us? Lots, on a physical level. Nothing on a spiritual level. And even the things on a physical level are allowed for a purpose. Even based on wrong choices that we make, well, they're choices that we make but God is still with us on a spiritual level. It

doesn't mean to say that God is going to pull us out of those physical environments, because it's physical, but it has a spiritual component. Maybe the best thing for us is to leave us in that particular environment because there's a lesson to be learned.

Spiritual growth can take place *because* of a physical environment. Now, that is something that mankind doesn't understand. But for us, brethren, we understand it. Spiritual growth can take place because of difficult physical environments. If we were to lock ourselves up in a cave and have no interaction with anybody, and that food and water were provided, what spiritual growth would take place? None! It's *because* of the need for choice. The way that God made mankind was that of a free moral agency. We have to make choices.

So once called, we are given that potential to now make right decisions based on God's holy spirit, God's thinking. But we have to yield to that thinking. We have to choose. Now, we make choices progressively based on knowledge, and by that I'm saying when we're first called we don't have the spiritual knowledge, the spiritual understanding, or the *wisdom* to implement, necessarily, right choices. We will make choices based on the knowledge, understanding that we have at that time. But given time in the Body of Christ with God's holy spirit we would understand if we look back twenty, thirty years later, we'd look back and say, "Well, if I was in that environment again, that physical environment, I would not make that choice again." Because in hindsight we look back and realize, "Well, that was not that wise." We made the decision based on the knowledge and understanding we had at that time, but God gives us growth. God gives us *spiritual* growth, spiritual knowledge, spiritual understanding so that in the future we would make *different* decisions.

That's what life's about. It's about this growth and the ability to make right choices. Right choices are choices that are in unity with God's thinking, therefore, it takes time to make right choices because it's based on knowledge and understanding, and then the implementation of that understanding, which is that wisdom. Living wisdom is living life according to the word of God, the way that *God* has demonstrated through Jesus Christ, which is living wisdom.

Verse 5—All day they twist my words. Well, we see this all the time. We understand that everything that the apostle that God has appointed to this Church in this particular time, all of the words are twisted because they don't understand them on a spiritual level. **All their thoughts *are* against me for evil.** Well, this is the period we're entering into, brethren, where we need to be very careful that during the days of the 3½ years, those last 3½ years, we have to be careful about what we say because mankind is still going to twist our words, and their thoughts *are* going to be against us for evil. Not everybody is going to love the Church of God—PKG.

They gather together, they hide, they mark (observe) my steps; in other words, they're watching what's going on all for a motive of ill will, **when they lie in wait for my life.** So here it is, they're actually now setting out to destroy. They're setting out to harm. Well, we understand that our life is in God's hands, so even though people will gather against us, they'll twist our words, they'll be against us in their thinking,

they may plan and plot and observe to try to destroy us on a physical level, then they may lay in wait for our lives, it *doesn't matter* because we are in God's hands.

Now, do we trust God that He will physically provide for us? It may happen. It may not. It's according to God's will. God is almighty. God is all-powerful, but what's the best thing for us on a spiritual level? Is it to have food for the whole 3½ years? Is it to remain alive for the whole 3½ years? Well, we don't know God's will and purpose for that. We just simply don't. We know God's will is to develop holy righteous character within each and every one of us. The exact time order for that to take place, we don't understand.

Now, we can look at this from another point of view. We can see, brethren, that physical things are going to be difficult coming ahead of us. We know, we understand, we see that all of those things are for a *spiritual good*. Mankind is going to suffer for a spiritual benefit. It's quite incredible to understand this. So no matter what happens, no matter what happens in this world during the 3½ years, through all the death and all the sorrow, it is all for a benefit. It's all for the purpose of "bringing many sons to glory." And that's an incredible thing to understand.

Now, this is something we need to take on board, that no matter what happens, no matter what people do to us, no matter what mankind does to us we know, we understand that *all things (everything)* is for our spiritual benefit *IF* we yield to God's holy spirit, *IF* we have been called according to His purpose. His purpose is to create Elohim, to create a family by changing the thinking within mankind from a natural carnal mind of Romans 8 to a mind of God: "Let this mind be in you, which was in Jesus Christ," the very thinking of God, all powered by God's holy spirit. So no matter what happens to us, brethren, we understand that there are potentially great opportunities for us to grow in holy righteous character.

Verse 7—Shall they escape by sin (iniquity)? In anger cast down the peoples, O God! So here it is. This is about righteous anger because of sin. This is not just to go out and destroy everybody and David crying out to God because saying, "Well, people are against me, therefore, destroy them all!" No. "Shall they escape by iniquity?" Shall they escape because of their sin? Well, no. Nobody escapes because of sin. The only way to escape *anything* in life is through developing the mind of God, by having God's holy spirit. So they won't get away with sin. Nobody gets away with sin. *We* can't get away with sin. Here he's saying, "Cast down these people, these unrepented sinners." Anybody that won't repent of sin, David is saying, "Well, cast them down." Because? It's righteous anger against sin. Because God is against sin, so we can have this same mindset. We need to be against sin within our own life, not looking out at others, but looking at ourselves. We should be angry at sin. We can be angry at our self for what we choose, the choices we make. God is saying here, "Nobody will get away with sin," and God's anger will be against the unrepented sinner.

Verse 8—You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? This is saying God knows everything. God knows everything. God is in control of everything. Now, we can trust God that He is aware of everything. Now, there's a positive side to that, and then there can be *seen* to be a negative side because we want God to be aware of everything in our life. We want God to "number my wanderings." Everywhere we go we want God to be aware of it. "Put my tears," my sufferings, the pain

and sorrow, "into Your bottle." Put them into the context of God understands them, which He does. He made mankind. Jesus Christ has lived a life of physical flesh with the mind of God, so they understand what it's like to be physical. God knows what it's like to be physical *because* He created mankind this way. He understands the sorrow. He understands the suffering. And He understands the purpose of it because God created it. God created pain, and sorrow, and suffering all for a spiritual purpose. That's the outcome. Now, mankind for 6000 years doesn't understand it. They've turned to their false gods. They've turned to trust in other gods, but not the true God, because they haven't been called according to His purpose.

So here David is saying, "Well, everything that I do and all my suffering and sorrow, You're aware of it. Put it in *Your* bottle." In other words, God understands it all. It's known by God because God knows all things. "Are they not in Your book?" God is fully aware of every single thing that goes on, on a physical level in our life, but God also understands everything on a spiritual level. So we can trust God that He understands everything to do with our physical life.

We can also trust that God knows everything about us on a spiritual level. Now, this spiritual level is everything to do with our thoughts, our words, and our actions, everything that goes on in our thinking, whether or not we're yielding to God, what our priorities are in life. So we desire that God stays close to us. We *trust* in God, that He is aware of our spiritual condition. Now, this can be a fearful thing because we're not always spiritually alert. We're not always using God's holy spirit in our life. We often slip back into the natural carnal mind of selfishness. So we understand that everything that goes on, on a physical level, and everything that goes on, on a spiritual level, that God is fully aware of it. God knows all things. And God sees all our decisions. He sees all our attitudes. He sees whether or not we're desiring to repent. Now, we trust that when we do repent God forgives. We also should always trust that God knows everything about us. He knows all of our physical sufferings. He knows all of the spiritual battles we are having because He is the one who has made us aware of them. Because without a calling, without God's holy spirit, without God's mercy, we cannot see ourselves. So if we do see a sin, if we do "see" ourselves, we understand that it is God that is revealing it to us by the power of His holy spirit. God knows everything on a physical level about us, and everything on a spiritual level about us. So everything that happens to us, our tears, our sufferings, and our sorrows, God is fully aware of them. The point is for us, brethren, that as we become aware of these conditions we know, we understand, that everything works to our spiritual good *if* we are *yielding* to God's purpose in our life.

Verse 9—When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back. Well, that's the desire. When we cry out to God our enemies will turn back. Who are *our* enemies? Well, they're not mankind. *Our* enemies are not mankind. *Our* enemy is Satan and the demons. And they *will* turn back because of our crying out to God for repentance because of what we are. We admit what we are. We admit our nature. Well, when we cry out to God our enemies, Satan and the demons, will turn back. Now, there are scriptures which we're not going to look at today, which talks about fasting and turning to God and Satan will flee from us. And it's all based on this gift of repentance, if we are willing to repent, if we're willing to trust in God, that He *will* forgive us, we trust in God that He *can* destroy Satan and his demons from our life on a spiritual

level now, that they can be taken away from us, these attacks. We trust in that. We know that God can do that.

Well, God allows Satan and his demons to test us, to tempt us, because it's about a spiritual matter. Satan is allowed to exist on this earth with the demons because of a purpose, and that purpose is God's purpose, the creation of Elohim. So we know that if we cry out, brethren, our enemy, Satan, will turn back.

This I know, because God is for me. How encouraging is this? We know that God is for us. Now, this doesn't mean to say that everything on a physical level is going to be perfect. We understand that no matter what happens in our life on a physical level, it's all for a spiritual good, because God is *for us*. God is with us and God is for us. God's purpose will be achieved, which is the creation of a family, the creation of *His thinking in us*.

Now, we have this opportunity. Such a small group at this time, we have been given great opportunity. Considering there's about 7 billion people (I believe it's almost that amount), 7 billion or 6-7 billion people on this earth at this very time, how blessed and how fortunate are we that we've been called out now to trust in God? And we're the only one that can actually trust in God. Mankind can cry out and believe they trust in God, and they can turn to their god's—their money, the stock exchange, other religions—it makes no difference what it is; they *cannot* trust in God on a spiritual level because they haven't been called to it. But we *have* been called to this. We have been called to put our faith, to put our trust in God. Now, we understand that it's not physical. It doesn't mean to say that everything in life is going to work out just as we would like it. In actual fact, it is the opposite. It'll be the opposite. Because if life was to work out exactly as we wanted, it would be totally selfish! The only way for spiritual growth is to go through those physical trials so that we can take on the mind of God. So in those physical environments we tend to turn to God more, to ask God to intervene according to His will.

Now, that is something in life that we learn over time. I remember being first called. I never really turned around and said, "According to Your will, O God." I used to pray for Wayne. I used to pray for my environment, for my problems in life, and it generally was, "Take them all away from me. Please, God, take them away from me."

Verse 10—In God (I will praise *His* word), in the LORD (I will praise *His* word), and this is referring back to "In God," "In the LORD," which is Yahweh Elohim. And here David is saying He would always praise God. He would praise His word because His word is true. So he'd give all credit to God for everything because it's God that is good and it's God that does good, true good, spiritual good. **In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?** Which is going back and is virtually saying the same thing as verse 4, "What can flesh do to me?" "What can man do to me?" Absolutely nothing.

"In God I will put my trust." Well, that's us, brethren. In God we put our trust that all things work to the good. Now, this is not always easy to understand even within the Body of Christ that no matter what environment is happening to us, no matter what *is* happening to us, these physical things that are going to happen to us because of choices or because it's God's will that these things take place all for the

purpose of developing holy righteous character, what attitudes we will choose. So everything that is happening to us, brethren, if we've been called to this, *is* for our spiritual good. There's a great opportunity here to grow. And generally it's about humility, growth in humility. So no matter what is happening to us, if we put our trust in God, if we turn to God in this particular trial it will yield humility.

"I will not be afraid." There's nothing to fear physically. There's things to fear spiritually because of wrong choices, but we shouldn't be afraid because we've put our trust in God, that everything is going to work out well on a spiritual level. Even though we're going to suffer physically, everything is going to work out on a spiritual level, therefore, we should not be afraid of anything on a spiritual level because we have this gift of repentance – that if we do err, we can repent. "What can man do to me?" Physically? Absolutely nothing. What can man do to us on a spiritual level? Absolutely nothing because we are God's. God is *for* us! That's what verse 9 said, "God is for us."

Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God. Well, that's saying promises made to God are going to be held to us. So we need to be very careful. In the New Testament Christ says, "Let your yes's be yes, and your no's be no's." In other words, don't go out and make vows or promises to God because you might think we can keep them. We might think we can keep them when we make them, but the truth is we're natural, we forget, and we let down, and we'll make promises and say, "Well, if You do this, God, I'll do that," which is like bribing God or bargaining with God. Well, no, anything spoken to God is binding on us. We'll be held accountable for our thoughts, words, and actions.

So we, brethren, should make sure that our yes's are yes and our no's be no. We should know that we can't bribe God. We should *know* that the promise that we made was at baptism because at baptism we made a statement; we made a promise that God would be first in our life. We knew, we understood, we trusted that all our sins have been forgiven because they were washed away, because of the water baptism. We believed. We knew. We trusted in God that He provided the gift of His holy spirit to us at the laying of hands of a true minister of God. So we knew from that point what we had committed to in life, that God would be first no matter what, and that no matter what happens, no matter what is still happening to us (to us all), we're all going through these "no matter what's," whether it's in our families, whether it's in our jobs, whether it's those around us, whether it's the world's system, whether it's the government, whether it's the oppression, whether it's the violence on a physical level, whether it's the violence on a spiritual level from Satan and his demons—because they are violent against us because they want to destroy us, we need to be very careful about how we respond in those environments, because we *know* that all things are working to a spiritual outcome. So we should let our yes's be yes and our no's be no, because we know that everything is binding on us on a spiritual level. This is not talking about physical. This is about spiritual things that are happening in our life.

I will render praises to You, because God is all-powerful and almighty, and in the end we can turn around and say, "Your will be done."

Well, we know, brethren, often people will say, "Pray for me." Or, "Can you pray about this environment?" Or, "Can you do 'this'?" Or, "Can you do 'that'?" "Can you ask God for me?" Well, I've come to see and I've

come to understand that in all of this I have to be very careful that I'm not praying against God's will. Because somebody can get a particular illness or a particular situation can develop in a person's life, and now I can say, "I'll pray about that environment for you, or to pray about it." And often prayer requests come out in the Church. Well, the most important thing out of all of that is that we pray that God's will be done because the *best thing* for that person may be that they suffer the pain and sorrow of an illness. The best thing can be they learn the lesson quickly so it can be removed. So in all of this, brethren, we need to be ensuring that at the end of it we can say, "Well, there's 'such and such' an environment, but God, You know all things. You know this person better than what I do. You know what's *best for* that person on a physical *and* spiritual level." So who am I to try to *change* that environment? I'm nobody! I can only pray, "This is the environment, God, intervene according to Your will." And therefore, if it goes on longer I know that it's God's will. And if God intervenes, I know it's God's will. Because God *is* all-powerful, God *is* almighty and I *trust* that God knows what is best for the individual. I *know*! You know! We know, brethren, what is best is God's will be done. Therefore, when we pray we have to ensure that we always come to the understanding that we trust God's judgment in a person's life, that God's will be done. Therefore, if somebody suffers in a trial for a long period of time, it's according to God's will, because God could intervene tomorrow if He really, really desired. He could intervene straight away. Sometimes He doesn't. Sometimes He does. And it's all for the development of holy righteous character. So we always should pray, "God's will be done."

Verse 13—for You have delivered my life from death. *Have You not delivered* my foot from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living? So here David is looking at something physical from the point of view that God has delivered him from death and that he can continue to walk before God in this life, in a physical life. Well, for us it's the same thing, brethren. We desire to live physically, but God can deliver our life from death, which is spiritual death, because of this relationship, because of a calling that He has given us. So we have been delivered through baptism and the receipt of God's holy spirit *from death*. Repentance is a deliverance from death. And God has "delivered our foot from falling," by providing us His word, by the power of His holy spirit that we can see the truth. So we are continually delivered from this falling down because every time we fall we can repent. So God is delivering us, is in the process of delivering us into *life*, because it's all about a spiritual matter.

"That I may walk before God." Well, because of this ongoing repentance, because of the forgiveness of sin, because we trust God that He is delivering us from sin by this gift of repentance and His great mercy and forgiveness, we can walk before God every single minute of our life, every single second of our life. We can walk "in the land of the living," spiritually! We're spiritually alive! We're not spiritually dead. We're alive because we have the gift of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. So we walk before God on a spiritual level every single day. We trust God every single day, every breath that we take. We trust God on a spiritual level, that He is one, almighty, and then all-powerful. And He is so powerful that He *can and does* forgive sin. So God is all-powerful and all-merciful, and we walk before God on a spiritual level every day and we walk in the land of the living, which is the spirit life that lives and dwells in us makes us alive.

Now, there's all these people out there that live in the land of the living on a physical level. We are the only ones, members of the Body of Christ, people that have been called and received God's holy spirit or have been awakened to live a life of love, to be alive on a spiritual level. Now, we walk in this, brethren. Very few in this world walk in "the land of the living" on a spiritual level. We have to come to understand that Satan and his demons are trying to destroy us from the access to God's holy spirit by unrepented sin. Now, we all will sin. The secret to life is repentance, continually repenting, trusting in God that He will forgive sin and that we can walk anew. We can walk with the thinking of God every single day of our life if we choose to continue to yield to God, to repent. And God says He will be with us. God is *for* us. God *desires* that we change. And that's the purpose of life, to change the way we think.

Jeremiah 17:5—Thus says the LORD (Thus says the Eternal): Cursed is the man who trusts in man.

Now, this is the problem within mankind. They haven't been called to trust in God, but mankind turns to, he trusts in what man makes. He trusts in his own thinking. Now, this "cursed," this is "they will suffer." So mankind will suffer because they trust in man, they trust in self, what man has made. They will suffer because of a lack of turning to God in repentance. Now, they haven't been called to it so this is the penalty for sin. The penalty for sin, of course, is death. But the penalty for sin is ongoing suffering. So "cursed," man will suffer because he trusts, he has turned to his own thinking, what he has established to trust in. **And makes flesh his strength**, or this is what he trusts in, "makes flesh his trust." **Whose heart departs from the LORD.** He turns away from turning to God. Now, this could be somebody in the Body of Christ that turns away from God, is disfellowshipped or disfellowships themselves. So he is cursed because of his disobedience, "is the man who trusts in himself," because he turns to his *own thinking*. "He makes flesh," what he trusts in, himself, "his own trust." He becomes reliant on himself rather than trusting and relying on God and what God has established in His Church. "Whose heart," (whose mind, whose thinking), "departs from the LORD." Now, to "depart from God" means they have been called already into the Body of Christ, into this relationship with God, therefore, they now turn and trust in something different other than God Himself. God is saying to Israel, which is physical Israel, that mankind would be cursed because he is turning away from this relationship they have, this potential on a physical level of this physical relationship they have, that they would be cursed because of it because they are now trusting in themselves.

Well, for us it's similar, but it's based on a spiritual level. So we will be cursed for our disobedience by putting our trust in our self, because we have departed from God's thinking, "Whose heart departs from the LORD," who departs from God. It's because we trust in something else. We don't put our trust in God to believe what God has said.

Now, mankind has this potential just because he is mankind, because of the way he is. Well, we, brethren, have this same potential, but on a spiritual level. Our heart can depart from God. We don't turn to God's thinking, we don't turn to the truth, we don't turn to strengthening our relationship with God.

Verse 6—For he shall be like a shrub, which is a bush, in the wilderness, which is in this desert area or barren area, and shall not see when good comes. So they won't see when help comes, which can be the

rain, but when good comes. So this is talking about an individual, that they're like this shrub that's in the desert, and when the rain comes, well, they don't see it, they don't benefit from it. There is nothing good going to come out of their decision that they have made.

But shall inhabit parched places of the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. So here it is, this is something on a physical level, that if a person turns to themselves and turns away from God they will be like this shrub in the desert and there won't be any help provided. They won't receive any rain. They'll actually wither up and die. On a spiritual level it's the same thing. Somebody that departs from this relationship with God that has been called to it is like this shrub that is cut off from good. They're cut off from the flow of God's holy spirit, so nothing good can come, no help can come because God's spirit *is* help to our thinking, because of this transformation that's taking place. So the transformation will cease. The transformation will stop because the flow of God's holy spirit will cease and they will inhabit this desert place, this parched place in the wilderness, "in a salt land which is not inhabited." They'll be cut off from the flow of God's holy spirit. They *cannot* grow. They can only go back into the world. And the world trusts in self.

No matter what idols man sets up, it's all about trusting in self. They trust in themselves because it's something they have made. They don't understand it and they don't see it, but mankind simply trusts back in his own reasoning, in his own understanding. He trusts in his self, what *he* established as god, what *he* thinks will protect him. That's what he trusts in.

Well, God is saying here on a spiritual level that, "Cursed is the person who trusts in man," who trust in their own thinking. Because they are cut off from the flow of God's holy spirit, therefore, they're going in an opposite direction than having a true relationship with God. They're actually turning *against* God and now they're becoming in unity with Satan and his demons, the natural carnal mind's thinking.

Verse 7, there's an opposite now described, because the first one in verse 5 is "cursed." Now in verse 7, which is the opposite: **Blessed (fortunate) is the man who trusts in the LORD**, who relies in God, who *believes* God's words because to trust God or to trust in God is to trust and believe His word. So if we were to say, "Do we trust in God? Do we trust God on a spiritual level?" We will *believe* God's word. We will *believe* the truth that God has placed in the Church. We will *believe* that Ron Weinland is an apostle. We will *believe* who the two witnesses are. We will *believe* what is given to us through the posts. We will *believe* the 57 Truths. We will *believe* this is God's true Church. If we believe those things we are *trusting* in God.

Now, anybody else outside of the Body of Christ *cannot* trust God because it requires God's holy spirit to believe. We need God's holy spirit to believe the truth, to believe God, to believe God's Church, to believe what is written, what God is providing. We *believe* this is God's true Church. Now, if we believe, we then can trust. But if we don't believe we cannot trust. Well, if we don't *believe* it, we're not trusting God. We're *doubting* God. We're doing the opposite to trust. We *don't* trust that God is in the Church. We *don't* believe. We don't trust that God is feeding the Church. So what are we doing? We're going back to

trust in our *own* understanding, our *own* reasoning. And that means that God's holy spirit isn't with us. It's been withdrawn from us and we will wither up and we will die because of it.

But here it's saying somebody that has God's holy spirit, that *believes* God, "this is the man who trust," who relies, "in God," because they have the *confidence* that God is working in the Church of God—PKG. They have the *confidence* that everything physical is going to work to the *spiritual* good of every single person in the Body of Christ. So no matter what is happening in our life it *is* for our spiritual good *if* we are yielding to God's holy spirit.

Verse 7, again, **Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.** Now, this hope, brethren, is a key to being in the Body of Christ. We desire to see what God has provided us in the way of our understanding of what He's given in His word. We desire to see it. Now, that is hope. Hope is the desire to *see* what God has promised. Now, when it's fulfilled it's no longer hope, as scripture says. So we believe God. We trust in God. We *believe* and we *hope* in what God has promised us. We hope for the fulfillment of what God has given the Church through the book *2008—God's Final Witness*. That will no longer be a hope when it's fulfilled because it will be *seen*. But we are going to be fortunate, says here, because we believe God. We're going to be blessed by God because we trust in Him, we believe in Him, and we hope in His word. That's what we do.

For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, so it's going back to something physical here; it's pointing to something spiritual. **Verse 8**, again, **For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river.** This can be symbolically pointing to people, as we understand a tree is people or a person. "For he," a person, individual, man or woman, "shall be like a tree planted by the waters," which is somebody in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, has access to the water, "which spreads out its roots," so we're like this tree. We spread out our roots "by the river." We stay in the Body of Christ, the Church of God where the water is. This is where the water is provided, in God's Church through God's words.

And will not fear when heat comes. So the person with God's holy spirit will not fear what is coming, no matter what is coming. And they won't *fear* when they see the heat coming, because we see it coming, brethren. We have nothing to fear. There's things on a physical level that we may have to suffer all for our spiritual good. There are things coming on a physical level that we may not necessarily fully understand either, and there will be suffering from family, friends, and those around us. Well, we have nothing to fear when we see the heat come. We have nothing to fear at all because we trust in God. We have nothing to worry about *because* we understand what God's will and purpose is; *God's* will be done. So no matter what we face with regards to those that are going to suffer around us, and even our own suffering, and even our death, we shouldn't worry about it because it's all for our spiritual good. God knows best. God knows what's best for us on a spiritual level.

But its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious (worried) in the year of drought. We understand that the physical drought is coming. Well, for us, brethren, this should not be a spiritual drought because we will be trusting in God and staying close to God.

Well, trials are coming. We have to be grounded and rooted in the truth. We have to stay connected to the vine. **Nor will cease from yielding fruit.** Because if we have God's holy spirit and we're yielding to it and we're trusting in God, we're *believing* God, we will yield fruit, *spiritual* fruit. And we know that in Galatians 5:22-23 that it outlines the fruit of the spirit, that God's holy spirit will flow into us out to the benefit of others and we will not cease to yield this fruit because we're connected to the vine. We *trust* God and we're staying close to God because we are repenting; we're in a state of ongoing repentance.

We're going to look at a particular account now that outlines what it really means to trust in God because of man's misunderstanding, or lack of understanding, or lack of knowledge about the truth of trusting in God, believing God. We're going to pick up the story in Daniel 3:1, which is about king Nebuchadnezzar and the fact that he set up this image of gold.

Now, we understand (while you're turning to Daniel 3:1) that it's in relation to the Persian Empire at that time, which is in the area of Iran today. And this really is about pride and humility, and this is demonstration of *how* we can actually trust in God. Now, there are other lessons also to be learned in this story, but we'll go through it on the point of view of coming to see what it really means when somebody says, "I trust God." Or, "We trust God." And the statement that is made that clearly demonstrates and reinforces the spiritual principle that *everything* works to the good of those that love God.

Daniel 3:1—Nebuchadnezzar, the king, made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up on the plains of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Now, this was about ninety feet high and about nine feet wide (roughly) in measurements. So it's rather enormous gold image that he has made. **And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, and the counselors, and the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

Verse 3—So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, and the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officers of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Now, they would have turned up because of fear, as much as anything because a disobedience to a king like King Nebuchadnezzar would have meant death. So here, in physical reasoning and physical logic tells you you best come and worship this image that has been set up, because if you don't, you will die. You will lose your life, which means everyone would be affected, the family and everyone else. So this is self-protection as much as anything, and it *is* all about this authority, that when an authority is set up, we, in God's word, are told to obey the authority that is set up, and if it meant disobeying God, we would not obey the authority, because God is first. So all of the rules of mankind we would follow as long as it does not contradict or contravene God's word. So where God says to do something, we do that first. Now, if doing that meant to disobey one of *man's* rules, well, that's what we would do. We would obey God first.

For example, where there's a commanded assembly before God, for example, like the Sabbath or on a Holy Day or Holy Days, we would strive to attend what God has set up. So we would do that first. So this means that obeying God, we'd put God first, we'd obey the Sabbath no matter what, no matter what that meant. If it meant disobeying a government rule, that's exactly what we would do. And therefore, we wouldn't turn up, as it says here, to worship before the idol, because it's contradicting...well, it's a contradiction to God's word. But we should obey authority as long as it does not contradict God's word. God is first.

Then a herald cried aloud: To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, *that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that Nebuchadnezzar has set up. So this was a forcing of idolatry. Now, they would not understand that it was idolatry, where they're having to worship a manmade image. They would just simply look at it on a physical level and think, "Well, I'd best obey the king." Well, for us, brethren, we would not turn up, because we would not have another image before God. We have nothing before God. God is first. God is Almighty. God is the one who has brought us out of bondage. Now, we understand this because of a calling we have been given. Well, they have been now commanded to, when they hear this particular music, they're to fall down and worship the gold image that has been set up.

Continuing on now with what this was now being announced ...**and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of the fiery furnace.** The wages that they were going to earn for this disobedience to King Nebuchadnezzar was death.

Verse 7—So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, the flute, the harp, *the* lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down *and* worshiped the gold image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Now, this was in this particular area or location where all of these peoples were that when they heard that particular music they would then kneel down and worship, or fall down and worship this particular image that had been set up.

Verse 8—Therefore, at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. Now, these were the ones that had been taken in from captivity because King Nebuchadnezzar had taken them into captivity, the Jews, and they were there. And of course, this was more about politics and those that had wanted authority. They would have realized that some of the Jews that were in Nebuchadnezzar's area were given levels of authority and levels of service, and this is one way to get rid of Daniel and some of the others that were there, and therefore, this was as much as political as anything.

They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, O King, live forever! Which was a common greeting of the king. **You, O King, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.** Well, he would have understood that. They've just now virtually stroking his ego a little bit and

just reminding him of the edict. Because when a king like King Nebuchadnezzar made a proclamation or an edict or a ruling, if it wasn't fulfilled you would die. You simply would. Now, he is in a position where he is all-powerful and he is the ruler, and therefore, whatever he says goes. When he makes these rulings, that's it. So they're just reminding him that he's made this ruling.

Now they declare, **verse 12— There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon.** Now, that's the problem because, "These certain Jews whom *you* have set over the affairs of the *province* of *Babylon!*" They have positions of *authority* and now this jealousy and the politics all kick in because these now, these Chaldeans, are now upset with this, and they see this as a way to get rid of these people, these certain Jews whom they hated, to get rid of them because they were disobeying the king. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O King, have not paid due regard to you.** So they're making it quite personal because they disobeyed the king's instructions. **They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.** So they're making it, now, very difficult for King Nebuchadnezzar because he would have trusted them because he's made them rulers. He would have actually trusted them and trusted their judgment. Now the Chaldeans, those in that area that were setting up this complaint, are now making sure that it's very personal, because they've virtually said, "They do not serve *your* gods, or worship the gold image *you* have set up." Well, of course he has pride, he has human nature, and therefore he would respond accordingly.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, *Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?* Now, this was, virtually, a fearful situation for most people, and it's interesting because these three young men now have trusted God, and they believe in Yahweh Elohim and they have placed Him first in their life. Now, we understand that Nebuchadnezzar is the ruler of the known world at that time, therefore, no matter what he says, it should go. But he had his own gods that he would worship and his expectation was that those in his service would worship those same gods. And he set up this image, and the image really is a type of god, but it's really all about this chain of authority, that whatever he says must go. He's set up this image to be worshipped because it was all really about his power, his authority, who he really was.

Verse 15—Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, the harp, the lyre, and the psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! So if you do this, it'll all be good, nothing will have happened to you. **But** (so the opposite), **But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?** Now, what he's virtually saying now is that, "*Who* can deliver you? Who is the God that you worship that could deliver you from this?" He's virtually asking this question believing that there isn't a God that could do this. "And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" He's virtually saying, "Well, there isn't anyone that's going to! Don't you know who I am?! I am Nebuchadnezzar! I am the king. I am all-powerful, and *nothing* is going to save you if you don't follow these commands!"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. What they're really saying here now, "Well, there is no need to answer you in this," because the answer to this trusting in God is now going to be given to them. This is how we understand what it is to trust in God, where the world cannot understand it, but we can. We can understand Romans 8:28, that "everything is going to work for the good of those who love God." Now, this is the answer to this trusting in God.

What does it really mean to trust in God? Verse 17—If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He is able to deliver us from your hand, O King. Now, *this* is the answer to trusting in God. "If it is the case," so no matter what is happening to us, "our God whom we serve is able," if it is God's will, if it is God's will to deliver us from anything," from the burning fiery furnace, and He is able to deliver us from your hand, O King." It's God's will be done. It's not our will. So *if* we are to be delivered, it's God's will. If we are to lose our physical life, it's God's will. If we're to go without a meal, it's God's will that that happened, *all* for a spiritual purpose. It's all for a spiritual purpose. And *that's* the key to understanding this trust in God.

The term is a throw away term in the world, that people just simply say, "Oh, I'll trust God. I trust God." And therefore, they just live their life believing that God will protect them. Well, that's not true. That's not how it works. We, as members of the Body of Christ, understand that we trust God. We trust God in physical things. We trust God in spiritual things. But we understand that *everything* physical that happens to us is and has a spiritual purpose and it's *God's* will that will be done in our life. So no matter *what* happens to us, brethren, we can make this statement that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, "Our God, whom we serve," we serve Yahweh Elohim, "is able to deliver us from *everything*, from anything! *And if He desires*," if He desires to deliver us *from* anything, "it's *His* will be done." And that's why it's so important whenever we pray that we should always use the word, "Your will be done," just as Jesus Christ did. Because when we pray for others, when we pray about our situations, to deliver us from particular trials, it's according to God's will, and therefore, we shouldn't go against and fight against it. This is very important key to understanding this trusting in God. That God is able to deliver us *if* it is His will.

Verse 18—Virtually, this is virtually saying, "It's all up to God. It's God's will." God is able to do everything. He is all-powerful, almighty. God knows everything physical, everything spiritual about us. Verse 18—**But if not...** So he says here before, they've said, "He is able to deliver us from your hand," because God is all-powerful. "But if not... if He doesn't deliver us, if we happen to lose our life, *if* something goes wrong, *if* we go without meals, *if* one of our family members dies, *if* a close relative dies, *if* our children die... but if not... if we're not delivered, **let it be known to you, O King, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.** So this is saying this is obedience at any cost...obedience at any cost. No matter what happens we will not serve any other God; we will not turn to any other religion.

Hold your place there and look at Acts 5:29—Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: **We ought to obey God rather than men.** So this is that spiritual principle: God is first no matter what. So no matter what happens, we obey God first rather than men. Now, we obey men as long as it doesn't contradict or go against God's word.

Back to Daniel 3. Now, the reason that they have said this is because to worship the image would be sin, therefore, they have virtually said, "We don't serve any other god. We just serve Yahweh Elohim."

Verse 19—Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Therefore, he spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than was usually heated. So his attitude has completely changed and now he's gone into this rage. He's actually furious at the fact that they will not obey him, that they've declared something against him. Because he believes he is virtually all-powerful himself, and to turn around and say that you're not going to worship *my* gods and your defiance against me and my gods, and you believe that your God is all-powerful and almighty, that He could save you?! He may or He may not? Well, let's just find out what He will do! And I'm sure at this point Nebuchadnezzar, he would have believed that he was going to kill them, destroy them in this fire, because really deep down there is no need to heat it up seven times hotter than what it already was. It was already hot enough to destroy.

Verse 20—And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *and* cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. So they're fully clothed and they're bound up and they're thrown in. Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So these were the "mighty men of valor." They were from his army. They were the ones that obeyed the king, did his command because they needed to obey him otherwise *they* would die. So they now have been burned. They have been killed by the flame that has come up out of the fire because it was so hot.

Verse 23—And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound in the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished... You can imagine the change on his face here, the change in attitude that he would have had... **and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?** Because he's now seen this... They answered and said to him, True, O King. Look! He answered, I see four loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt. The form of the fourth is like a son of the gods. Which we understand was an angel. So here it is, he's thrown in three and now he sees four. So he's obviously observing this. He's looking at it and he can see them; they're walking around in the fire when they should be destroyed. They should be burned up.

Verse 26—Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the princes, administrators, governors, and King's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair at their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of the fire was not on them. So the smell of the smoke wasn't on them. *Nothing* had happened to them, absolutely nothing!

But going back to verse 17, "If that is the case, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us if it is His will." If His desire is, that's what will happen. Well, that was God's desire, to demonstrate to King Nebuchadnezzar that Nebuchadnezzar wasn't all-powerful, he wasn't all mighty, that there is *one* Yahweh Elohim, there is *one* true God who *is* almighty and who is all-powerful in whom somebody that is called can trust in. We can trust God, that God's will, will be done. *Nothing* can happen to us without God's will, without God's knowledge.

Verse 28—Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (blessed be the God of the Church of God—PKG); who has sent His angel (His messenger) to deliver His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Well, brethren, this is a lesson for us! We are blessed of God! Because He *will* deliver His servants who trust in Him. We are to learn to trust in God on a spiritual level because we have to go back to verse 17 and 18: "But if not, let it be known, King, that we won't serve anyone else." So if we have to lose our physical life, it's God's will be done in our life. "And they have frustrated, or they have "changed," the king's word," a better rendition of that, "and have yielded their bodies that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!" The God we worship! The God that has revealed Himself more fully to us at the Feast of 2005, Yahweh Elohim. That's the God we worship, the Almighty God, the All-Powerful God that loves us and that is for us, and that is going to do a work, and that we have been called to serve in that work.

Now, part of that service may mean that we're going to have to suffer on a physical level, but we will not be suffering like the suffering of the world, the world that is going to be humbled. So, brethren, we have been called to worship God, and we *know*, we "see" that *everything* works to our spiritual good no matter what happens to us. And the answer to all of the things that are going to take place in the next 3½ years is in verse 17 and 18.

Verse 29—Therefore, I make a decree that any person, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap, it'll be burned, because there is no other God who can deliver like this. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the provinces of Babylon. So they stood for their trust in God because there *IS* no other God who can deliver like God! And brethren, we can take this to heart. There *IS* no other God. There is only one God, whom we have been called to know. And there is no other god that we can trust in! And we'd be *foolish* to turn away from God in any shape or form. We'd be *foolish* not to believe God. We'd be *foolish* not to trust in God, the God that has revealed Himself to us. He is the *only one* that can deliver us according to His will and purpose. So it's not only just talking about something physical. Yes, God can deliver us on a physical level, if it's His will, but God *can* deliver us on a spiritual level *because* it *is* His will to deliver us. That's what a calling's about. A calling is about a deliverance. It's about an escaping from Egypt, an escaping from sin, being taken *out* of Egypt, being taking *out* of sin. And we've been granted the *gift* of repentance! So we, brethren, are the ones that know the One True God, Yahweh Elohim. We are His servants. And God can deliver us because we *trust* in Him.

So if you go back to verse 28 where Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed is the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego," blessed is the God that God's people worship. God's people worship Him. "Who has sent His angel," who has sent His messenger. Now, we understand that God is encamped around those who love Him, whom God has a purpose in. We are God's people. God has a purpose for us. He has encamped *around* us. He has sent His angel, His messengers *around* us. And He will deliver His servants who trust in Him.

We know, brethren, we're going to be delivered spiritually. How incredible is this? We *understand* this principle that God is about delivering us on a spiritual level. "And they have frustrated (changed) the king's word." Yes, no matter what anybody says, no matter what any government says, no matter what any other Church says, no matter what the scattered Church says, it makes no difference. It's *God's* will be done in the Church of God—PKG. It's *God's* will be done in His people.

Turn to **Romans 8:12—Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh**, so this is saying that we don't owe our flesh anything. We're not debtors, "not to the flesh." We owe it nothing. We have to be fighting sin in our mind because the flesh is something that is carnal. So when we leave ourselves to our flesh we leave ourselves to our natural carnal mind. Well, we shouldn't be debtors to it. We owe it nothing. **...to live according to the flesh**, which is our own desires. And we've just been through a sermon about this, about our own selfishness, the lacking of *self*-control. We are to overcome our desires.

So, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh," we owe it nothing at all, "to live according to the flesh." We've been called out to trust in God. We've been called out to overcome the flesh, the desires in us. **For if we live according to the flesh we will die**. That's right, on a spiritual level we will die, **but** (the opposite), **but if by the spirit**, which is God's spirit, **you put to death the deeds of the body**, these desires, **you will live**. So we will be fighting against our own selfishness. **For as many as are led by the spirit of God...** So if we have God's holy spirit and it's leading us, and the way that God's spirit leads us is that we have our mind, we have our thoughts, thoughts entering our minds, well, with God's spirit we can discern between right and wrong, and therefore, we are led, God leads us to see the truth. If we see the truth and then we yield to it our motive and intent will be one of righteousness. It'll be God's thinking in us. **For as many, which is us, brethren, as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God**. How incredible is this? We are begotten sons of God. Our motive and intent will be that of God. It'll be God living and dwelling in us.

Now, we can trust in this statement, brethren. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God." Now, we have access to God's holy spirit. We've been called to this. We can *trust* in God. We are called *begotten* sons of God. Now we can trust in that! God is *for* us. We're going to fight against our selfishness. We're going to put to death the deeds of our body because we trust that God will deliver us from our sin. Just like God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego on a physical level, God is going to deliver us on a spiritual level.

Verse 15—For you did not receive the spirit of bondage, which is about prejudices and about the way we think which holds us in our captivity (the natural carnal mind), **again to fear**. So we're not without hope because to have fear means we don't hope; we don't *trust* God. So if we have fears in life it means

(it demonstrates) we *don't* believe God. Because God says He is for us and that all things work to our good, and that whatever happens will be according to His will because He loves us. So if we have fear, we're back into this bondage. We're back into the bondage of the natural carnal mind. Therefore, we should not have it, because we've been called out of it. ...**but you received the spirit of adoption**, because we have this relationship with God, we're begotten sons, **by which we cry, Abba, Father**. We have this personal relationship as a begotten son of God.

Verse 16—The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, we're in unity with God and we are without fear, because we trust God, **and if children, then heirs—heirs of God**, because we're begotten sons, **and joint-heirs with Christ**, because He has already inherited, He has received what God had promised Him, **if indeed we suffer with Him**. So if we suffer, which we will, because we're going to have to suffer because we've got to *fight our pride*. We suffer because we're putting to death the self, and that's the suffering. And we suffer, **that we may also be glorified together**. So we're going to inherit Elohim. We're going to inherit spirit life in Elohim because we're denying the self, we're fighting pride, we're suffering. Because denying self is suffering. So we've been called to this, to trust God, to believe God.

Now, all this suffering that we're going through, this fighting of the self, Paul goes on to say, **verse 18—For I consider that the sufferings of this present time**, this fighting of the self, **are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us**, because of this change, the character that's going to be developed in us, and then the glory of God's nature living and dwelling in us *forever*. So this suffering, this battling of the mind, this ongoing battle that we have against our self, against our pride, is *not* to be compared with what we're going to receive. Now, we understand it to a degree, but we don't fully see it. We do not fully see what it's like to be in Elohim.

Now, if we were to stand back and just consider this for a moment: How incredible is it that a being that is and has eternal life and is righteous has made physical humans for the purpose of changing them to enter into life-everlasting, age-lasting life? How incredible is that?! How loving and how merciful is that?! What a gift! How generous is that?! We are nothing! So God is going to take nothing and make it something? How incredible! Therefore, how could we compare this suffering? How could we compare this battling that we have to do? And we often fail. But how could we compare it with what is coming for us, what God is going to give us in a resurrection? *How* can we compare it? We can't! There is *nothing* to be compared.

For the earnest expectation of the creation, which is mankind, **eagerly awaits for the revealing of the sons of God**. Because this is the freedom that man can have. The revealing of the 144,000 at the return of Jesus Christ is the beginning of this expectation being revealed, being changed, because it waits. Mankind waits. It doesn't even understand about it now, but mankind, when they see the 144,000 and the return of Jesus Christ, they will then begin to see what God has in store for them. They'll see the plan of God.

Verse 20—For the creation (mankind) was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him (because of God) **who subjected it in hope**, the hope of a change, knowing it will happen in the future.

So we know, brethren. We have a hope. We know it's going to happen in the future. We hope in Jesus Christ's return. We trust God and His word that it's going to take place. We have this hope. So mankind's been placed in a position where at the moment they can't "see" anything, but their hope is going to be given to them once Jesus Christ returns, the hope of a resurrection, a hope of entering Elohim, their hope in that change and *trust* in God's word, the truth of trusting in God, God's will be done.

So the next 3½ years that we face *is* for the benefit of mankind. It's *for* their benefit. They won't see it, but it is, because everything is going to work to the good of those that love God and are called to His purpose. Well, there are many that are going to be called to God's purpose as they enter into the Millennium. But the rest of mankind who have to die, it's still for their good. It's all about a humbling and an opportunity to enter Elohim in a time order. So they will be resurrected (the vast majority), will be resurrected to enter a Hundred-year period.

Verse 21—because the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage, which is that bondage of sin, of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. They'll be given this opportunity for freedom from themselves, this freedom from sin. So mankind has that potential, to trust in God in a time order.

For we know (we "see") that the whole creation (mankind) groans and labors with birth pangs until now, because there's 6,000 years of mankind under mankind's self-rule, under the influence of Satan. **And not only they, not only mankind, but we also who have the firstfruits of the spirit...** Well, we are part of the firstfruits in the sense of we are the first of the spirit because we've been given access to God's holy spirit. Now, we understand there's 144,000 that will be revealed at Pentecost who are firstborn of God (because they are firstborn into His Family), but there are others who are the first in the sense of having God's holy spirit. So we are the first to have God's holy spirit during this time order, and soon there'll be thousands more to have access to God's spirit. **...even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting for the adoption, which is that sonship, the redemption of our body, which is to be appointed as son of God.**

Dropping down to **verse 27—Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.** So we understand, brethren, that we have Jesus Christ as our High Priest, and that "*He* makes intercession for the saints (us) according to the will of God," because it's God's will be done in our life.

Because, **verse 28— We know (we "see") that all things work together for the good (for the spiritual good) to those who love God, to those who have been called according to His purpose.**

So, brethren, we'll finish this sermon here, *Part 1*, and we'll pick up *Part 2* shortly.□