

I believe this will be the last portion, the last part, *Part 4* of the current series entitled *Hezekiah, Then and Now*.

I'm always inspired by how so many things that have happened throughout time, especially the examples in the Old Testament, God has given a lot of examples of things that happen along a physical plane at different times throughout history to obviously help His people in the future. But a lot of those things have been geared toward the end-time, toward the time we live in, and they, at times, specifically say so. So to me, I find that very inspiring that God brings us, has brought us to this point in time, looking forward to a new time, and the way this world is right now it's just mushrooming in the sense of evil, perversion, the sickness that's rampant in this earth. I mean up here in the mind, the human mind. We look forward, indeed, to the end of all this.

These are things that we can certainly learn from here in this particular story. We have been going through and giving examples of things that happened back then along a physical plane, if you will, that there are lessons spiritually for the Church, and always have been. So there are, obviously, those examples throughout time that you can learn spiritual examples from, but I find it interesting when they apply even more specifically to a specific period of time.

Anyway, toward the end of *Part 3* we had looked at the verses that were a very condensed version of the fact that Hezekiah's heart became lifted up, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Now, I also mention how that in times past because of some things that I've heard in sermons, especially one particular sermon, it affected my judgment regarding Hezekiah in some of the things I'd heard because I feel that God has finally kind of cleared some of those things up and that, to me, is inspiring, too, how that we can continue to grow and learn, and understand. But God made it very clear at the very beginning, at the very onset concerning Hezekiah, that there had never been a king like him before of the same caliber, in that respect, as to what he was like, unique indeed. Obviously, there were kings that went before him who were very great and mighty in every way and awesome things said about them, like king David. But as to what he did in his nation, in that nation of Judah, in the sense of what he was given responsibility over, there had never been a king like him before nor after, and that's inspiring.

God made that very clear throughout the scriptures here, that we've gone through in times past here in beginnings of *Part 1* and so forth, and because of that there were some things here that we're going to talk about today, get to that are said about Hezekiah, that there was a portion in some of those sermons I heard in times past that was actually left out, which is an important part of the story that should be inspiring to us. So we'll come to that as we go along.

But it's important to remember that as we go along because it really applies to us and how we live our lives. We're going to go through things, we're going to experience things that have to do with judgment, that have to do with the ability of coming to see ourselves for what we are, for what's in our mind, that sometimes we don't even know what's there until we go through a specific trial, a specific experience in life, and then it brings us face to face with something in us that we haven't had to address before. That's awesomely important because the mind can't be changed unless we're able to do that, brought to that point in time. God knows how to do that, how to work with us in those things, how to mold and fashion the mind. It's up to us then to choose, make choices to respond to what we're going through. That's awesome when you understand how God works with us.

So, again here, he came to a point in time when his heart became lifted up, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, it said, and as it was stated after reading about this incident, this occurrence, it doesn't fully explain when, as it was brought out, Hezekiah and the people, in this particular case, humbled themselves, but they did after this. The timing here is a little awkward but it becomes a little clearer as we go along. As I mentioned, there's a lot that happened in the 39th year of his life and that was in the 14th year of his reign then because he started reigning at age 25. It begins to be pieced together, it becomes a little clearer that it had to be after the visitors had come down from Babylon.

So this is a part of the story we're going to pick up on, and again, there are things that need to be asked. Well, what happened, again? So let's start there, what happened after Hezekiah's encounter with confronting death because this is where things began to happen, in that respect. So here is a point in time where he had to begin to face things that he'd never faced. And being really quite young, thirty-nine years old, and God telling him, "Get your house in order. You're going to die," and then his response to that and then the things that followed.

So this is a part of what took place. Hezekiah was healed of his illness (we read about that), the sundial was turned back, went back ten degrees, which means the earth moved backward? I can't understand any of that. God is all powerful, almighty. People read things like this, and just like so many stories it's like, "Well, these are nice stories," but it's like they really didn't happen. "The flood, it didn't really happen," and "They're nice children's type stories," and you think, "You've got some things to address later in the future, that's for sure."

Then Sennacherib was defeated by God when an angel of the Eternal was sent out in the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000. That's almost 200,000 people! That's incredible, the kind of armies they had back then, in some cases you read about in the Old Testament. 185,000 destroyed. Awesome. It's akin to, in some respects, as thinking about an entire nation that's brought to its knees, what happened to Egypt when Pharaoh and his entire army that went with him after the Israelites destroyed in the Red Sea. Here is another occasion where God intervened, destroyed an army, weakened the nation powerfully to where it changed things in the world. It changed a power that had been very aggressive in their conquering of different nations all around

that region of Assyria, and now something has happened to Assyria and then another kingdom comes along, another world ruling, or at that point in time as far as what the world was at that time, kingdom.

So again here, the army was defeated and these things that were taking place, it was after this that Hezekiah's heart became lifted up. These events of him experiencing this healing and the sundial being turned back as it was ten degrees, Sennacherib's army being destroyed, and even the death of Sennacherib, obviously, had a strong impact on him after he experienced these different things, had a strong impact on him that wasn't good, those things that he experienced. We're going to look at how and why this came to pass.

So let's pick it up here again in 2 Chronicles 32. At the very end of *Part 3* we were looking at what God did with Hezekiah as part of a process of molding and fashioning him. We pick up this part of the story here in verse 31.

2 Chronicles 32:31—However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land... Because of the Assyrians. This 185,000 army being destroyed, Sennacherib himself being dealt with by his own children, being killed, wasn't a small thing. It rippled through the nations in that region. One nation in particular it had a strong impact upon because this was a part of raising them up in power.

It talks about these princes of Babylon; they sent to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land. It says here, **that God withdrew from him**, from Hezekiah. Incredible. He withdrew from Him **in order to test** or to **try him**. How would he respond? He was going to face some things he had never faced in his life yet. He was going to come face to face with a part of his nature that was deep inside of him that he couldn't see except through various experiences here that he went through, some of the things we've talked about, in order to come to see himself. We do this in our lives. God brings us to points in time where we have to be able to see ourselves. God knows us. He knows what's in our mind, but He wants us to be able to see it, to come to see it, to understand it. God works with those things once He's called us to help change that, to transform the way we are, to transform the way we think. But the thing is, the choices are with us, and that isn't always known, what the choices are going to be, what choices are we going to make, because that determines something in the mind. It's the choices we make that determine the course of what follows, of whether God will continue, as an example here, to work with, to mold and fashion at a specific moment in time with us, with different ones.

There have been many who have been called who have been worked with, who had incredible opportunities before them. I think of what it says to the Church of Philadelphia, in essence, "Don't let anyone take your crown." If God's called you to a purpose and you have an opportunity to accomplish something in an awesome way in serving God into time, age everlasting, everlasting life, what an incredible thing. But the reality is that when people have come to a certain point, and tried and tested in certain areas, it's brought out things in them that God has said, "No, not Hezekiah, Then and Now, Pt. 4

now.” It doesn’t mean they won’t have opportunity later on, but not now. “You made the wrong choices. You’ve chosen the wrong thing and you haven’t grasped, in essence, what the Great God has placed before you. You haven’t loved it with all of your heart, with all of your being,” which we must, and therefore, because of the wrong choices in essence it’s said, “No, you’re going to have to wait. It’s going to be for another time.” That’s happened to a lot of people, a lot of people that many of you know.

So again here, He removed himself in order to try him, to test him to see what he would choose as he went through some of this, to see what would happen. God knew what he was going to be confronted with and what human nature is like, and God let him experience that. Because if God’s not there you can’t make the right choices. It’s because of God’s spirit and our desire for that that He helps us to more clearly see things in our life and around us and helps us in making the right choices, because He makes it clear what the path is, and so often as long as that’s really clear... But when it’s not so clear, when He’s not there to show various things, to make certain things clear, and we’re left more on our own, then what will “I” do? What are we going to do on those occasions? And that’s out of necessity that God bring us to those points at different points in our life because it’s a part of an awesome process of refining us that can’t be done in any other way. There is absolutely no other way because it’s a matter of the mind; it’s the matter of the way one thinks. That’s awesome to understand.

He withdrew Himself that He might know what was in his heart, in essence to reveal what’s in the heart at that moment in time so it can be worked with.

2 Chronicles, let’s back up a little bit. So what happened after this? Again, this begins to be shown in the verse preceding this last verse that we just went through, and backing up then to verse 27, after all these events had taken place, of what he had experienced. **Verse 27—Hezekiah** it says here **had very great riches and honor.** So it’s addressing something at a moment in time; in this particular year a lot took place, a lot was brought to the surface. It says here he had very great riches and honor.

Now, for us the truth and sometimes service can affect us in that manner within the Body, within the Church. Now, this was something on a physical plane, but for us we’re to learn on a spiritual plane what this means. We have been given the greatest riches of all times. If we can just grasp that, the greatest riches ever given to human beings because it’s of the mind of God, it’s of the being of God, it’s of the plan of God to grasp where we are in time. After 6,000 years we’re getting ready to go into a new time, we’re getting ready to be able to see things, experience things concerning what God has shown from the beginning about His Kingdom, that His government is going to rule, that there is going to be a Messiah that is going to come and rule and not have to have human rule, in the sense of the world. To be able to have the kind of truth, the amount of truth, it’s incredible where we are! To be able to put that in a picture of seeing how God has worked with man for 6,000 years, to see the various segments of time (that we’ll have in future sermons, especially around the Feast time), and I have a tough time sometimes. When you

have something so much in your mind about what you're looking at a particular moment, because these have to be prepared well in advanced, it's hard not to get into them, because God leads us, works with us, and you want to jump ahead and you want to pull some things in. So I have to leave some things out, to wait until we get there. It's a matter, again, of being molded and fashioned.

So again here, **Hezekiah had very great riches...** The moment we lose or begin to lose the reality of how blessed we are with how much we have... I don't know how many times I have said it, your strength lies in the word of God, the mind of God, the truth of God that He's given to you. How awesome is that...to understand...because it's about power. It's about might. It's about truth. It's about riches that others have never been given yet.

There are those that are going to be a part of God's government for the next 1,100 years over the earth, over mankind, who don't know the things that you know. It wasn't revealed in their time. When they're resurrected to see what has happened through time, what God has given to make the plan even greater, to help them see more about what God is doing, they're going to be so dumbfounded and so inspired, so moved by those things, and yet we can begin to take them for granted. That's a horrible thing!

I think of all the people who have left. They took for granted what God gave through Mr. Armstrong. They began to take it for granted. Not only that, they began to mess around with it and try to change certain things of it. The basic 21 truths, very powerful, that God worked to restore at the end-time into the Church so that the Church could be strengthened and be made rich spiritually, to profit from those things, to have things molded and fashioned in them that no one else has had to that degree. You think God isn't going to use that mightily so? We don't grasp what God is doing in this end-time, what opportunities we have as a part of God's people. We really don't grasp it because we didn't live in those times and we can't put it altogether yet. But God is helping us to put it together.

So I become a little perturbed sometimes when I think about people who have begun to lose sight of what God has given to them! We have the truth! We have a lot of truth! Awesome, to understand that.

I love what we've just been freed from as well - Joshua. Now, last week I messed up, I slipped up. I used the old name again. It's in your mind; it's going to happen. We're going to do that on occasion. But to understand how blessed we are to have the right name? I was reading a part of that this morning and going through some different things, and there it is, so clear, "And you shall call him Joshua." The reason I was going through that is because (next series), it's about the authority, the power of the name, that there is meaning in the name. There isn't in Iésous, or whatever, you know. There isn't! It's a bunch of crap that human beings did because they were inspired by a being that is all powerful in this earth in a perverted and distorted way - Satan, the devil, the adversary of God, who has always fought against God, who works to confuse and confound the world. So he's been given that for a purpose, to confuse and confound the world, to

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be the god of this world. That's what it says in Corinthians. Because the world doesn't know it's in captivity spiritually. It doesn't know what's happened to it.

What an awesome blessing to be freed from those things, to not be in captivity to such things. So how much do we love what God has given? You know what? To love the truth is to love God Almighty. To the degree you love truth, the truth, is the degree to which you love Almighty God because that is God! I hope we get that. I hope we understand that. That is who God is. It's the revelation of the mind of God, the word of God. That's what it says about Christ; he was made, he was the word of God made flesh, that mind that was in him that we don't grasp the magnitude of, that mind having the Father being God Almighty is an awesome thing to grasp and comprehend.

Then he died in order to give us that opportunity, that ability that that word can be in our minds, in our being. We have the mind of God dwelling in us in the truth that He's given to us. It reveals God's thinking. It reveals who He is. Beautiful! The more we come to understand those truths, how it all blends together, how it all has purpose as a part of a plan that God has is the most astounding, incredible thing that a human being could ever experience. Truly is. You can't experience anything greater.

It's not about physical things out here that you can experience in life. There is a lot we can experience that God has given us because God loves us and has blessed us with such variety, color, beauty, variety, and God put it all there for our enjoyment, but that's nothing compared to what is ahead for us. That's nothing compared to what's in the mind, because we don't take this with us. This body is just meant to be here for a little while and when it's gone it's gone. It's not important in the scheme of things; it's only important to being a vessel through which we can have something take place in the mind that's meaningful and important in life. Truly is. And when it's over it's over. Then if you've lived right, with God, spirit life, spirit life forevermore. What's there and what's beyond that we can't even begin to grasp and comprehend.

I say these things because sometime we don't grasp the riches we have. We're not to be lifted up with those riches like what happened after the end of Philadelphia because that's what happened to Laodicea. Because that's what happens to people in their lives, they begin to see how much "I" see, how much "I" know, and then all of a sudden we can get to a point where we think we see something else, we see something else that Mr. Armstrong didn't see. We see something that, "Oh, wow, 15th Passover. Wow, this is interesting." Shoot me. Might as well, because when you go that route you've thrown everything away. You've thrown away the mind of God, the word of God, the truth of God, the blessing of having a relationship with God, the blessing of God's spirit living and dwelling in your mind because you've chosen something different because you forgot how God worked in your life. So we're tried and tested in many things, aren't we? Tried and tested in many things.

We're going through unique things that are unique to us at this time. I've been thinking about, "What on earth can we do next? What could we do out here? What could we do?" Advertising?

What good is it? Writing something different? What good is it? Now, you have to understand where that was coming from. It's coming from a reality that whoever says it, because you have said it, it definitely isn't true. So you think, well, it gives people reason and grounds for not believing certain things. Anyway, I've got some sermons coming later.

I've got a lot I want to give and so little time to do it. This may be *Part 5*, I don't know.

We are, again, so blessed and sometimes those things go to our mind, as I said what happened to Laodicea, became lifted up in self importance, began to look to self for how we use God's word. See, that's what happened to the world. That's what happened. They used the word of God, but they put their own interpretations into it, and especially when it's not based on the Church or the truth, then people read things out of here and they just add all kinds of garbage to it. That's what they do. They have their own perspective of what this is saying and they don't have the foggiest idea.

I was thinking, what an incredible thing to be able to have a short thing go on YouTube, 10 minutes, about see this, this thing here of the cross, that he didn't... To even say it, Christ didn't die on a cross. "Those people are crazy! They're insane! They're nuts to go at an icon like that, to go after something that is an image that is looked up to like it is without knowledge, without understanding, and to say, 'No, just take off those two other pieces and just have a pole there; that's how he died.'" They would hate you with such hatred that as a whole they're not going to listen to another word. I hope you understand what I'm saying.

So it has to come in God's time and we wait for God's time to humble this world. Because, you see, that is the only answer. God in many different ways in the last several years has brought us around to that again and again and again. We have to have horrible times that the world must live through. We must have times of humbling that the world must go through because there is no other way to save this earth, to save mankind. There is no other way but the exact way God says it's going to happen. That's a beautiful thing to understand. It's horrifying. But what mankind would do to it if God didn't intervene and stop it; look what we would do to ourselves given enough time.

Technology, that's scary stuff, what they're doing out here. Artificial intelligence. You watch some of those things that have been on TV? The mind of man and what is potentially possible to accomplish in different ways, in perverted and distorted ways, there is some scary stuff out there because where would it end in what man would do? Well, hope it's clear to you.

Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. So we can look at a story like this of something that he did, that he was lifted up by it, and we ought to be able to see ourselves because we are all guilty of these things on a spiritual plane. We've all been guilty of not holding on to and loving what God has given us at various stages because of our human nature. We seek to be able to see those things, to grow in those things, to help, to ask God to help reveal those things inside of us so that we can get rid of it, just like a big block of stone out here and chisel it off. You know

what? Just take a big sledge hammer to the parts that need to be knocked off. I don't care how much it hurts, do it! Get me down to what I can start looking what I'm supposed to look like, you know, being molded and fashioned after You (after God), after Joshua. Get me there. Whatever I have to go through, so be it. That's what should be in our heart and our mind, "I want to get rid of that which contradicts, that which interferes with, that which resists God's spirit, God's mind, God's being." Thankfully, God does that as we cry out for help in that.

It says, **and honor**. So again, being a king, being over a nation, having the wealth and the praise of people, it can go, it can begin to lift people up, it can begin to lift someone up with self importance. You've really got to hate that. You've got to hate that if you see even the slightest little smidgeon of it in your life, because if you see it and it takes root, it's destroyed many people. Many people have made wrong choices because of those things in their life. That's why people get lifted up and have made choices, because they see something new, they see something different. "Oh, I see this." Laodicea was filled with that kind of garbage. That's why we had the Apostasy, that's why we had such confusion. That's why we had so many in the ministry that had so many ideas about different things. They didn't faithfully teach, well I guess I got to back up on that one, because they did faithfully teach some things that were taught at headquarters, but they weren't taught by Mr. Armstrong. They were taught by some evangelists, who had already gone off track and already cut off from God's spirit, but they were still there, and they didn't know their heart, they didn't know their mind, they didn't know they weren't a part of God's Church because God hadn't revealed that yet to the degree He has now. Just a little bit of it out there it'd be spotted so quickly today. But see, that shows growth in God's Church that we didn't have the ability to deal with back then. It wasn't seen. Unless you've lived it I guess you can't see it in the same way.

Going on: **And he made himself treasuries of silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; storehouses for the harvest of grain...** Now, these things of and by themselves are not bad. These are good. These are good for a nation. It's good for a people. But it's what it can do to the mind if you're not on guard, if you're not careful of how you think about them. **...storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. Moreover, he provided cities for himself and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property, very much possession.** You know, God gave it to him. Nothing bad about it whatsoever!

Sometimes people look at those things and they'd say of Mr. Armstrong, people would look at that and say, "Oh..." I hate this one, "The family is suffering out there and they can't feed their own children, but they have to pay tithes." Anyway, I'm sorry, but some of those things just used to cause me to do a slow boil. God gives us everything and He just requires a little bit. We have to change how we live. We have to work six days a week instead of seven. We don't work on holy days. We give ten percent of what we have to God, to God's Church. We save another ten percent. There was a time when every third year within a seven-year cycle, two periods of time

in seven years, that you gave another ten. It was done! Beautiful thing when you obey God, serve God, and God blesses.

Again, I think of times like that, I remember when the house that was dedicated to God, the auditorium, a lot went into it. There were people, there were people ordained that I heard as I was quite young in the Church at that point in time, and heard comments about, "Well, God is trying to show..." because of the finances and so forth, and so there was asked for sacrifice of God's people to be a part of that. You know what? The Bible is filled with times people were asked to sacrifice for something to give. Hezekiah did it in his time. Different ones ask, "If you want to be a part of this, to contribute to the temple, to contribute to this, it's your choice, whatever you decide, but we're asking for it." Mr. Armstrong did and people gave. People took out loans in order to give. Been there, okay? It's just the way the thinking was. It's just what you did. You wanted to give. You wanted to support because this is something that God's apostle has asked, so, yeah, I want to be a part of that. It's exciting.

Some say, "Well, you don't need something that nice. God is trying to tell you..." because the finances are hurting in certain areas and because of that building and because of so much going into it, and therefore, you know, the conclusion was by some (I think of some ordained), that God is trying to show Mr. Armstrong that he shouldn't build it. Hmmm. I think if God's trying to show Mr. Armstrong something he's going to get it. He's God's apostle.

Anyway. It's the mind and how we think about God, about God's Church, about how God works. I think about some of those things that the Church has gone through in times past. People will believe what they want to believe. But those kinds of things, if people aren't careful, they can get lifted up with pride in, by what they have. Some who lived out there did get lifted up with what was there. "I'm at headquarters. I'm not over at Bricket Wood. I'm not at Big Sandy, it's a lot of sand. I'm at headquarters where God is working." You think those things didn't exist? They existed. People became lifted up with pride. "I'm at headquarters. I get to see Mr. Armstrong often. I am in the executive offices right there by that building! I'm important; can't you see it?" You think what it did to people. Sick. Sick-sick-sick-sick. What a blessing when God shows where pride is and that you've got to get rid of it and you can't have it in your mind, in your being.

That's why we should learn to hate certain things that oppose God, that work against God's mind, that work against the word of God. That's a beautiful thing because until we do hate those things and loathe what is bad and what is evil we're not going to fight against them, we're not going to be on guard against them like we should. We've got to learn to hate what is evil, what is bad in order to change, in order for the mind to change. You know it's not just a matter of saying, "Okay, I'm going to do the Sabbath, I'm going to do tithing," because you want to kind of blend in or you want to conform! Conform! You can't just conform to the law of God because people have done that. They've conformed to it; go through the motions of it. "If I'm conforming then I'm doing what I need to do." No, it's much more than that!

You don't conform with the truths God has given. You come to agree with them. You come to be in agreement with them and hate anything that opposes them, that is different than them. That's the conversion of the mind. To conform doesn't change the mind. Just to go to Sabbath services or the holy days or to tithe doesn't do anything of and by itself if it's a matter of conforming to the law of God. Something has to happen in the mind where you see it and you agree with tithing, where you agree with the Sabbath, where you agree with the laws of God, with the word of God, the plan of God, the truths of God. That's what has to happen in the mind. Awesome!

This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel (brought it straight) to the west side of the city of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works. So again, his heart had become lifted up in his greatness, in his riches and the honor that was being shown to him as a king and the things he was experiencing here, and so it lists some of these things.

Then it goes on to say, let's notice here, 2 Kings 20. So it just talks about a lot of those riches and the kingdom that had been built up quickly and what had taken place here and all the riches that God had given to him. I mention some of those things, that riches of and by themselves, and those things that they had, it wasn't bad, but what can be bad is what you do in the mind depending on what is given to you at any moment in time in life. You have to be careful how you use it as far as the mind is concerned in how you see others, that you don't compare yourself with others because of it and become lifted up by it, because that's what happens a majority of the time to human beings.

2 Kings 20:12—At that time, or better, it really is, After this time, literally is the phrase here, Berodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan... Now, I'm just going to mention this because maybe some have seen it, but in Isaiah 31 it's the same thing and it says Merodach. It's the same person. But anyway, **king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures.** So again, they had inquired because of the wonder that had been done in the land, these emissaries, these individuals, these ambassadors had been sent down there to Hezekiah. They came down here and this is a part of the story and it's expanded now in Kings here.

...and showed him all the houses of his treasures – the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his valuable vessels, or all the valuable things, the items that he had, and all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in his domain that Hezekiah did not show them. Not a good idea. Not really a good idea. He wasn't on guard like he should have been as to the danger that such a thing could involve when you're talking about other peoples and other nations and how people tend to think in the world. Because it's like, "See what I've got? You ought to come and get it." That's what it was. That's what happened. That's what eventually took place. So again here, it wasn't a good thing that had

taken place here. A part of this was a beginning of a process of becoming lifted up and showing others then what he had. He fell into a trap, a trap of human nature that we often do ourselves.

Every one of us has fallen into the traps of human nature because we're not totally freed yet from bondage, from that kind of a mind, from the mind of selfishness, from the mind that we want to be freed from. It's a process and it takes a lifelong process. Even at the end when God says, "Now I know you," you're not freed yet. You're not freed yet because you're still going to have things happen in your life you're going to have to repent of because we're human beings, we're carnal, we're selfish, ugly selfish. That measure of selfishness can be chiselled away in time to where there is less and less, but every once in a while there's going to have to be a piece be chiselled out that you don't see yet. You'll never be exactly what you're supposed to be until you're changed.

Verse 14—Then Isaiah the prophet went to king Hezekiah, and said to him, What did these men say? He already knew. That's why he asked the question. And from where do they come to you? Now, why did he go to him? God had him go. That's why he went. I think of times how God worked with us at times and sometimes people know: "How did you know that? How did you know I was going to..." It's God's spirit. It's what God molds and fashions. It's what God gives.

Isaiah knew. "What did these men say and from where do they come to you?" **So Hezekiah said, They came from a far country, from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in your house? So Hezekiah...** Now, this is part of a process here. It's a part of God bringing him to see something that he couldn't see save through what Isaiah was saying and because of what Isaiah was saying there were certain things that began slowly, as through a process here, added to other things that took place, to where he could begin to see himself. These things had to be brought out. "What did you do? What did you say?" So it's like, "Why are you asking that?" Because it's a matter he knows he's from God.

And he said, What have they seen in your house? So Hezekiah answered, They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them. Now, this is good because he told the truth. He didn't try to cover up or anything at this point in time, because sometimes human nature when all of a sudden they're asked a question about something it's like, "Here is part of the story," but sometimes we don't tell the whole story. And you know what? God can't help us at times when we do that because the whole story has to be there. See, God's desire is to help us. It's not to hurt us. It's to help bring some things to the surface so that we can see them. They're already known, it's just a matter of our being able to come to see them so that we can deal with them so that we can make and seek change in our life, so it's good to be totally open. God can work with us more quickly in those situations and so forth.

Verse 16—Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Eternal: Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, will be carried away to Babylon; nothing shall be left, says the Eternal. Powerful, what was said here. So it's going to come to pass. It's going to happen. This is going to take place.

You've shown them the riches. God has a purpose and a plan for what's going to take place. But we can read about those things in the time of Daniel, and so forth, of when they finally were taken captive, when they finally were taken into Babylon, and then later read Ezra, Nehemiah, and times when they began to come back and rebuild some of the areas of Jerusalem and around the temple and the like, and around the walls of the city.

Anyway here, it's a part of a story of something that's all a part of God's plan. These things aren't just by coincidence. Babylon wasn't by coincidence. The rising and falling of kingdoms, never by accident; God had a plan and He fulfills and accomplishes some of those things and He allows people to do various things. In this case here He was working with Hezekiah for a plan and a purpose. He was called, in that respect, to be worked with. What an awesome thing when you are and God will work with you to mold and fashion you and He'll give us the opportunities to become a finished product, in that respect.

He tells him then this is going to take place, this is what God says is going to take place. What you've done wasn't wise. It was foolish and you need to be aware of what's going to happen.

Nothing shall be left, says the Eternal.

And they shall take away some of your own lineage who have descended from you; shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Again here, not a pleasant story of what God is going to allow, what God is going to do, what God is going to bring to pass through what He allows people to do because of lessons and things that human beings need to learn.

What was the important lessons back then? He used an entire nation of people to drive home a point. It was on a physical plane but we're to learn from it spiritually. You don't mess with God's Sabbaths. You don't mess with God's holy days. You don't mess with the word of God. You don't turn from them in the sense that you begin to pollute them. Now, they were able to keep their identity of who they were, the Jewish people, because they remembered those days. They didn't always observe them properly. Later on in time they began to mess it up even worse, like Seder and the Passover and so forth, and various of the holy days, annual holy days. But as far as the Sabbath was concerned, in their mind and attitude they tried to preserve them as far as recognizing them, of what was given back in the Old Testament. It was never a spiritual thing; it was always a physical thing.

Now, the other nations, the tribes were taken captive because they changed it all. They changed the times, the periods of time and so forth. The Jews kept those so they kept their identity. We understand that. Lessons we should learn, of how we are to keep our identity of who we are, the Church of God. We belong to God. We are God's people. We are the temple of God. We have God dwelling within us. Awesome! And those who pollute it (like they did), they go into captivity. That's what happened. They went into Babylon.

So God used a whole physical nation of people to drive the point home, and then as time went along the Church came along, those examples become more refined as time goes along. You learn more and more of what God is doing and how He works with us.

So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, It is good to hear the words of the Eternal, for has He not said that peace and truth will be in my days? Now, some can look upon this in a very negative way, but it really isn't. He knows it's going to happen. He knows it's going to happen to them. He's coming to a point here where he's beginning to see some things and yet there is good in the midst of all this that's bad, because "This is going to happen to Judah, it's going to happen to some of my lineage, of what's going to take place, but for now we're being blessed. It's a good thing." It was because of his attitude, because of his response and because of what he did through all this.

So what happened? He began to see himself and he repented. Awesome that God blesses us with the ability to repent. He became lifted up, he began to see it, and he hated what he saw, became ashamed of what he saw, and repented. That's what he did. The people repented.

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Well, we read about that. **So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.** You want to talk about some horrible times of things that followed in Judah; there were some horrible things that took place.

Again here, it's an incredible story of things that happened in Hezekiah's life, of something he had to go through. God withdrew Himself and allowed him to experience some things about human nature - pride, being lifted up with pride, who he was, the honor, the riches and so forth. And he finally was able to come to see himself in part, in that respect, and began to change, have something addressed in his mind and his life that couldn't happen any other way. Not an easy thing to go through when you go through trials and hardships.

So after this complete story of Hezekiah's life it would be good to focus on some of the highlights of some of the things that were said. You know, there is that which is referred to here about what took place in his life. Let me back up here just a minute.

So again here, incredible stories of all that we are to learn from some of these things, but I want to read to you here again what was stated because it's good sometimes to go back and then begin to pick out some of the different lessons here because it's good to learn from this.

We remember the example here where it says, "Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him." The word "repay" having to do with "render or didn't return again." I think of things that happen in our lives sometimes and when we come to a point where we repent of various sins and God blesses us then there is a response we should always have in our life, and some of this is brought out in part of the story, and obviously other examples as well.

But I want to read this again, of a good example of how this is used here, this particular word “to render or repay” that was used in his example here because this is the one that had been used in times past where it kind of gave a wrong look at Hezekiah in the sense that “Look what Hezekiah did. He didn’t render according to the benefit that was shown to him.” Well, because God withdrew and he gave into his human nature. But something that was left out of the picture was that he repented. He repented. That’s an awesome part of the story because God grants that to all of us. That’s the only way we can come through all this because we all have a lot of wrong in our life, a lot of things that need to be changed. And even as we grow, no matter how long we’re in God’s Church, there is still a lot that can be refined more and more and more, to be changed because we’ll always have carnal human nature.

So what an awesome thing when we can go through a process and God continue to work with us, to change the way we think to become more at one with Him.

2 Chronicles 6:30, I’ll just read this to you quickly: **then hear from heaven that is Your dwelling place, and forgive, and render, give, repay, or return again unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart You know.** So we rely on God to reveal to us what’s in our heart. It’s through the things we go through. Just like He did with Hezekiah, He revealed to him what was in his heart. He didn’t respond in the right way of what we think he should have when he was given fifteen more years and what God told him, “You’re not going to die.” He gave in. He got lifted up with pride. But then as soon as God revealed those things to him he repented. Awesome! What an awesome thing, and he began to do, again, what he should be doing, in the sense of this attitude of mind of him returning again toward God. God will make certain we are judged and that we’re going to have payment made to us, if you will, according to what we do and how we respond to Him.

Anyway, 2 Chronicles 32, going back there. There are examples like that in the New Testament as well, that says, in essence, that God’s going to render to every man according to his deeds, according to what he does. Some of that has to do with repentance. If we repent then we’re blessed, awesomely blessed.

2 Chronicles 32:31, reading this again as to how it stated it. **However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him...** This word literally means “to leave, to forsake.” It just didn’t leave; it means He pulled away totally. He didn’t give him help at that moment in time because it was a matter then, “What are you going to do with what’s been given to you?” What are you going to do with it? What are we going to do with the truth that God has given to us? So there are times, and some of you know when those things have happened, and some of you aren’t aware of them, as well, because we learn as we grow, but there are times when that takes place—it just does—that God allows us to go through a trial, a test to see what we’re going to do.

We in God's Church have gone through many in the last many years. Since 2008 there are a lot of things we've gone through that have helped to mold and fashion things within us that if you had never experienced them you wouldn't be able to have the mind you have today. You really wouldn't. It's because of how God works with the mind and deals with us in those things that refines us.

So again, it's a matter of being tried and tested, and we go through that a lot. I'll just read it to you, **Jeremiah 17:10—I, the Eternal, search the heart...** God does. He allows us to do various things. He allows things to be brought out, and it says He searches the heart. There are times when we've received of His help that He does, He will pull back, whenever, when we go through various things to see what we're going to do. I gave that example last time about the two up in Toledo area who were elders. That time came to them. They had to choose, "What are you going to do with everything you've ever been taught now, because now is the time. It's not later on. You can't postpone it. It's now."

So what are we going to do with what we have been taught to this point in time? Well, sadly, sometimes people make the wrong choices. But God searches the heart to bring it out, to manifest it, to make it clear so we learn through this process, too. We're able to see others when they haven't responded properly. That should cause a kind of fear, if you will, to let down, to not be on guard, to not have God in our life, to not be able to be able to repent, to come to repentance, because there comes a point in time sometimes when people can't be drawn to repentance anymore, or God chooses not to draw them to that. There are times when God says, "Not now. Not now. You were given much. What did you do with that?" Many have to wait until another time.

Can you imagine how they're going to feel? That's why I enjoy that one scripture when it began to really make sense; it talks about what you will do. There is going to be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You just think, "What on earth, weeping and gnashing of teeth?" You know, when you grind your teeth together; and what is that all about? It became clear as time went along, think of those who once had the truth and to think, "If I had just held on. If I hadn't done," whatever, "If I had made a certain choice at that time. And now?"

I don't know how much clearer I could ever say it. I would really hate to have to live in a physical body for a hundred years. I really would. I would really hate to have happen, you know? I've had enough of this physical life. I really have. I've had enough of physical, human life. I don't want anymore. I really don't, if you understand what I'm saying. It's not the greatest thing, indeed. To have a different life, that's what I want. To have a spirit life, to be in total, absolute unity and oneness with God, that's what I want. Choices. So we have to make choices along the way.

God says, **The Eternal searches the heart.** He says, **I try the reins...** "I try the reins. Which way are you going to turn? Right now you're to turn this way. Are you going to do it? It's your decision, it's not Mine," God is telling us, in essence. Like those two up there, those elders. "It's your choice. You've got to decide right now. You have to have another week? You have to have another

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month? You have to have another year? What do you mean? What do you mean you need more time? You've had ten, twenty," whatever those years, twenty, thirty years probably in some cases there, "...twenty some years and you don't know what your choice is going to be? Whether you're going to hold on to what God gave you through Mr. Armstrong or you're going to go over here and believe something about clean and unclean meats, you can go out here and eat shrimp and lobster and anything you want to eat now," just on a physical plane, "you can worship God on a Sunday and not on a Sabbath, on a Saturday, on the seventh day of the week? You mean you can go to the Feast of Tabernacles at some other period of time..." Maybe two days are in the actual period of time and some other days are not.

Because this is what happened! Some cases, some groups had a few days (even them), within the Feast of Tabernacles to start out with because, "We don't want to jerk this all away from them immediately. We'll just do a little." I think of what Israel did, you know, a king, the first king of Israel - changed the times. Same exact same thing. Same exact being behind it, you know, that can work with the human mind to deceive people, to turn people farther away from God. Hard choices? They shouldn't be.

There should be moments in time when God puts us to the trial, to the test, that we know what we're going to do. It's the truth that I hold on to. It's the truth that God has given that is our strength, because it's God, it's the mind of God, it's the word of God, it's the way of God, it's the way God thinks, and if I can think more that way and be in unity and oneness. What an awesome thing to have more of the mind, the thinking of God - separate individual beings but we must learn to think the same way. God helps us in that through the power of His holy spirit, to come into unity and oneness with His thinking. Because His thinking only is true and right. Only God's is true and right. All other thinking is screwed up to the nth degree and will cause nothing but misery, pain, and suffering in life. It isn't the way of peace. It's the way of drama, drama, drama. To have peace we must be at one with God, to think in the same way as God. In other words, to agree with God. That's our choice.

There are many people that are never going to agree with God. There are not just a few. There may be a whole lot more than what we've ever thought that just don't agree with God. Choose something else. What a horrible thing.

I try the reigns, even to give every person according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings. Could be good, could be bad. Depends on the choice.

1 Peter 4. Familiar verses but they go along with some of the things we've gone through, to understand a process of how God works with us, how God worked with Hezekiah, how blessed Hezekiah was when it was all said and done because he made the right choices and he led a nation, a people into the same thing, to repentance. He did. Because it talks about the people repented, in essence.

1 Peter 4:12—Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But sometimes what we do when something isn't going our way, it's like, "Where is God? Why do I have to go through this? Why do I have to wait seven more years? Why do I have to wait another year? Why didn't these things happen?" Not a smart thing to take that one up with God. It's just a matter of following God and God will lead to whatever God's leading us to through time. Because it goes back to what do I believe? What is the truth? What is the mind of God? Where is the Church of God? How do I know? How do you know this is the Church of God? It's by the truth God has given to you, those things that are stated as the truths plus one.

You think this is over with yet? You think you're not going to be tried? Be careful. Be careful. Be careful. Be on guard. Because it always comes down to your choices and what you choose in life and what you believe. It's not what somebody else believes, it's what do you believe? What are you convicted of in your heart and in your mind and in your being and in your relationship with God Almighty? I hope we don't have to go through a lot more but some are going to still go through some things because you're being molded and fashioned. Some have gone through all that they need to, in part. Be on guard. Nothing is owed to us. Because it comes down to what do we love? What do you love? What is the most important to you in your life? Is it something else, something else, some other idea, some other belief? What is it? Well, those are the things we're tried in. God must be first. God must be indeed number one in our life, in our thinking. Not just by words, but what's in the mind.

Don't think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing. "Why is this happening? Why? Why? Where is God? Why am I having to go through this?" Whatever it is you're going through, whatever it is sometimes people go through. Well, remember Hezekiah. Remember that there are times that God allows us to go through things to help us, because, in essence, He's waiting for a decision. What's your choice here? What is your choice? I'm not making you make the choice. It's your choice. What do you want? What do YOU want? It's our choice, my choice.

What happens to me in life is my choice. What happens to you in your life is your choice. It's like becoming upset by something, becoming angry at something and we blame someone else. No, no, no, no, no, no, no! It's you! You choose to become angry. You choose to become unhappy. You can choose to be happy or you can choose to be unhappy when certain things happen. You can choose to be whatever it is in life. It's your choices. Nothing is anybody else's fault. No one else makes you or does it to you. Truly. Now, you might have things affect you in life around you, and they do, but see, it's your response to what's going on around you that counts, isn't it, as to how you think. If God is number one you're going to do certain things, and the biggest of all is to repent and to seek a humble spirit before God.

So don't think it's strange when those things happen, **but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings...** See, that's a part of suffering. It's a part of sacrifice. Because what

we're going through at different times, there are certain things of self we have to choose to sacrifice, to give up, to quit, to run away from, whatever it might be in life, in order to hold on to what we really value. God. ...**but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part he's blasphemed but on your part he's glorified.** In other words, we can choose by what we do in life. To have God's spirit work in our life this is the glory. It's God's glory. It's God's mind. It's God's life. It's God's being that we're blessed to share in. We receive of that glory, God's glory in our life, when we chose to live by it. It's an awesome thing, an awesome thing that others can't live out here in the world around you. They can't experience that. They can't experience this fellowship on the Sabbath that we have with one another and with God. They can't have it. It's the truth that we're able to fellowship with, God, the word of God, the mind of God, the being of God.

1 Corinthians 3:11—No one can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, who is Joshua the Christ. It's what we build upon. Now, if we... That says volumes right there so what does that mean? No other foundation. So it means any kind of building that comes along, it has to come from him. He is the head of the Church, and how does he work in his Church, the Body of Christ? Those are such basic things, but many people through time have lost them, because the Apostasy reveals that in a magnified way, what can happen with thousands and thousands of people.

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, straw, then each one's work will become clear. I love this example because it shows you here that we're all going to build - well, if we build. Because I love that, too. As it says here, "If anyone builds." So sometimes there are people who just don't even build. They don't bother building anything.

Anyway, it shows here there are ways to build when you're building something. God makes it clear here that whatever we do or don't do it's going to be made manifest. That's what's been happening in God's Church especially since 2012, going into 2013, and the temple and what has been taking place in the sense of God making it clear here that there is a cleansing taking place and a strengthening of the temple as well. It's a beautiful thing that God does because the Body is then made stronger, the temple is made stronger, and that which isn't really a part of it, that's really supposed to be out here holding something up isn't doing it, and so God makes it clear. "You don't value this? You're not building as you should?" Because each one of us has to contribute.

Sometimes we don't recognize how important it is how we pray and what we pray for and as we pray for things about others and what they're going through in life and our desire for one another within the Body, our desire for the whole temple.

It says, **then each one's work will become clear.** God's going to make it clear because of what we go through in life. And candidly, He does it through the trials. When the fire comes along it reveals, see, because when the fire comes along there are times that God pulls back. "What choice are you going to make? It's your choice. I'm not going to inspire you in the choice you make. I'm not going to give you the clear picture because you've had that given to you now for years. It's there. It should be there. It will be there if you're doing what you should, if you're building properly." And the choice then? We only blame ourselves. The choice is ours. There are times we have to come to that. Just as it was with Hezekiah, the choice was his. It wasn't God's. "What do you want, Hezekiah? What's important to you?"

...then each one's work will become clear, be made manifest is what it's talking about here, **for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test/try each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on endures, he'll receive a reward.** So again here, we have to build. We have to choose to build. We have to choose as we go along the process here of being a part of a construction, of a creation that God is giving, accomplishing in life, yielding ourselves to it.

Verse 15—If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss. So again, the wood, hay, and stubble. Good examples. You can't do that because it'll burn up. You can't build in God's temple in a shoddy way. Now, wood, hay, and stubble, wood is used in construction, stubble has been used, different things have been used in construction of things. But if you want something that's going to last and you want to sacrifice, you want to work for something that God says we're to build, then it can't be done that way. It has to be done with something that's more permanent.

That's why I think of different construction. You can see things in the world, and I think of (coming from a farm), barns. Sometimes over here we make barns to last a little while. Now, with metal I'm talking about years. I'm talking about my time period going way back, we didn't have all kind of metal things and structures like they do today. They'll last a lot longer. But I marvel sometimes what I see in Europe. Driving through various areas and you see how things are preserved with incredible beams that are sometimes used, but the masonry and the work that's done for something to last, to be passed down generation to generation and be maintained. It'll last a lot longer than things over here do because twenty years, thirty years, things just begin to deteriorate if you don't keep it up. Even then there is only so long certain structures can be there, when it's done with wood. If you understand what I'm saying. Wood rots, especially on a farm, in time, you know, depending on where it's sitting and what's around it and so forth.

So again here, this example here is how we build, because in God's Church what's precious? What's more precious than those things? Well, it gives the example here of gold and silver and metal, and so forth, that those are the kinds of things. So we want to build with that which is strong, with that which is valuable. That's the example that it's been giving here in contrast.

...if anyone's work is burned, he'll suffer loss, but he himself, it's not the word "will" but may be saved, yet so as by/through fire. So that's in God's hands through trial, through various kind Hezekiah, Then and Now, Pt. 4

of things that they still may go through. So God has much patience. I've seen that over and over again in my life, in other people's lives, where there are times that God just gives us incredible mercy and patience and time. But in time, as well, still going to come down to what's inside and how much have we have chosen this for ourselves, that it's mine, it's what I believe, it's what I want, it's what I desire with all my being and I don't care what else happens. Oh, I care, don't misunderstand. Who enjoys suffering and going through hardship or seeing others go through it? But whatever it takes, so be it, you know, to get from point A to point B.

Because this only lasts a little while. It only lasts a little while. When you're young you don't think that. When you're older you know that, you know, it only lasts a little while. It wears out. It runs out. There is a certain time when it just quits. Sometimes that's an awesome blessing in life, it truly is. It truly is. There are many things I don't want to experience if time were to go on, if God allowed certain things. I really don't have any desire to experience ninety. I really don't! ...unless I'm as strong as I am right now, which probably isn't the case. So we learn things like that. You know, sometimes it's just a better thing to be in God's hands and wait. So be it! Our lives are in God's hands because it's in God's time, everything that we look at, and that's how we should look.

What an awesome thing, because what comes after this is not this, it's spirit. It's spirit, spirit life. But to the depth you believe that and have that in your heart and being is a matter of your relationship with God. Truly is.

Verse 16—Do you not know that you are the temple of God? That's what it all comes down to. How deeply do we grasp that, this is a part of God's temple. He called us. Joshua the Christ suffered to the degree he did so that each one of us can have the opportunity to be a part of this temple, to dwell in a temple, so that he and his Father can dwell in this, in a physical body. Because that's what changes us! It's because they are able to dwell in us on a spirit plane in the spirit essence that's in the mind that we're so richly blessed to have what we have, to grow, to change, to become a completed creation of God.

God's creation didn't stop 6,000 years ago. The greatest part of His creation has continued on since that time. The greatest of God's creation - that should move us right there to understand that - the greatest of God's power, the greatest of God's might, the greatest of God's creation is doing what He's doing in human beings.

From the time of Abel on God has been creating, and that part of creating has been much more difficult than all the rest, than all the rest combined! That part of the creation is far greater, far more powerful, far more meaningful, far more mighty to accomplish that God is doing. It shows the greatness of God in ways that we'll come to understand and appreciate far more deeply as time goes on. It's not a small thing.

So do we grasp that we're a part of the temple of God? And if we do then how can we do some of the things we do? I marvel at that. I hate my human nature. I loathe it. I am disgusted with it. I

hate it when I see selfishness come out. You all have selfishness! We all have it; it's a part of our nature. It's what we're still held captive by because we're not free fully from captivity. God is bringing us out of captivity, out of Egypt, but we're not out yet. You're not out until your body is just over with and you have another one coming - not the one in the hundred years, for that hundred year period, but another one that's spirit. That's the one you want. Don't have to say that.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? Sometimes we just don't grasp what we have, how blessed we are that God Almighty can dwell in this mind. It's by that that we have the truth. It's by that that we're able to grow on, to have the truth expanded in our being, in our mind, in the spirit essence in our mind. Awesome!

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy. There is patience and time God gives us, but that's in God's timing, and candidly, in His Son's, as to what is given. It's a marvelous thing to grasp and comprehend. But the more deeply we grasp some of these things the more we'll be on guard against sin, the more we'll come to repentance faster and not allow things to thwart or choke off the power of God's spirit coming into our lives. Because that's God and His Son coming into our life that we want and we need in order to make the change complete.

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy. So if we don't repent... That has to do with repentance then. If repentance isn't there and we continue to resist it and we continue to want our way because of what "I" want that's different from what God says we should have and want, if we're thinking right, then He'll let us have it. After a time God will just let us have what we want.

I think of all those, some who used to be sitting here - candidly, a lot, and going even farther back thinking of times in this area here, different ones. They're not around any longer. It can happen to anyone. And by that, to even understand by the mercies of God that there is a remnant that is prophesied that He said He would bring through. We're here because of that, not because of how good we were, not because of how strong we were. On the contrary, we all did what shouldn't have been done.

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. So many things we can look at.

Malachi 3:2-3—But who may abide the day of His coming? Who shall stand when He appears? So this is talking about all with whom God has worked through time all the way to the time when certain things are fulfilled. **For He is like a refiner's fire...** We have to go through trial. The dross, that stuff I want to call what it is, has to come to the surface.

When God blesses us with fire to where He brings certain things to the surface we have to choose then. Do I want it taken off and discarded or am I going to let it settle back down in? And you know what? The majority of people who have gone before you have chosen to let it settle back

down again. For the fire to die down and for the dross to go right back into it to corrupt what is there. Then it grows in greater corruption. Who wants that? Sadly, many have. But they haven't been able to see it through because you know why? Because of God's spirit. Because God won't stay around that. He starts to withdraw. He starts to pull back. We start to quench the spirit, see, to cut off the flow of God's spirit. We're the ones at fault, not God.

...and like fullers' soap. This is an expression. It's the one who whitened garments. That's what this expression is about, who whitened garments as would be done in bleaching. Back then, it's not like we have today. We have these little things we can pour it into this thing and the thing goes around. Anyway, we have things today they didn't have in times past. They had to work hard to do the various kinds of things they had. I think of meals and food and preparation of those things, and clothing, and everything else. It's not with the ease we have today.

That's why it gives this example then, the process they went through to whiten something for a particular ceremony or an occasion, whatever it might be, it took a lot of work. But this is the example God gives about getting rid of the dirt in our lives, getting rid of the filth in our lives, so that we can become, so we can wear white garments. That's why those expressions are used in scripture, "to be clothed in white," because it reflects then the cleanliness, the righteousness, getting rid of that which is not clean. This is what God desires to do in our life to cleanse us, to make us white, to bless us with white garments, if you will, but we have to make choices all along the way.

He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he will purify the sons of Levi... Who are they? It's a spiritual thing! It's not a physical thing; it's not talking about a Levitical priesthood at all! It's talking about a spiritual one, the priests of God, the priesthood of God. **...and purge them as gold and silver.** What a blessing to be purged. What a blessing to have fire! What a blessing to go through trials and hardships. Because if we escape them it means we've gone out and we've done our own thing and we've given up and we're not seeking to be refined and have a creation work within us that's changing us and transforming us into something different then and we're just saying, "Meh, maybe in the hundred years." Now, we don't say that because we don't have God's spirit with sense enough to say it, to see it, because God's not there. It's withdrawn. He won't dwell in sin.

...and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Eternal an offering in righteousness. To live right before God. That requires God's spirit, God's help, and God's favor.

So again, the different examples here of things that happened in Hezekiah's life over and over again here. How much to go through? I'm not even going to go through it. I think we're just going to stop there because if I go into another section here... I could use this in some other future sermons then.

Anyway, what an awesome blessing to be able to look back in time at one individual and his response to God, to specifically Isaiah and how God used Isaiah to help bring Hezekiah to a point

of being able to see himself. And so, an incredible life he lived and God gave him those fifteen more years. He repented, the nation repented, and they were blessed mightily by God. And actually, as soon as repentance was taking place there I think of Job and what he went through and the awesome blessings of what God gave to him physically and spiritually. So we have to go through a lot sometimes to get where we're growing, and need to see trials for what they are and need to see those occasions when they happen for what they are and to embrace them. Embrace them.

It's hard to count trials a blessing. It's hard to count it all joy as scripture talks about. I used to wonder about that one a long time ago. Go through hard times and the more you grow the more you see, yeah, it is a joy because everything –as you grow, if you see the growth—you look at that and you think, "What an incredible thing to still be here to be able to walk in what we walk in, to be able to experience the truth that God gives to us and to know the journey and what it took to get there.

So again, Hezekiah lived a righteous life because he believed God, he yielded himself to change and he repented when God revealed to him the error and the wrong and the pride that was in his life. We're able to live a righteous life - not because we are but because we believe what God has given to us and we hold on to the truth God has given to us.

Don't forget that truth. Please strive to see it as the word of God. The more you can see that the more blessed you will be. It's the mind of God. Every truth that God has given to us reveals to you more and more the very mind of God. And if we see that, if you love that it's just another way of saying this is why I know and to the degree I know I love God, because I love what He's revealed about His purpose, His plan, everything that's true that He's given to us. Awesome! Awesome!

I'll tell you (before I part), I think of the one about women alone, and if we don't grasp the value and the magnitude of that one, just that one alone. Because you don't have to look out here very far in the world and see how ugly it's been. For 6,000 years it's been ugly, ugly, ugly in that regard. What a freedom! God's way is about true freedom, true righteousness.