

This past week I was reading about the building of the temple and the dedication in the days of Solomon and thinking about the grandeur of it and everything that is stated about that particular temple, all the work that went into it. One of the reasons is because of an individual that helped in the construction of the temple, because that's connected with the great area of Tyre at that time, the region of Tyre.

As I was going through there and thinking about the temple I couldn't help but be reminded of some of the things we've just gone through in the past series about some of the places, the buildings, the remains of things of past civilizations and things that are there and things that were discussed about some of that that's in southern Spain that goes back so many hundreds of years that are still standing there. Some they robbed from others that went back even farther, several hundreds of years. That's the way a lot of things were done.

Then there was also the mention of massive construction of cities and seaports built by past civilizations of the Minoans, the Phoenicians, Tyre specifically, the Greek civilization, Carthage, the Romans, and so forth.

Before I came into the Church I didn't care about history. I didn't like history. But boy, after that it's just different. There's something different because of things written in scripture, in the Bible about different civilizations and so forth and the rise and fall of kingdoms. History seems to come alive more, and it does, I think, for people in the Church a lot more so in that respect. So I find these things incredibly interesting and there is so much to learn from it.

Anyway, this somewhat sets the stage for a new series that we're going to start today. It's entitled *The Greatest of Civilization, The Greatest of Civilization, Part 1*.

We're going to begin by going back and looking a little closer at Tyre, which was focused upon in the last series when we went through what was covered in Ezekiel 28, because in the beginning of Ezekiel 28 it's talking about the prince of Tyre. Later on, it goes on talking about the king of Tyre, which is about Satan. But first, it's about a leader there in that part of the world. We're going to focus on a very specific period of time, in the 10th century BC, which was in the 900's BC. So we're going back quite a ways, almost 3,000 years, if you will, and look at a particular period that was the most prosperous for Tyre. It just happens to be the same time of King Hiram that is recorded in history as one of the most prosperous times of Tyre.

Hiram, hopefully, means a good deal to you, a great deal to you, because he's the one that worked with King Solomon, that King Solomon contacted about all the things of construction, of

timber and so forth and helping to cut out much stone in the quarries and the like for the building of the temple. It's a fascinating story.

But I want to read to you a little bit here of what's stated in history about Hiram, King Hiram, in that respect, and it states here that ¹“Hiram's regional cooperation as well as his fight against Philistine pirates helped to develop trade with Arabia, and North and East Africa and *‘such was Hiram's success that the Mediterranean Sea became known as ‘the Tyrian Sea.’*” Anyway, from the word Tyre. But anyway, this is about him and some of what is recorded about him because that area, the Phoenicians especially, and Tyre, they were noted, and if you remember some of the things we talked about in the last series, it was actually from the region of Tyre that people went down into because of being conquered through time, that they went on down to northern Africa and built Carthage, which was a huge armada. They had an incredible port and an armada that was massive and at that time seemingly indestructible. But the reason they had these types of shipping lanes and ports and so forth is because of commerce and the things we've discussed.

So port cities were vastly important. They were major trade cities. Tyre—I'll read some more here about Tyre in a moment that's just recorded as a part of history. But again, very fascinating of how they grew and how they became prosperous because of their ability in trade. Of course, the Mediterranean opened up vast regions of trade all through those regions of all those countries. It was the easiest way to transport. Camel's a little slower.

It goes on to say that “Commerce from throughout the ancient world was gathered into the warehouses of Tyre...” So they were known for their ability to store. Because if you're going to be that large as they were you had to have that ability as a port city. Going on here, “...which thanks to its fortifications offered protection for valuable goods in storage or transit.”

“The Tyrian merchants were the first who ventured to navigate the Mediterranean waters; and they founded their colonies on the coasts and neighboring islands of the Aegean Sea, in Greece, on the northern coast of Africa, at Carthage and other places, in Sicily and Corsica, in Spain at Tartessus and even beyond Gadeira (Cádiz)” in southern Spain. So that goes clear around past the area of Gibraltar and on to the southwest corner there of Spain.

Again, trade was massive back in those times. You're talking about 3,000 years ago and some of the things you read about how they went long distances in some of their shipping. They went all the way around Africa all the way to India, clear back in that period of time. So, to find evidence in other places of the world like South America, North America, that people were here a long time before Christopher was shouldn't be a shock. People, they had great knowledge of sea travel and so forth.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre,_Lebanon

Anyway, let's turn over to 1st Kings and read about some of this, about Hiram. There is a lot we're going to be covering in this series that I find very inspiring as we continue forward and continue through this, but we're setting the stage primarily here in *Part 1*.

1 Kings 5:1 it says, **And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon because he heard that they had anointed him king in the place of his father: for Hiram had always loved David.** So there was a relationship already. Not a very long one, but a short one there because of Hiram's lineage and his father before him. But when it came to Hiram then he had developed a relationship with David and some of this has started already because of plans for building the temple because some of the things for the temple David had already started working with. Not specifically the temple itself, but plans were being made for those things because he knew it was going to be for Solomon to take care of. It was to continue and wouldn't be for him, but he made other things that would be for the temple.

Then it goes on here in **verse 2—Then Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, You know how my father, David, could not build a house for the name of the Eternal his God because of the wars which were fought about him on every side, until the Eternal put them under the soles of his feet.**

It's kind of interesting how some of this language is used because, again, there is some symbolism in here that goes far beyond this to another period of time, and if you know the symbolism of Solomon and the relationship with David, obviously his son, but there are prophecies about David's son that go way beyond Solomon. They're about Christ. So there's a lot of duality in these things as you go through here and here is one of those that you pick up on very easily when you think about some of this that's being said, because it says, "Until you put the enemies," in that respect, "put them under the soles of his feet." So it's an expression that's used later on, obviously, in scripture about what God is doing through Christ, will do through Christ until everything is conquered.

So here is a physical example of some of this that teaches a spiritual one that's going to be accomplished later on.

Verse 4—But now the Eternal my God has given me rest on every side, and no adversary and nothing bad that is happening. So things were going well. Very prosperous. He had peace and so it was a time of great prosperity, an opportunity for a period of great prosperity. So they were able to utilize this because of not having wars, which so many nations did, of some trying to conquer and the like. He had peace on every side.

Now, as we go through some of this I hope you start picking up on some of the things, like the one we just read here, because we're going to come back into some of the story (not necessarily in these verse here later on), to discuss some of the duality of things. That's how we need to think oftentimes, about what can we learn from these things, what do they teach us? Because there is so much the Bible can teach beyond just a physical story. Some of these stories in the Old Testament, I marvel sometimes when you look at some of these things.

I was reading something the other day (I wish I could remember what it was). It wasn't about the flood (because I was doing some studying into that, too). But anyway, there are some other areas of things that had happened in Israel and the like in the Old Testament, and they were talking about it being like a myth. "It's a myth." You think, no, it happened. So the world, scholars in the world, talk about things in the Bible as a kind of mythical thing that took place to teach lessons or to teach stories. Well, it's like the flood. It's like creation. All these things are kind of a myth and not real. You think, "Give me a break!" Such stupidity in the world, mankind that won't acknowledge that God is their Creator and won't acknowledge what is said in this book. Sad, sad, pathetic, and what God has to do to shake the tar out of mankind so they'll start listening. What a horrible thing! I don't want to get ahead of myself but I get riled up when I think about some of those things.

So again here, **verse 5— So I have said I will build a house for the name of the Eternal my God, as the Eternal spoke to my father David saying, Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build a house for My name.** Already alarms should be going off. I mean, we ought to be able to see that. It's not just something physical for that time; it's something for later on.

So give charge that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon; and my servants will be with your servants: and I will pay you wages for your servants according to whatever you say, for you know there is none among us who have skill to cut timber like the Sidonians. So again, he wants his help and Hiram is going to offer that help. It's a good deal of money, prosperity. Because their prosperity in Israel, no one is trying to conquer them on any side, they have great wealth, they have a desire to trade, they've built these things up, and now to pick out a particular area and a particular king, this is good news.

It's kind of like today in commerce. The closer you are with commerce people want to trade with each other. That's how you grow as a nation. That's how you grow in power. People like to grow in wealth so this was a good deal. It drew them closer together. "This is going to be exciting because we're all going to prosper from this; the whole country is going to prosper from it."

Verse 7—So it was when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Eternal this day... Now, to what point he really felt that and with a knowledge that we have, obviously, is a little different. He was excited because of what it meant for his country and for him. People have never hated prosperity, as a whole.

Blessed be the Eternal this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people. Well, again, people say things sometimes that they may feel indeed, genuine about parts of it, but a lot of it is, you know, the motivation isn't because of God's spirit. It's just because of carnal relationships in the sense of how people think as far as physical carnal human beings. Selfishness. "If it's good for me, it's good for others. We're going to benefit from this. This is great!" It's exciting!

You know, people get excited when you watch the news, when the stock market goes up 5 or 600 points. It's exciting! "My 401!" Then the leaders are happy because this keeps us in office. The only ones that aren't happy are the opposing side.

Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered what you sent me and I will do all you desire concerning the cedar and the cypress timber. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. So they would cut, bring them down, I gather, by river or whatever, into the sea, into the Mediterranean Sea and then farther down, if you know the geography of Lebanon above Israel where Tyre was and where the cypress was, and they would cut them then and bring them down the coast.

He just then went on to say, **I will float them in rafts by sea in the place you tell me.** So as you see on TV sometimes when they bring large masses down certain rivers in certain areas - and some of these are huge how they transport them and move them along—well, it was the same thing there. So they got them out to the Mediterranean Sea and just kept them along the coast until they got them to a place that Solomon was going to have to stipulate here. So that's what he's saying.

My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you tell me and will have them discharged there. Then you can take them away and you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household. So in other words, this is how you're going to care for us. What did he mean by his household? Just him, you know, his family there, Hiram's family? It's about the kingdom. It's about the people. It's about all those that are going to be involved in cutting timber and bringing it down.

This is a massive operation back in those times. Not like today where they still float those things down the river. But how did they get them? Well, they have these giant chainsaws and different things they can use. Not back then. It was a lot of work so a lot of people are involved. A lot of people are receiving payment so they can have food on their table. This is what it's talking about, "for my household." "For those under my care," is basically what he's saying.

Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress timber according to all his desire. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cores of wheat, whatever that measurement is. I didn't try to study into that at all. A lot to feed a lot of people, **as food for his household.** Again, we can read something like this and think it's just Hiram's household. He's getting a lot of food. It's for the whole country. It's for all the people that are working doing all this under his care.

...and twenty cores of pressed oil: thus Solomon gave to Hiram year by year. So this is going on for a long period of time. It's an agreement they have to continually do this and they prospered.

So the Eternal gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a league together. So it's just like nations today. You draw closer together, you get along with each other, you're both benefitting from the

trade that's taking place here. This was a massive matter of trade in this particular time because of what was taking place.

Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel; and the labor force was thirty thousand men. Not a small thing for doing what they were going to accomplish. **And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts.** So even here there were those who were sent up there to help out, not just with those of Tyre and the region of Tyre and the Phoenician area of that time, but also out of Israel to help, to be a part of this.

It's hard for us to grasp how massive something like this was because we have machines today that do a lot of these things. Even then some of these operations that take place, they're massive. But back then because of the kind of work and everything, the labor was human beings, this was massive. It was a massive undertaking.

So they were one month in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was in charge of the labor force.

It goes on to say here then, **verse 15—Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens.** It's getting bigger. 70,000 laborers in different areas spread throughout, whatever was needed, **and eighty thousand who quarried stone in the mountains.** This is for the temple! This is for the work of the temple! They didn't have machines, but they had thousands and thousands of people who were gainfully employed. This was a great and prosperous time for everyone. **...besides three thousand and three hundred from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies who supervised the people who labored in the work.** Just to organize all this is incredible, it really is, at that time, in that time period.

And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, all hewn (cut) stones, to lay the foundation of the temple. Now, this is kind of interesting. The date of this period is very close to 967 BC, so we're talking about long time ago. 967 BC.

So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gibalites quarried them, and they prepared timber and stone to build the temple. So a lot of work. I'm fascinated just to see some of the pillars of some of those places I mentioned in Spain (because most of them, of course, are from the Roman Empire), but to see some of those and so many of them massive and symmetrical, the work, the polishing. Everything that went into it. Blows my mind. I'd like to see how they did that, but they probably don't even have the art of knowing how they did it anymore. A lot of things get lost through civilizations.

They don't even know how things like the Pyramids and different things have been built, and people have gone back and tried to figure it out, but they don't know how. Some of these things they try to figure out what they did and how they did it and they don't really have all the knowledge of it. Today we have massive machines that can do some of these things and even then it takes a long time. It takes a long time to get something like this done. Back then, all by hand? I

can't comprehend it. So it took a lot of workers doing a lot of chipping away - a lot of chipping away, a lot of work.

We're going to come back to some of the things about Solomon here in a little while, but I'm going to take a little bit of time and in this period of time to set the stage for some of that. I want to stop and consider some of the great things that different civilizations have constructed. Much like we recently covered then in the past series concerning the greatness that's existed in past civilizations because those things are then evident oftentimes then by the structures you see, by the remains of certain things you see. Then we'll come back to the story here.

There are all kinds of ancient ruins that archeologists and the various scientists have tried to date, and this is an interesting thing just to go through and study and read some of these things by themselves. I think you'll find some of these things a little surprising—I did—as we go through this.

But looking up some of these on the internet produced a wide range of focus and vastly differing ideas and opinions about various ruins and their supposed importance at any particular time. Some of the main differences seem to be or come from when looking for objects of somewhat questionable ruins that are generally dated long, long, long, thousands of years before Adam and Eve. So you know right away something is wrong here, somebody is smoking something.

But it's a scholarly thing and they come across with all these scholarly reasons of why. They take a lot of these relics and they come up with all kinds of crazy things that we know are wrong. They don't fit what God says.

When you begin to look at specific kinds of buildings that are large constructions then dates seem to become a little more reasonable. Some of these are given different names, but the first one that's recognized as one of the oldest manmade structures in the world is located in France. So again, I found some of this interesting going back and looking at some of these things, of large structures that are powerful in the sense of past civilizations that are still there to this day.

This first one is known as Cairn of Barnenez and it's called a passage grave. Now, it's amazing here. To me that would be an incredible story just to know some of the reasons of why they did some of these things, but some of these things that were built as tombs or graves, later on places of worship, people had weird ideas. Mainly because they didn't accept God. They didn't want to remember God, just like today, and so there are a lot of crazy things that people have believed and done.

Anyway, this one here, ²“a passage grave or a passage tomb consists,” it says here, “of one or more burial chambers covered in earth or with stone and have narrow access passages that are of large stones.” So again, they've excavated a lot of these or gone in as archeologists do, with a

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passage_Grave

little brush and chipped away. Anyway, they've unearthed some incredible sites and some were sticking way above ground anyway.

Anyway, I'm just going to read you what it says, "These structures usually date from the Neolithic age" (whatever that is), "and are found largely in western Europe. When covered in earth a passage grave is one kind of burial mound which are found in various forms all over the world. This one is dated 4850 BC." So the first one they acknowledge that's huge, that goes the farthest back, of a major structure, dates 4850 BC. Well, we know that can't quite be true because that's before Adam and Eve, before man was even on the earth. So they're a little screwed up in some of the things they study and there are reasons for that.

Anyway, then the next two dates that are listed as the oldest existing structures are also found in France. Now, I found this interesting. You think of where civilization was and you think all the way up. People travel. People were all over places in Europe way before the flood. I found that interesting. Massive structures. It's obvious they existed way before the flood and peoples traveled all over the continent, some of these sites that are out there.

Anyway, the oldest of these are found in France and are a different kind of burial mound. One was dated 4800 BC and the other 4500 BC in order as they recognize them, as they acknowledge them. Then many more old structures are referenced that are all dated before the flood in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Denmark, India, Russia, Peru, and finally Egypt. There are some things that are down there that are dated way, way, way back. Incredible. Christopher Columbus wasn't the first to get over in this district of this particular area, but we know that all people got wiped out at one point in time.

What I find amazing in some of this is when people try to start piecing together things of history, especially when it comes to Egypt, they have some major problems. It's because they don't accept the story of the Bible and they don't accept the story of the flood and what happened to all civilization. So they have some tough times tying these things together. And candidly, a lot of them work overtime to make a connection that doesn't exist because of their prejudice against the truth, against the Bible, against God, against the flood, against knowledge, against the truth. I find that fascinating.

Again, Russia, Peru, and finally Egypt, and all having to do with massive burial mounds and tombs. Again, some incredibly massive. But most people are most impressed with the tombs that are in Egypt, the Pyramids.

One of the oldest that is the most notable is the Djoser Step Pyramid built by Imhotep of the third dynasty. (So they say.) Anyway, there are certain things that they've found in writing and so forth. But anyway, it is a massive structure that has a height of 205ft (62m), and that's big especially when considering this period of time. Actually, my wife and I had the opportunity of seeing some of these pyramids out there because these are located, if I remember here now, it's on the

southeast side of Cairo. So you have to take the bus, get out there a ways, take a tour, whatever. It's dated about 2650 BC, about 300-350 years before the flood. Incredible!

So I don't know if you've ever thought about some of those old pyramids that exist in Egypt. There are pyramids all over the place there, but there are certain ones that are noted more than others and this here is very famous. It's called a "Step Pyramid" because of the way it's built and the structure that was actually there. It's still there. It's massive. It's crumbling and there's a lot out around it you can see this crumble on the ground around it and the mound that was there, but it was massive.

Anyway, I want to read to you a little thing here about radioactive carbon dating because this is where it began in the sense of trying it on certain things. It began with this particular structure. So this is where certain discoveries were made when it came to using it for archeology and the like. I'm just going to read it to you.

³"One radioactive or unstable isotope is C14 which decays over time, and therefore, provides scientists with a kind of clock for measuring the age of organic material. The earliest experiments in radiocarbon dating were found on ancient material from Egypt. A team obtained acacia wood from the third dynasty step pyramid of Djoser." This is the one. That's what it's talking about here. ...of Djoser "to test a hypothesis they had developed."

Anyway, it goes on in the story telling about how that they were very accurate in what they did and this was the first time this was used in this manner. What's interesting is when you go back in some of these things there is a period of time that they seem to get fairly close, but something changed with the flood. It's like the rainbow. There was no rainbow in the sky until after the flood, so whatever change, whatever God did, the lifespan of man, how man, the human body could actually exist longer during that period of time, there was something connected with the atmosphere, the sun, and other things that helped to change some of that. I don't know what it was. God will tell us one day. But they're connected. So it seems some of this dating is not as valid because of some of these things. So anyway, I look forward to the day we can plug in all these things and learn what really happened and why these things only worked to a certain point in time, what God did, or whatever.

But anyway, then the more well known or the Giza Pyramids that were constructed around 2570 BC. Again, this one, I was surprised about this one because I always thought this was built after the flood. They were built before the flood, so they were covered up in water. Incredible!

These were about 220-270 years before Noah's flood, and that flood was around 2300-2350 BC. So again here, some of the timing of some of these things, of civilizations, of great civilizations that existed. I think sometimes when we think about Noah and this ark it's like people really hadn't advanced very far and they're kind of out here farming and going out deer hunting or whatever it

³ <http://aeraweb.org/projects>how-old-are-the-pyramids>

is to get some food and kind of way back there, but it wasn't that way. They were massive societies in some of these places and massive numbers of people.

Even the building of these pyramids, people are still in awe, how they did it and the numbers of people it had to take to do it. But I guess I'd never been told or I'd forgotten or whatever, but I always thought it was afterwards. I thought all these dynasties that they talk about in history of Egypt all started after the flood, several hundred years, as a matter of fact. I've actually heard some speculate that the Israelites were used as slaves to help build some of these. Speculation. Well, that's really off, obviously. That didn't fit into history or history of Egypt or anything, but there were some who speculated some of those things.

They needed to dig a little bit deeper. Back then they didn't have the internet like we do today. Today it's amazing what you can go and you can find so quickly. Back then you had to go in libraries and do extensive studying and reading and dig for things and try to find things.

So again, before the flood. Incredible! These things are incredible. They had to be incredibly great civilizations to do something like this. So the time of Noah wasn't small. There had to be millions and millions and millions of people on the earth at that time. I don't know that we think in those terms. Maybe after this period of time a whole lot more. We just don't know. But it's interesting.

When he was out there building that thing and being as massive as it was on dry land, it had to be an incredible feat to see what was being built. But other things had been built by society that were massive, but that had to be quite impressive. They had to think he was stark raving mad, nuts. Really. Out here on dry land building a huge thing like that.

I hope most of you have visited to see that one down south in Kentucky there that they've reconstructed to be like the size of the ark. But it's quite impressive.

So again, ⁴“The great Pyramid of Giza, also known as the Pyramid of Khufu or the Pyramid of Cheops is the oldest and largest of the three pyramids in the Giza Pyramid complex bordering present day Giza in Greater Cairo, Egypt. It is the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and the only one to remain largely intact.”

Now, I saw the thing, but I didn't realize it was quite this big. Its base was 700 feet. There are four sides to it. 756ft (230m). Now, a football field is 300 ft or a hundred yards. Now, I know we're coming up to the season of the year again here where they have the Super Bowl. See, I don't care about those things. I don't keep up with it. I used to have club on those nights and people would get upset with me. They'd take about three or four years to let me know: “Why do you always have club on the night we're having Super Bowl?”

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza

Anyway, this here is another one here that's massive in size. Its height was 455ft or 138m. Again, 450ft high. That's around 42 stories high. That's much farther than a football field, you know, 300 ft. You're talking about another 150 ft, one and a half times putting it up in the air. Massive! All the stone, all the work. Anyway. So it was quite a civilization that had to exist way before the flood and yet it came to a point where God determined that mankind was so corrupt, so vile in their thinking. I really can't imagine what that would be like for people to live hundreds and hundreds of years and for evil to become so refined because that's what happens.

To be healthy. To be healthy when you're 300, 400, 500, 600 and the evil that had to exist in the minds of human beings by that time? It blows my mind, really does.

Anyway, incredible civilization and something that people when they see it they're in awe of - and should be, in one respect.

Anyway, a few hundred years after Noah's flood you begin to find much evidence of large cities and elaborately constructed buildings, especially for places of worship. Then the evidence of the greatness of the period in the expansion, as we talked about some of this in the different periods, Greco-Macedonian Empire. There are things that exist to this day of temples and great massive theatres and other structures.

I think of one structure, I think somebody had said it was Roman, but I'm not too certain it wasn't one made by the Greeks because they had massive theatres as well, the Greco-Macedonians did and they've unearthed some. But I remember one we saw close to Corinth there, south of Athens at one time, they'd just unearthed not too long ago, and it was massive. It must have had twenty some rows. You know how an amphitheatre is. There were things they understood back then that was kind of incredible to me. There was a rock, or a stone, and they had theatre there, they put on plays, they did different things, people would come up and speak, and the amazing thing was there was a stone that was a different color than all the other stones that was right in the center of where the theatre was and you could talk and a person could be up at the back, because I did it. I actually asked Johnny at that time to whisper something. I went clear up to the top and I could hear him. Now, if you take a step away, 2 steps away, it starts changing quickly. People had to project their voice the farther they got away from the rock.

To me, to understand sound and how things work to build a structure like that to me is a marvel, of things they understood. So the very way that some of those theatres are made and things you find in the sides of hills and the like, and even I think of the time of Christ when it talked about the sides of the hills and so forth, there were ways for voice to be projected just by natural surroundings because of the landscape itself, let alone the specific structure of a theatre like that. So again, there were things that were understood back then that today we have to use massive speakers and bring them in, but back then, awesome the things they did know. Great things in civilization.

So anyway, the Greeks had a lot of this at that particular time in the period of the Greco-Macedonian Empire, and those things are evidenced to this day.

Following right behind Greece then, again, we've already talked about some of these, some of the things of the greatness of the Roman Empire and there's more of that in evidence because the more you come up to time, the more some of those things have existed. A lot of times when things were conquered they would actually destroy and use the materials. That's what we come up to here in a moment. I want to read about a particular area.

People are generally quite aware of one of these such structures that was built by Rome and it's the massive stone amphitheatre known as the Coliseum there in Rome. It was commissioned around AD 70-72. So we're talking now up past the time of Christ, but still an incredible civilization that existed at that time, of things they were able to do and things they were able to build. Again, all by labor; they didn't have machines. To think of some of the things that are built is really quite incredible.

Anyway, ⁵“this was commissioned around AD 70-72 by Emperor Vespasian as a gift to the Roman people. In AD 80 Vespasian's son Titus opened the coliseum”—and I'm just reading a part of history—“officially known as the Flavian Amphitheatre with one hundred days of games including gladiatorial combats and wild animal fights. After four centuries of active use the magnificent arena fell into neglect. Up until the 18th century it was used as a source of building materials.” So things around Rome, a lot of it was taken from there and other structures around there. So that's what they did back then, especially when someone conquered someone else.

I think of Carthage. They actually came in and totally destroyed all of Carthage and rebuilt a particular area inland, if I remember some of the things I've read, but they used a lot of the stones and things that were there in Carthage when that was destroyed by the Romans. Again, I hope I had that right.

Anyway, it says, “though two-thirds of the original coliseum has been destroyed over time the amphitheatre remains a popular tourist destination as well as an iconic symbol of Rome and it's long tumultuous history.” So it is.

When you see something like that and you are told some of the story about all the marble—it wasn't just the stone—but all that's been stripped away, but it was to know that all this was covered in marble, shining. That's why I think of Malaga and the streets there, although a lot of it is chipped up and everything, to have streets made of marble that's shining, a little slippery when it's wet if you don't have the right kind of shoes. Not many cities, old cities that have marble streets. But back then, to think of an entire amphitheatre like this, as large as it was and the numbers of people they can get in there, incredible. Things of past civilizations.

⁵ https://www.history.com/topics/ancient_history/coliseum

So we've looked at what might be considered evidence of the greatest of civilization in Egypt before the flood and have referenced some of those that were discussed in previous things that we've gone through and now it's time to go back here to the story of Solomon and the temple.

We're going through all of this for a reason because you can't help but be impressed by things that have happened through times past in life, things that you can see and learn from. As we've talked about in the past, one of the greatest lessons as far as that series was concerned, is where are they today? Where are those nations? Where are those peoples?

You know, without God it doesn't mean anything. It's gone. It's buried. It's dead. The leaders, you have to go look them up on the internet and then they're not really sure. You know, that's why I mentioned about some of the dynasties of Egypt. When they go through and try to plug in all the things that have happened in Egypt they have a terrible time of tying these different kingdoms together and these different dynasties because they don't acknowledge the period of the flood.

Well, it took a long time for some of those things to come back and who were the peoples? They weren't the original ones that built it. They were descendants of Noah. Civilization started all over. Took time, several hundred years, and people started doing the same things they'd done before. God wasn't in the picture. What He did to the earth, Noah's own sons weren't happy campers. They started rejecting right away things about God.

You go through 10 generations you finally come down to Abraham, Abram at that time, and God started working with him. Noah is still alive. Incredible stories. 350 years after the flood. Things that I can't even imagine.

2 Chronicles 5. Again, the foundation of the temple about 967 BC. Even Israel didn't last too long because it was about another 245 years later and Israel was taken captive by Assyria. Incredible stories, time periods, rise and fall of people, nations.

2 Chronicles 5:1 it says, Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Eternal was finished. So we're coming up to a point in time now it's been done, it's been completed, and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; of the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments that he put among the treasures of the house of God. Great treasures, things that he had built, things that he had made that were to help furnish the temple when it was built. Awesome! Treasures. Silver and gold.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Eternal out of the city of David, which is Zion. So again here, these things have much more meaning than something that's just physical that happened.

Therefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the Feast which is in the seventh month. Well, when it talks about the Feast in the seventh month, you know, people

generally know where that starts. It's at the beginning of the very seventh month, the first day is the beginning of the fall season, Feast of Trumpets.

And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark. An incredible event that took place here because, before this, knowing what had taken place, there wasn't any structure like this as far as the Levitical system was concerned. If you remember there was the removal of the tent and the things that they took up and put down and moved throughout the time of the forty years. Then when Joshua went in to the promised land and all the things that took place during the judges and the like and the movement of the ark during that time as well.

And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation. So this was an incredible event for Israel, it truly was, and it was all physical. All physical. If we had been there to see the grandeur of it, it would have been very moving, very inspiring, the beauty of it all, the work that went into it of all the thousands and tens of thousands of workers that did all the things that they did to make it possible. It was an incredible thing, an incredible structure of that time. Not necessarily in size like some things that have been built in some cultures, but of a quality.

That's one thing I loved about Mr. Armstrong. He talked about quality. A lot to be learned by that. Well the temple that was built is a matter of quality. That's more important than size.

That's why I think of the Church. What's more important? The size or the quality of what God is doing? We learn from those things. We should learn from those things much, much more.

Verse 5—And they brought up the ark, of the tabernacle of the congregation and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, this is what the priests and the Levites brought up. Also king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel were assembled unto him before the ark and they sacrificed sheep and oxen which could not be given nor counted because of their great number. Physical things, but spiritual things to learn, brethren. There is a lot here, there really is. It's loaded.

Verse 11—And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course.) So, in other words, there was much work to be done. They normally served by course, which means they had a period of time that they served in the temple. Each year, they had a period of time allotted to them, couple weeks, whatever the course was at that particular time, and they wouldn't serve again in those specific positions—they had other things they did in the year—but in a specific area of service within the temple they had to rotate because of the size of the Levitical priesthood and those things that were there.

At this time here, it talks about how they were all there present and there was so much to be done that it required the presence of everyone and the work of everyone.

Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and

harp, stood at the east end of the altar... Again, all these things were incredible to see it taking place, to know what was being done at this particular time, and we would have been impressed and moved by it all, but it's nothing compared to what it pictures and what it's all about.

...and with them a hundred and twenty priests standing with trumpets. Can you imagine? 120 priests all with trumpets, and when that sounded, and the things that they did with the music that they made?

Well, today we just turn up the volume and have bigger speakers, but for that, awesome. If anyone has ever seen a great symphony it's very moving to see everything working in unity and harmony and all the different sounds, the kind of music and so forth. There is something unique in that totally.

And it came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Eternal; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and the cymbals and the instruments of music, and praised the Eternal, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures for ever, that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Eternal.

So it was a very moving time and so much so that God honored it, in that respect, by what He manifested there, by what He did, by what He let them experience because this was one of the most incredible times of all Israel's history, in that respect, as to what took place here at the dedication of the temple. It really was. But again, it was a very physical thing. Moving? Yes. Way beyond what happened then.

...so that the priests could not stand to minister due to the cloud, it was so great. Meaning, how do you do your job? How do you get around? There's this cloud in here. **For the glory of the Eternal had filled the house of God.**

So again here, incredible things that were taking place here at this particular time, and candidly, I'm not going to go into the next part because it'll take away from next Sabbath's sermon if I do. So we're going to stop there today because there is a tie in.

But I want you to think about these verses here from 2 Chronicles 5:1-14 this next week. Think about some of the things that are said there because there is a lot here and we need to dig out all that we can. There are times that God chooses to give us more, to give us more understanding, more appreciation of things that He's done in times past and this is one of them. To try to understand a little bit here thinking ahead a little bit, why on earth would this be given the kind of title that it is, *The Greatest of Civilization*? Because we can look at all the great things that mankind has done, look at all the structures of things that have been built out there. We can see their remains and be in awe of them, and indeed, we should be of things that people do when

they work together like they did. Even though some were done as a matter of slaves and the like it's still amazing that something so massive could be done.

So there were great things that were accomplished, but they weren't great. They're not around anymore and they're ruins today. But there is that which goes way, way beyond that that is so important to understand. What is the greatest indeed of all civilization?