

This will be *Part 5* in the series entitled *Humility & Seeing Ourselves*.

We're going to go back and talk about some of this period of time that we were discussing in the sense of sermons we were receiving back in 2009 and what we were doing at that time. So, last Sabbath we talked about some of that, that we'd started out the month of January in 2009 with a sermon specifically geared toward what we were doing at that time, which was a Churchwide fast.

Then it was announced that we were going to have a fast at the end of the month as well. It's kind of unusual to have something that close together but obviously, especially the kind of fast we worked up to toward the end of the month, because we entered into another fast which was a two-day fast back on January 31st and February 1st of 2009.

And again, we were focusing upon the need for humility and seeking God because that's what a fast is about. A fast is about a desire we have of drawing closer to God and understanding the importance of humility in doing that. We have to think about that before we enter into a fast, and while we're in it that this is why we're going through this.

It's not just a physical routine of depriving ourselves of something to get something from God. It's a matter of something we know we need, "and that's why I'm doing it. I'm humbling myself. I'm going to enter into this of what God has given to us in order to think about the physical aspects of that and the spiritual aspects, what it teaches us."

And of course, we've gone through Isaiah. It talks about some of those things, of the purpose of it. And again, it's about humility but it's about change as well. Because all of Isaiah 58 that goes through and discusses this, it's about an understanding: "I need help to change and to live right toward others." It's about the ability and desire to live God's way of life toward God, obviously, as the first four commandments tell us, and the last six toward one another.

To do that well requires humility. There are things we have to see in ourselves that we have to get rid of, the selfishness and the things that cause problems with relationships. Because that's where drama comes from, conflict comes from it.

So, we were focusing upon those things back at that time and during that period of time we were also focusing upon, that two-day fast, upon the Thunders. Now, that's going back quite a way when you stop to think about it. Here we were, truly focusing upon the Thunders. That was part of the subject matter of the sermons that were covered, and a need to understand what has to happen in the world to humble the world. It begins with the process of Thunders before the events of the Trumpets.

I hope we see them. I hope we hear them. Because I marvel at looking back over that period of time and thinking about news and how events, even going back to the beginning of all those things that were taking place as far as that first Trumpet, and we talk about 9/11, everybody knows what that means, and events that were spread out over pretty long periods of time before another event would happen in the world. You think about some of those things, and you realize it's been a long time between them.

That's exactly the way it's supposed to be, and now it's getting closer together. That's one of the primary lessons and warnings that were given, that it's to be like a woman in travail, a woman that's going through a process of getting ready for birth. The labor pains are farther apart; they're not as intense as they are toward the end.

I hope we grasp what's taking place in the world right now and how those pains are getting closer together and stronger. That's the kind of world we're living in right now before a WWII breaks out.

So, last Sabbath the sermon was ended by focusing upon current news events that reflect massive Thunder, if you will, and the frequency of them, and we're going to start out today with news - because generally I end or somewhere in the middle have news events that talk about some of the things going on in the world.

In times past I remember being at a "special place" for three years. Anyway, it was special in some ways, I guess. But doing some writing and looking for articles and so forth that had to do with WWII. Then after being out doing the same thing because we're to watch, we're to be alert and on guard, which has to do with the physical routine as well of understanding where we are, and very little talk about those kinds of things at that period of time.

Now for the last year it's over and over and over again, constantly in the news, one way or another somewhere in the world.

So again, these things ought to stir us up. It ought to help us to understand the seriousness of the times in which we live. To be on guard means we need to see self, we need to be taking this more seriously, of striving to change and grow and conquer, because we don't have a whole lot of time to do those things. That should be more intense in our lives because we are stirred up by what we see, we are sobered by what we see, and we're crying out to God for the help to see things properly - not only the world but ourselves in the midst of that is even a bigger thing.

So again, we had that sermon entitled *A Great Fast*. And indeed, that was a great fast. Two days. Awesome! Absolutely awesome God's Church did something like that. We need to understand it for what's happened since that time because God has blessed us mightily. He gave us a focus at the beginning of that year for a purpose and at the end of that month another very strong focus. It's good to look back every once in a while to see where we've been and how far we've come, what has taken place.

I think of how those kinds of things, individuals who entered into it in a right spirit, in a right mind, a desire to draw closer to God, a desire to seek humility before God, a desire to change, a desire to grow, and people are here because of that today, candidly. Because what happened? 2012, 2013. There were things we were prepared for by going into that at that time. Because we just went through a period, six months earlier, basically, where we were given something new in understanding, that Christ wasn't going to return on a Trumpets but on a Pentecost.

There are people who left God's Church over that. They didn't leave immediately, but there were people who were so rattled by some of that, and so disagreed with some of that they left, most in 2012 and 2013. So again, we should be in awe of what we've gone through.

Then understanding of truth that God has continued to give to us and build upon the things we've had since that period of time. That's why I enjoy it on occasion to go back and look at what we've gone through in the sense of what God has given to us in content of sermons and understanding and truth. Then I think about what God is going to give us even more at this Feast of Tabernacles, and it's incredible, it truly is. More carrots.

But anyway, it's incredible what God gives to us, it truly is. I use that word a lot. I use "awesome" a lot, because how do you describe certain things that God gives to us except by some of those terms. So, as a whole, the primary Body of this Church today is still here today because of that two-day fast, how you entered into it, what you did at that particular time and so forth on a spiritual plane.

I'd considered at that time, truly, a three-day fast. Some I'm sure are very thankful that didn't happen. The only reason I didn't is because I believe I was led to understand something and see something, that it shouldn't take away from another fast that happened that was three days. That's the book of Esther, what Mordecai and Esther and the Jewish people went through back at that period of time.

And so, we went through those things when we discussed fasting back in 2009, and we're going to return to some of that again today because it's an incredible story.

But before we do, news. Just going to start it out because these are about Thunders, and it's about the intensity of them anymore. It's astounding (another word; get my thesaurus out). But what's taking place in the world over a short period of time week-after-week-after-week now, it's just tremendously powerful, it really is, the sound of what we're able to hear on that plane.

So, here we go. So, we went through two weeks before and now I'm going to go through about a week and a half since that period of time where I ended off last Sabbath in the news.

It says, **“Is A US-Russia War Becoming Inevitable?”**¹ “In 2022, Moscow asked the U.S. to pledge not to bring Ukraine into NATO. We refused. And Putin attacked. If Russians believe their country has been pushed against a wall by the West, can we blame them?”

Now, got to realize this is a two-way street sometimes in certain things going on. If you’re talking about what’s happening in the world and if you’re striving to work things out with one another, just like individuals or whether it be nations, and I think of, again, when missiles were put down in Cuba, how can you help but understand a bit of their feeling if we start pushing missiles closer and closer to them?

So, how do you reciprocate? You just push and push and push. Some time something is going to have to give. It’s inevitable; it’s going to take place. That’s a part of what this is discussing here.

Is it inevitable, a war that’s coming? Well, people who look at some of these things they understand - not very much in many cases, sadly, but there are very hard times coming. We’re pushing toward that point in time.

So, it goes on to say, “Americans appear dismissive of dark Russian warnings that rather than accept defeat in Ukraine, the humiliation of their nation, and their encirclement and isolation, they will resort to tactical nuclear weapons.”

You push somebody in a corner long enough and people who have those kinds of weapons, some are already saying they’re going to use them as soon as they have them. Iran. North Korea.

The article goes on to say, “Is it really wisdom to dismiss these warnings as ‘sabre-rattling’?”

So, even that term, I’ve heard it within the Church, some when I first started writing about it, that some were asking, “What does this mean?” It’s kind of an old term. So, a lot of people hadn’t even heard this term, “sabre-rattling.” What is it? It’s always used when you’re getting close to a war. That’s how the word is used. Now you’re reading it in news articles quite often, “sabre-rattling.” Well, that’s what this is, getting closer to a war, and so people are making this noise and pushing one another and eventually, it’s going to erupt. That’s what it’s discussing here.

Another one: **“Russia Building Laser Weapon To 'Soft Kill' US Spy Satellites.”**²

Another article... I’m not even going to go into that one there.

¹ <https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/us-russia-war-becoming-inevitable>

² <https://www.zerohedge.com/military/russia-building-laser-weapon-soft-kill-us-spy-satellites>

“We're Facing The Biggest Crisis The Country Has Ever Had': President Of German Employers' Association Warns Of Historic Crisis Over Russian Gas Cut.”³

This is crazy over in Europe, what's taking place and all the back and forth and how much they should or should not do, and the conflict of what they're discussing with one another. Anyway, so they're talking about various things they're trying to prepare for, winter, and how they're going to prepare for it because they know they're not going to have the same ability in all areas as in the past because of cutting off (if they all do it) gas and so forth coming out of Russia.

Another one here: **“Anxiety Grows Among Americans as Crisis After Crisis Spirals Out of Control.”⁴**

It's not enough yet to cause people to begin to be humbled by it but there are more concerns today. You see how it has to take a lot for people to be hit over the head again and again and again before people will start humbling themselves and willing to listen. Because right now there is no desire whatsoever to listen to anything.

Another one here: **“Era of Western dominance ending – Tony Blair.”⁵** “China, which is ‘already the world’s second superpower,’ will compete with the West ‘not just for power but against our system, our way of governing and living,’ the Labour politician warned. Beijing ‘will not be alone. It will have allies. Russia now for sure. Possibly Iran.’”

Well, it's kind of weird that it takes them that long to guess that one, figure that one out. Because that's been out there for years and years and years. That's exactly where they are.

Going on: “It is the first time in modern history that the East can be on equal terms with the West...”⁶

Another one here: **“London falling: Britain's military decline exposes NATO's collapse in credibility and capability.”⁶**

Now, that's from *RT, Russian TV*, news, if you will, and they have a bit of a bias there. But they're reporting on something that's being reported in other parts of the world and being said.

“US Conducts ‘Successful Test’ Of Two Hypersonic Weapons.”⁷ “Even though the US spends more on national defense than China, India, Russia, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Japan, and South

³ <https://www.zerohedge.com/economics/we-are-facing-biggest-crisis-country-has-ever-had-president-german-employers-association>

⁴ <https://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2022-07-15/anxiety-grows-among-americans-as-crisis-after-crisis-spirals-out-of-control#:~:text=Anxiety%20Grows%20Among%20Americans%20as%20Crisis%20After%20Crisis,fix%20them.%20By%20Susan%20Milligan%20and%20Tim%20Smart>

⁵ <https://www.rt.com/news/559117-tony-blair-ukraine-china/>

⁶ <https://www.rt.com/russia/558555-nato-uk-response-force/>

⁷ <https://www.zerohedge.com/military/us-conducts-successful-hypersonic-weapons-test>

Korea — combined, the Pentagon has yet to field hypersonic weapons on the modern battlefield, while US' adversaries do.”

I don't know why they said it was successful, because something seems to be a little bit wrong with that headline. But anyway.

“**Satellite Imagery Shows Global Crop Declines – Except For Russia And China.**”⁸ “Today, Russia is selling more oil and exporting more commodities than ever before, and both Russia and China now have the most healthy staple crops in the world.”

“**Khamenei adviser says Tehran 'capable of building nuclear bomb.'**”⁹ That's from the *Jerusalem Post*.

“**UK braces for hottest day on record with precautions put in place.**”¹⁰

Well, some have been getting a taste of that. I'm not going to go into that again, the temperatures and where they are. But again, this is happening throughout Europe, across Europe in different areas, Portugal, Spain, Greece, France.

“**The Collapsing Euro And Its Implications.**”¹¹ Another article here. “...part of the TARGET2 problem there's the repo market with €8.7 trillion outstanding, set to implode on rising interest rates, destroying commercial bank balance sheets which are already highly leveraged.”

So again, even in the economy these things are happening in different places in a way that they weren't even happening in 2008.

“This goes some way to explaining the deep reluctance the ECB has about raising interest rates. While producer prices in key member states are rising at over 30% year-on-year, and consumer prices by over 8%, the ECB keeps its deposit rate at minus 0.5%. It knows that if euro bond yields go any higher their situation which is already untenable will disintegrate into a full-blown crisis. Therefore, the euro is sliding.”

So, what was it last time a report talked about some of these news articles, the dollar and the euro are on par, equal with each other first time?

“Therefore, the euro is sliding. Markets can see that all the ECB [European Union Area] is doing is talking the talk and otherwise is frozen into inaction.”

“**Euro-Area Rates Market Prices In Record Anxiety Ahead Of ECB Decision This Week.**”¹² “Euro-area rates markets haven't been this skittish. Ever.” “The markets are taking a pretty grim view of how the euro-area economy will cope...”

⁸ <https://www.zerohedge.com/commodities/satellite-imagery-shows-global-crop-declines-except-russia-and-china>

⁹ <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east-news/iran-news/article-712327>

¹⁰ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/uk-braces-for-hottest-day-on-record-with-precautions-put-in-place/ar-AAZGSL2>

¹¹ <https://www.zerohedge.com/markets/collapsing-euro-and-its-implications>

¹² <https://www.zerohedge.com/markets/euro-area-swaptions-volatility-soars-record-ahead-ecb>

Again, all these things are pushing ten nations. That's what the outcome is going to be. So, you know what to look for. You know what's going to come out of all this.

It goes on to say, "...and it indeed feels like a bit of irony that we may get to know about whether Russia will indeed turn back those crucial gas supplies on the same day the ECB meets. An adverse decision could not only hobble the economy, but also catapult soaring natural-gas prices -- which have already spiraled away -- even higher."

Again, rumbling, rumbling, rumbling, because the economy of the world, how people work in these areas, and what's taking place and the kind of shape they're in, it can't stay like that. This is worldwide.

"EU should abandon national vetoes – German chancellor."¹³ It's what they're saying. "If the European Union hopes to compete in global politics, it can no longer afford to allow individual member states to veto the bloc's actions, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in an article published by the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper on Sunday. ... Last month, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told Politico that the union should ditch the unanimity requirement in matters of foreign policy and should move to qualified majority voting."

In other words, there's certain ones, basically, can vote on this and others have to be excluded from doing so.

"She noted that 'the speed at which things happen' was too slow and that it was important for the 'European voice' to be heard and seen without one single member being able to block it."

So, right now the way it stands all of them have to give a nod or an agreement if something is to be passed. So, they're wanting to change that so only certain ones can do it. Well, how many are going to end up doing that when it's all said and done?

"He suggested that one of the ways unity across the bloc and its allies could be achieved was if Germany 'assumes responsibility for Europe and the world in these difficult times.'"

Hmm, good idea? I mean, this is a little crazy, really. Let them accept the responsibility. They're almost to the point of saying, "Let us make the decision." That's kind of where it is.

"China Has Dumped Over \$100 Billion Of US Treasuries In The Last 6 Months."¹⁴

Again, the point of going through this and reading these things, just a few headlines - and it may be exceedingly boring to some - but we should all grasp that these are happening week-after-week after-week-after-week, far more than they ever have, far more dangerous, if you will, as far as the world is concerned, and that should speak volumes to us.

¹³ <https://www.rt.com/news/559182-scholz-eu-abandon-veto/>

¹⁴ <https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/china-has-dumped-over-100-billion-usts-last-6-months>

Another on here, **“US Signals Ukraine It Can Use HIMARS Against Russian Targets In Crimea.”**¹⁵ Anyway, let me read the article, part of it. “Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who currently serves as the deputy chair of Russia’s security council, warned Sunday that if Ukraine launched attacks on Crimea, it would mean ‘doomsday’ for Ukrainian leadership.”

The point of all this is that at some point they can use nuclear weapons. That’s what they feel like they’re being pushed into.

“Medvedev also said that the fact that Ukraine and Western nations don’t recognize Crimea as Russian territory poses a ‘systemic threat’ to Russia.”

There are so many articles here, so many things out here to read about.

“Putin heads to Tehran for talks with Iranian and Turkish leaders.”¹⁶

Good idea? Well, Turkey is supposed to be a part of NATO. They’re willing to meet with Iran, they’re willing to meet with Russia? How does that affect NATO? Remember, there’s a prophecy—I mentioned this in times past—about how Turkey betrays the US, which has to do large part too with NATO and some of the things they’re going to do. They’ve been in the process of doing that for a long time now.

Going on, another one here: **“There can be no winner in nuclear war – Russian FM.”**¹⁷

Too bad they can’t live that way.

“The State Of The US Consumer: AT&T Crashes As Americans Can’t Afford To Pay Their Phone Bills.”¹⁸

“Japan regulators approve release of Fukushima waters into sea.”¹⁹

Just one little thing after another after another. You think, isn’t that a great idea, release more of the water.

“Pelosi To White House: Designate Russia 'State Sponsor Of Terror' Or Else Congress Will.”²⁰

You know, just that kind of talk from a leader like that, what does that do to them? How do they respond to something like that?

¹⁵ <https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/us-signals-ukraine-it-can-use-himars-against-russian-targets-crimea>

¹⁶ <https://www.rt.com/news/559186-putin-iran-turkey-syria/>

¹⁷ <https://www.rt.com/russia/559304-lavrov-nuclear-war-ukraine/>

¹⁸ <https://www.newswars.com/the-state-of-the-us-consumer-att-crashes-as-americans-cant-afford-to-pay-their-phone-bills/>

¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/japan-regulators-approve-release-of-fuku-idUSKBN2OX0I2>

²⁰ <https://www.zerohedge.com/political/pelosi-white-house-designate-russia-state-sponsor-terror-or-else-congress-will?ref=biztoc.com&curator=biztoc.com>

“Since the US has already hit Russia with so many sanctions, the designation would have little impact on Moscow. But designating a state as a sponsor of terrorism opens up sanctions on other countries that do business with them.”

So, it’s all about control again. If you can’t do it with the petro-dollar, do it with sanctions.

“Fed Risks Imploding The Highly Levered Global Financial System.”²¹

“Italy’s rivers dry up and its farm fields bake as Europe’s devastating heat wave ‘exacerbates a record-setting drought.’²²

“Greece Hit by Major Wildfires as Authorities Work to Evacuate Areas.”²³ “A total of over 50 wildfires started in Greece in the past 24 hours, according to the country’s firefighting service.”

Another article: **“About 45% Of Small US Businesses Are Freezing Hiring Amid Soaring Inflation, Labor Costs.”**²⁴

Thankfully, we got around a corner. Then this morning I just wrote a few more down.

“US Carrier Group Heads Towards Taiwan Ahead Of Potential Pelosi Trip After China Warns Of ‘Forceful Response.’”²⁵

So even there we’re pushing at China. We’re pushing at Russia. We already know China, what their response is going to be in time here. But anyway, she also asked for some people in Congress to go ahead and join her on the visit. I haven’t heard anyone take her up on it yet. Anyway, whether she does it or not, who knows. But you think of all people pushing each other at a time like this is stupid. It’s just really stupid.

There is no one trying to negotiate, to work things out or to work through something. Because we’ve gone so far past that it’s not even funny. It’s just heading toward war.

“China warns US Fighter Jets escorting Pelosi to Taiwan could be shot down.”²⁶

“China’s Army Posts [this is what they posted] ‘Get Ready For War!’ Message On Social Media, State Mouthpiece Says PLA [People’s Liberation Army] Has ‘Right’ To Intercept Pelosi’s Plane.”²⁷

²¹ <https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2022-07-19/fed-risks-imploding-highly-levered-global-financial-system>

²² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/heat-wave-europe-italy-drought-wildfires-france-spain-greece/>

²³ <https://sputniknews.com/20220724/greece-hit-by-major-wildfires-as-authorities-work-to-evacuate-areas-1097733572.html>

²⁴ <https://www.zerohedge.com/personal-finance/about-45-small-us-businesses-are-freezing-hiring-amid-soaring-inflation-labor>

²⁵ <https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/us-military-makes-plans-protect-pelosi-after-china-warns-forceful-response-over-taiwan>

²⁶ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11062421/China-warns-fighter-jets-escort-pelosi-taiwan-shot-down.html>

²⁷ <https://www.nationandstate.com/2022/07/29/chinas-army-posts-get-ready-for-war-message-on-social-media-state-mouthpiece-says-pla-has-right-to-intercept-pelosis-plane/>

So, it's all this jabbing. That's what sabre-rattling is. No end. Pressure. Hitting each other until finally one day somebody does something.

“Xi Jinping told Joe Biden on Taiwan;” I thought it was interesting here. Some sources basically are quoting it inaccurately. Others are quoting some of this accurately, and the majority of them seem to. But one says, “Those who play with fire will (will only), will eventually get burned.” It was actually a little stronger than that. He said, **“those Who Play With Fire Will Perish By It.”**²⁸

“US economy shrinks for a 2nd quarter, raising recession fear.”²⁹

So again, economy, sabre-rattling, economy, weather. I don't know how many of you get some of these news things on a regular basis, but we ought to be moved by the fact that these things are happening at an accelerated pace far more than they were a couple of years ago, far more than they were one year ago.

So, if that doesn't move us and stir us up don't know what will - more than what we are. That's the point. We've been blessed to come this far. What a horrible thing that some might not be able to go the short distance left. That happens year-after-year-after-year.

So again, going back to this thing about Esther and why in that two-day fast we only had a two-day fast. If we go through this now and understand the blessings we've had, the blessings we've received. Because something doesn't happen immediately when you fast. It's not about that. It's not about trying to get something from God right away but it's understanding a process here of what we do it for, is for the sake of humility, the sake of humbling our self before God because we know we need God, we know we need God's spirit in our life, we're crying out to God for help, to fight the kind of spiritual battles we need to.

The primary battle we have is self. That's what it's about. That's what humility is all about. That's why we need to use that tool of fasting, of course, with prayer.

Esther 1. We're going to take time to go through this story to understand that God intervenes in people's lives in powerful ways at different times in life, at different eras. They experienced something very unique during that period of time, and we're experiencing something far more unique, if we can understand it, truly.

Esther 1:1—Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, and it says (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned from India unto Ethiopia, over one hundred twenty-seven provinces). Now, Ahasuerus was a title in Persia, much like Caesar's in Rome and the Roman Empire, Pharaoh's in Egypt. So, it's basically a title even though in scripture here they talk

²⁸ <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/xi-jinping-warns-joe-biden-over-taiwan-those-who-play-with-fire-will-perish-by-it-articleshow.html>

²⁹ <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/us-economy-grew-modestly-quarter-87540108>

about “King Ahasuerus.” So, it’s like using a couple of terms there to say the same thing, but in a specific region. Ahasuerus had to do with the area of the Medes and the Persians.

So, it goes on to say, **In those days when the king Ahasuerus sat in the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, in the third year of his reign he made a feast unto all the princes of his servants—to the powers of Persia and Media, of the nobles, and princes of the provinces being before him—and when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty for many days, even one hundred and eighty days.**

Can you imagine that you put that much money into something and you’re showing, basically, your greatness? It’s what it’s about. Then you’re showing the vastness of that kingdom and the wealth that was there because that’s what it was noted for in large part. This lasted for 180 days, all these rulers brought together for this great celebration, long celebration.

Verse 4—Then when these days had expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto the great and the small, for seven days in the court of the garden of the king’s palace. So, it wasn’t over with. He’s going to follow it up with this one seven more days, a special one for those who were right there in that area of government, if you will.

Verse 6 it goes on to say how it was an elaborate thing, it says, **with white, green, blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple, to silver rings and pillars of marble. The beds were of gold and silver upon a pavement of red, blue, white, and black marble.** So again here, this was another seven days but brought in even more wealth to show off and to enjoy the things that were there in the celebration.

They were given drink in vessels of gold, with the vessels being different from one another. So, each one, in essence, was unique, making the point they were all unique but all vessels of gold. **...and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.** That’s not fully clear what that is, but basically, according to how he was, what he was doing as well.

The drinking was in according to the law that none were compelled; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure. So, you put that much wine out there and basically, you know where it’s going to go.

Also, Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus. On the seventh day, when the heart of the king, it says in most translations here, it uses the word “merry” but it’s the word for “good.” It doesn’t get more specific than that but by the point being driven home here it should be kind of apparent that he drank a lot. He drank a lot and basically here when it says **good with wine**, basically meaning filled with wine.

He commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the Queen

before the king, with the royal crown, to show the people of the princes her beauty, for she was pleasing in appearance. In other words, “to look upon.” That’s what the word means.

Some have speculated that’s all she was to wear in there, but it doesn’t say that. But that seems to be a widespread feeling. It goes on to say here then, in **verse 12—But the queen, Vashti, refused to come at the king’s command by his eunuchs; therefore the king was very angry, and rage burned in him.** Because basically, especially in that time period of certain leaders of the world, you didn’t do anything like that, as you’ll find out when we go through the story later on, some of the things brought out. That they were almost looked upon like gods. To be treated with that kind of “whatever he says goes, whatever is said is law,” and here she is told to come in his presence, and she doesn’t do it.

Now, why she didn’t do it, it might have been for the simple fact that she’s a queen and she’s upholding the dignity of the office of a queen. But her drunken husband wants her to come in there to parade herself around before everyone out just because. It could have been something as simple as that. She might have just refused because he was drunk and she wasn’t going to lower herself in her dignity and so forth to be in that kind of environment, that all these drunken slobs are going to be looking upon her, you know. So, I can kind of understand that. Now, if it was just the crown I definitely understand that. Anyway, we’ll just leave it there because it doesn’t really say. But she wasn’t going to do it.

Verse 13—Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times (for so was the king’s manner toward all who knew law and judgment, and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Media and Persia, so saw the king’s face and who sat at the first of the kingdom), What shall we do unto queen Vashti, because, again, you just don’t do something like this.

So, he’s talking to them, those who know the law and the enforcement of it and so forth, what they were to do. **So, what shall we do unto the queen, Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of king Ahasuerus by the eunuchs?**

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti, the queen, has not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes and to all the people who are in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus. So, making it clear here, “It’s not just about the king. That’s bad enough as it is, but all the rulers and all the princes have been snubbed, in essence. They’ve been treated in a manner they should not have been treated. She should have been there!” That’s what they’re saying.

Verse 17—For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women. Now, this is really what more their concern was. How are they going to respond now? If she does this to the king, how is she going to treat the rest when they go back, and they hear the story? This could change the attitude of women in our relationship and how they treat us.

I think not a whole lot has changed in the world in many ways. It's human nature. It's been that way for so long, attitude of mind of men toward women.

It says, **So that they shall disdain or disrespect their husbands**, in other words, **if their eyes, when it's reported that the king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before them, but she did not come.** So, "They're going to respond in this way to us when we go back because they're going to hear the story, it's going to be spread about, and so they're not going to have respect toward us. They're going to treat us in the same sort of way. They're going to feel that freedom to do so. We can't have that!"

Kind of mind-boggling when you read something like this... and not.

Then the women of Persia and Media will respond that day to all the king's princes who have heard of the deed of the queen with much contempt and anger. If it please the king, let there go out a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and Medes that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

So, in other words, why are they doing this? Because they're offended and they don't want to go back and anything of this nature happen to them. So, let's set an example here that's really harsh, that everything they have can be taken away from them and that they can no longer come into the presence...of the husband, in this case.

Verse 20—So when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire (for it is great), all the wives - Again, notice the focus of this. This is incredible, mind-boggling, astounding to read something like this, of this magnitude, that this is where their focus was. Again, **for the kingdom (it is great), all the wives shall give to their husbands honor.** A law. I'll just be real candid with you. You think about some of this and all the people that affected in that part of the world because this is a world power. And how did that affect other peoples and other times from that point forward? A law that they're to give their husbands honor, that the women are beneath the men. It's incredible what took place.

I think of society and the time of the disciples, and that attitude, that mindset was still very much a part of even Judaism. In many ways it still is, obviously, it's still there. That oppression, a law. You have to have a law. Isn't that amazing that you have to make a law that that should be that way?

What about the flip of that? That a husband should honor his wife, show honor to his wife. Where did that go? That's not what they wanted.

...and shall give to their husbands honor, both to the great and small. The reason I mention the disciples is because certain things that Paul wrote, and different ones, that was the society of that time. One is at the top and one is not. One is to be, in essence, subservient in part and to show a unique kind of honor, if you will, and respect toward, yet it's not reciprocated.

Then the saying pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. And he sent letters unto all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that each man should bear rule of his own house.

Basically, what scripture says, written by Paul. That's what it says. So, whether it started back then, don't know, with power as a law and other peoples then incorporated and it just became a custom and a way of life for mankind, I don't know. I feel that probably was. But for this to say something of this nature, that "Every man should bear rule of his own house?" God allowed that to continue on until our time.

You think about that and that's an amazing thing, that it went on for that long. We know that it went back farther, the oppression, the thinking of people and the suffering of family and so forth. Because this is basically how people lived in large part anyway because of carnal human nature, of men over women.

But you need to catch that in the story flow as well, that more teeth were put into it at this particular time.

Then Paul, rightly so, reinforced that, because that's the way God wanted to continue it until this end-time, in the sense He wasn't going to interfere with the Church to change it until it's time, the end-time. Why? Because to do so 2,000 years before in the Church, there are certain things at different times you can read about where God didn't place certain things on people because of the world or because of the way things were within a religion or a group of people.

So, that would have been too much, to be candid, to expect the Church to do something. When you are called into the Church it's a big enough thing to come to the point where you begin keeping the Sabbath, especially in a Roman Empire and that world, where they're observing Sunday. It's a big enough thing if people are drawn away from and called out of keeping Easter and started observing Passover, Holy Days, and other things. It's a big enough thing if you start making those kinds of change in your life, that God didn't do this at that time.

I hope we can see and understand the reasons for that, that there was enough for people to do to live within that framework as the world was living that way. Because that was the way of the world, and the other things are far more important in the sense of a relationship toward God in the beginning of a growth spiritually that God can help people to grow in that environment, and especially if they listen to other things that Paul had to say, which most people miss and have missed in God's Church for a long, long time.

It's that two-way street: "Husbands love your wives." Candidly, that hasn't been out there a lot through time in the sense of what was focused upon. The other part was focused upon more by men who would preach, candidly, in Worldwide, as an example, and how they taught. Because this was the thinking.

The reason I'm bringing some of these things up is because this is something we're in charge of changing. God has given that to the Church to begin, as we have for some time now, to address some of these things, to make these changes. Because for a husband to love his wife the way God says to do it, this matter of who is the head of the home is not an issue if you really understand it spiritually.

I have known things in times past where it's been made an issue over and over again in God's Church. That isn't the way God said to do it. But He wasn't giving that direction and that understanding to the Church in those times. He waited until the very end here.

We have something quite incredible that we're able to experience in God's Church, a huge change that has to take place because that's going to be the Millennium and that's going to be the Great White Throne. People are going to learn to live together in unity and harmony in ways that God wants us to and not someone being over someone in the sense of just because of sex or anything of that nature whatsoever.

I didn't mean to get off on some of these things here, so I'll back off and go back into this. But you need to think about what was taking place clear back then and what the world has been like for so long, for so very, very long, and what God wants us to change. Because, again, that's what's going into a new age and that's what is going to be taught in a new world.

Which is beautiful. That families grow up, husbands and wives with an equality and a love toward each other, a way of functioning together in a way that's unique and beautiful before God. That's spiritual to understand that. It's to understand God's spirit and not just see something physical, and I can't give that. That comes from God, His spirit.

So, I am dumbfounded. I was really dumbfounded when I read this because we went through this some time back and we hadn't addressed this thing yet because God hadn't given that to the Church yet. So, I didn't even recognize this when I read through it. But I recognize it this time very powerfully so. Back in 2009 didn't see it, didn't grasp what was being said back then.

A writing in every province, to every people after their language, all these different languages it went out in, and that was a huge kingdom, it truly was. ...that every man should bear rule over his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people. Amazing. Amazing.

Esther 2:1—After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. Then the king's servants who ministered to him said, Let there be good, young virgins sought for the king. So, let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all of the good, young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, keeper of the women. And let their things for purification be given them.

So, they had this process that they were going through that takes a long time to go through, as well, as it talks about here.

Then let the maiden who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti. So, bring them before him. They didn't have any dating services on the internet at that time. (I'm just kidding.) They didn't go out to the market, maybe meet there, or go out to a night club and meet there. (I'm sorry for throwing those things out there. Well, actually, I'm not.)

So, what they did was bring all the women there, in essence, in the kingdom to come before him so he could meet them all. So, it goes on to say, **So, the thing pleased the king, and he did so.**

In Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity, who had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. So again, there's a long period of time here. The Medes and the Persians, a kingdom that followed that of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian empire, and some of the things being talked about here when they were taken captive.

So, there were Jews living in that portion of the world who continued on, and all the others that were there as well. So, this is one of the many peoples who Ahasuerus, who was actually Xerxes I in history, reigned over.

It says here, going on with the story, and so, it's giving a bit of history. **And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter.** So they were cousins, Mordecai and Esther were cousins to each other. And so, him being older he took her, raised her, **for she had neither father nor mother. And the young woman was good and beautiful.**

Now, Mordecai had taken her for his own daughter when her father and mother had died. So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens had gathered together at Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought into the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained kindness from him, and he quickly gave her things for her purification, with such things as belonged to her. And seven young women were provided to give to her out of the king's house. So, all this wealth was made available to them, even the things they were to wear. They had things at their own discretion that they could come in before him, things that they would choose, and so this comes up in the story as well.

Now, he preferred her and her young woman as the best of the house of the women. So, he already had this affection toward her, and so the indication here is he pushed this forward having her going through the purification quickly.

Esther had not revealed this to her people nor her kindred. So, she hadn't told anyone that she, that Mordecai had asked her to be here, to do this. She hadn't told any of the Jewish people that she knew. It says, **for Mordecai had charged her that she should not reveal it.**

Now, Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know Esther's peace and how she was doing. So again, he had position there, responsibility. It doesn't go into what it is, but it talks about some of this later on, about him being at the gate, which has to do with a role that he had within the structure of what was taking place there. Low though it might have been, he was working there at the palace.

Verse 12—So, when every young woman's turn had come to go in before king Ahasuerus after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, for so were the days of their purification to be accomplished; of six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and other things for the purifying of the women. Then the young woman would come before the king, and whatever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women into the king's house.

So, in other words, whatever it was that she desired she could take this wearing whatever it was, jewellery, clothing, and so forth, to go in before the king.

In the evening she would go, and on the next day she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines and she would not go into the king anymore unless the king delighted in her, and only if she were called by name.

This becomes important later on. So, in other words, they didn't have free reign to go in for him at any time. Only if they were called could they do so.

Verse 15—Now when it was the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, was to go in before the king, she required nothing. So, all of them had things, and she said, in essence here, **she required nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw it.**

In other words, she wasn't being presumptuous... That's not even a good word, I guess, for that, but she wasn't asking like the others had of things to take. And what they did with them it doesn't say. Whether they were able to keep certain things and the like, but it seems to indicate some of that when they went before the king. In this case here when Esther was asked she said she didn't demand anything. She left it to the eunuch to decide for her, and what it's saying is then is that they were all impressed by that. She was different than the others because of her approach, because of how she responded.

So, Esther was taken before king Ahasuerus, into the royal house, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. Now, the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the

virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

So, she had already been rejected and set aside and couldn't come before him anymore and lost all of her possessions, of everything that she'd been given before in times past. Now Esther is made queen.

Then the king made a great feast unto the princes of his servants, even Esther's feast. So, it was dedicated to her, in that respect, that this is for her. **Then he made a release,** and it basically means like a holiday from work for everyone, **in the provinces and gave gifts according to the state of the king.**

So, when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat at the king's gate. So again, mentioned that earlier, "sat at the king's gate." It's a term used to do, having to do with serving within the court of Ahasuerus.

Verse 20—Esther had not yet shown her kindred, nor her people. In other words, she hadn't revealed yet who she was, that she was there at the palace, that she was going through any of this, or that she had been made queen. None of this had been revealed.

...as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther did as Mordecai had charged her like she did when being brought up by him. So, she was very responsive, in that respect, as to a father, as it were her father, and obedient to that respect as well. So, they're bringing those qualities and characteristics out. She's always done what he said and she's doing it here. Because we get farther down in the story, and it becomes a little harder for her.

In those days, while Mordecai sat at the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, and those who kept the door, were angry and sought to lay hands on king Ahasuerus. So, that doesn't mean they just want to go out and beat him up, it means they wanted to do him in.

So, the story goes on. **So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen, and Esther revealed this thing to the king in Mordecai's name.** Then when inquiry was made of the matter, it was confirmed, therefore, they were both were hanged on a tree; and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

Esther 3:1—After these things king Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. So, it has to do with authority and power. This is a great advancement being given to him. Again, it doesn't go into a lot in these stories, it just gives a flow of the basic important points.

Verse 2—Then all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed and showed honor to Haman, for so the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow, nor show him honor. Because this was a kind of reverence, if you will, that he wasn't going to do it because of his beliefs.

Then the king's servants who were in the king's gate said to Mordecai, Why do you disobey the king, what the king command? So, it came to pass when they spoke daily to him and he did not listen to them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; in other words, what he was doing, his stance that he was taking, that he wasn't going to do that. ...for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Then when Haman became aware that Mordecai did not bow and did not show him honor (respect; reverence, as it were, basically is what it was about) **then Haman was full of anger. And he eyed him with such loathing.** In other words, this is kind of an awkward translation in a lot of places here, but this is the point it's getting at, he was so indignant, so riled up, so on fire in his mind about what Mordecai had done to him that it wasn't enough that Mordecai should basically be killed. That's what it came down to. He wanted to see all the people of Mordecai killed. That's what it's saying.

So, it's saying it in a different way here. **He eyed him with such loathing, to only lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had shown him the people of Mordecai.** It's about the Jews. He wanted something on a grander scale done, wipe out all who were of this belief, of this thinking, of this mind.

Therefore, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus. You think, what an incredible thing that took place here, that he would have a kind of reaction to something like this. But not hard to understand when you understand human nature and people in great power. Sometimes when they want more, and they want this reverence from others as well.

Candidly, that's happened a lot in the Church on a spiritual plane so we have to be able to see something physical like this to grasp the ugliness of it when it happens on a spiritual plane, that such a thing could take place if individuals are given responsibility and so forth, and like it in the sense of how they want others to see them. That's the last thing on earth you'd ever want. You have to fight against such things. But I've seen it much in God's Church since I've been in it through time.

So again here, he wanted to destroy all the Jews throughout all the kingdom of Ahasuerus. Then it goes on. It says in **verse 7—In the first month, that is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman from day to day and from month to month, and, it says, to the twelfth month, that is the month of Adar.**

Now, this is believed to be something that he was looking at as to trying to find out, casting lots, as far as time is concerned, when is the best time to deal with this, to go before the king with this and to try to destroy the Jews. That's what he was trying to accomplish here. That's the short of it. What is the best possible time here to execute his plan to accomplish this?

So Haman said to king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom. You can just hear it. When people

want more power, when they want their way. It's pride and power. It's an ugly, ugly thing. That's why we should hate pride. To understand how damaging it is, how ugly it is. Because whether you've ever experienced it yourself, which it hasn't existed to the degree it has existed in Worldwide, especially after Herbert Armstrong died.

Now, it existed during his time, but we really didn't recognize it until looking back and grasping what had taken place with so many in the ministry and what was really happening on a spiritual plane. So, these are things to learn from and to understand something physical like this we should be able to see. But do we see it when it happens in our midst as far as a Church is concerned? Because Laodicea, it was rampant, this kind of thing.

I think of it being rampant during Herbert Armstrong's time even. Why do people get together and start talking about various things, and against someone else? I think of the period of Garner Ted and different ones taking sides then. I'm not going to mention some of the other evangelist's names, but different ones who were kind of trying to exercise power. One who basically really wanted to have the control of the Church during the time when they took receivership of the Church, when California came after Herbert Armstrong in the Church and what different ones were doing.

Because sometimes people will go to horribly conniving, lying, ugly ways to destroy someone else in order for them to be elevated. We should abhor that kind of mindset. Anyway, it's gotten a lot of people in God's church who actually when they did it weren't in God's Church, but they didn't grasp that because that kind of spirit God will not be around. They're cut off from God's spirit. They don't have God's spirit working in them when those things happen.

You can't do such things and be in God's Church. Yet many in Philadelphia, many were out there in, supposedly in God's Church and in the ministry, and that filtered down through the Church as well in different leadership in different areas. We have to remember our history and understand that something that happened back here to Ahasuerus, to Haman, we can read this story and if we're not careful we'll miss some of the thrust of the story on a spiritual plane.

That this isn't about some worldly king and someone who was trying to rise up the ranks underneath him to become even greater because he was already elevated in a great way. He wanted more. He wanted more. Truth be known, he probably like to have had Xerxes place as well. That's the way human nature is.

That's the way governments of the world are. Look at some of the disgusting, evil things that people say and do sometimes toward one another in politics. It becomes so hateful, so ugly. I'm ashamed to be part. You would think that more people would think that way in different nations, or whatever it might be. It's ugly what people do in politics.

That's why governments, government of man is so bad, so wrong. Because these kinds of things go on all the time, the underhanded conniving, lying, twisting, distorting things that take place. They're sick. Most people don't see them. They don't know about them, but they

happen constantly. We need to see them too, but on a spiritual plane. A lot of people have gone by the wayside because of this.

So Haman said to king Ahasuerus, again, there is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from all other people, and they do not keep the king's laws. Was that true? Well, there was one, one law that they didn't. "So, why is that important to you? Well, they didn't bow down to you."

Therefore, it does not benefit the king to allow this of them. So, they're hurting the kingdom, these people are because they don't obey.

If it is pleasing to the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed. What an incredible thing! He's waited all this time, cast lots to try to know from the gods or whatever it is, the best time to go and present this thing before king Ahasuerus, and then he just lets it loose when he thinks it okay to do so. He's been around for a while now, and he know that he has some of the favor, obviously, of king Ahasuerus, or he wouldn't have put him there in the place in the first place. Now he hits him with this, "Destroy them. Kill them all."

...and I will pay, this is what I'm going to do, I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those who have the charge of the work, to bring in the king's treasuries. Now, in other words, basically saying here in part there will be no loss from them because I'm going to pay this into the treasury, and those who go out and collect it don't even have to worry.

There was one article I looked up, one source, talked about how much this was. It's a lot of silver. Heavy, heavy, heavy the amounts of silver that this entailed. But he was a very wealthy man, which oftentimes happens in politics. Anyway, money, power.

So, he offered all this, and so, he looks better before the king. "That's pretty big of you." It's just human nature, rank human nature.

So the king took his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. Then the king said to Haman, The silver is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you. So, that was a great gesture, but you can use all that now, wealth, to do what you need to do here. Little bribery going on, a little paying of people to do various things and give them tools necessary, whatever it is, to destroy the Jews. That's basically what it amounted to.

Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the kings' provincial governors, and to the governors that were over every province, to the rulers of every people, of every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language. In the name of king Ahasuerus it was written. So, that ring meant he had the authority of king Ahasuerus. That's what it amounts to, to do this, anything that he said, anything he told them to do.

...and he sealed it with the king's ring. Then the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day. So, they were focused on that one day, going to accomplish this, carry out this plan that he's been wanting to execute for a long time now. ...in one day, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and plunder their possessions.

Verse 14—The copy of the writing was to be issued as a decree in every province, for all the people, that they should be ready for that day. The couriers went out quickly by the king's commandment; and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

So, there were those Jews who lived in the region, and even the people were perplexed. Why is he going to do this, destroy all the Jews? We have this commandment now. And so, this is right at the palace, in that area of the provinces, all the provinces. They didn't know how to respond to it except to carry it out.

Esther 4:1—When Mordecai learned of all that had happened, Mordecai rent his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes and went out into the midst of the city.

Now, Isaiah is written primarily to the Church because of things covered there in Isaiah 58 about fasting. It's a spiritual thing. Now, they didn't grasp that. They went through a physical thing. They went through the motions of various thing as their custom, to put on sackcloth, to have the ashes. They had this custom of humbling themselves in that manner to call out to God, to cry out to God for help and intervention in their lives, for things that were happening to them in a very bad way, to ask God for intervention.

We learn in Isaiah 58 that that's not our main focus for a fast. It's about humbling ourselves to change what's inside. So, we learn on a spiritual plane what it's about, but they went through it physically because God wasn't working with them as a Church, He wasn't working with them as a spiritual people. They were a carnal, physical people, a physical nation of people. He worked with them in that manner, and this is a part of that process.

God honored that because that's the purpose they were called to, a physical purpose of a people that if they looked to Him He would intervene over and over at various times for them. This one here in a very powerful way, in this particular case.

It says he rent his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry. It says, He went even up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one could enter through the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. You know, he worked in that area, he served in that area, but when it came time for him now to be clothed in sackcloth and to have this process of going through and fasting he could only go up to this point in time because of wearing of sackcloth. You couldn't be attired like that and go into that area of the palace in that region, past that gate.

So, in every province where the king's commandment and his decree had come was great mourning among the Jews. Can you imagine all these letters have gone out and they all know it? They're given one day that they're going to be destroyed. We can't comprehend that. We don't live in that kind of a world. And yet they did, and they realized that on that day they're going to have people coming after them to kill them all, every one of them, children, and everything.

So again here, it says, **So, in every province where the king's commandment, his decree had come, was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many laying in sackcloth and ashes.** So, right away this was just a natural response of them. Because they had enough of the knowledge of that which they carried with them into captivity, and those who continued. The Jewish people have always been good at that on a physical plane, to pass things along from generation to generation. These things were passed along as to their customs and how they lived, and so this was their response - to fast, to go before God: "We have to have help or we're all dead people." Incredible.

Verse 4—So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her what was happening. Then the queen was exceedingly grieved, and she sent clothes to clothe Mordecai and to take away his sackcloth from him, but he would not receive them. So, she couldn't talk to him, she couldn't go out there, and she couldn't have this conversation with him, basically, is what she's saying, if he's dressed like that. She wanted him to come in because he had continually been in that area there, as it talks about him trying to see her peace, what her state was.

Verse 5—Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend unto her, and gave instruction to him to go to Mordecai, to find out what was happening and why.

So Hathach went to Mordecai in the city which was before the king's gate. Then Mordecai told him of all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay the king's treasuries for the Jews to be destroyed. So, the story was out there. Here is a sum of money that he offered to give, and the king has said now, "Go do it."

And he gave him a copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther and explain to her. So, she was basically removed from all of that and didn't have access to it where she was, and so he's going to make sure that she sees it, the actual writing. And so, **to show it unto Esther and to explain it to her and instruct here that she should go before the king seeking favor from him for her people.**

So Hathach went and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Again Esther spoke unto Hathach, with instruction of what was to be told Mordecai, **All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that whoever, whether man or woman, should come before the king into the inner court, who is not called is one law to be put to death.** So, that's the sentence, in essence. That's the decree, that if you do this you're going to be put to death if you try to go in before the king without being called.

...unless the king should hold out the golden scepter, that they may live. But I have not been called to come in before the king for thirty days. So, in other words, timing is of the essence here and this is where they are, they're about to be destroyed, and she can't go in before him for 30 days.

I have not been called to come into him, before the king for 30 days. So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

Then Mordecai instructed to answer Esther, Don't think to yourself that you will escape the king's house more than anyone else of all the Jews. So, he's getting pretty strong with her in what he's saying because she doesn't want to die. If she goes in before the king and he doesn't hold the scepter down for her, that it's okay, permissible to do so, she's going to be put to death for what she does. She knows that and she's dealing with that. Mordecai is reminding her, "This is far greater than you. This is all the Jewish people and you."

That's why he says what he did, "Don't think to yourself that you will escape in the king's house more than anyone of all the Jews. **For if you keep silent your piece at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place.** Now, that's pretty strong. To feel so strong about a matter that you're fasting about, and you believe that God's going to intervene. You just have this knowing in your mind that God's going to intervene, and if it's not you who does it, God is going to bring in someone else to take care of this. That's pretty strong. That can only come from one place, God, who had to put it in His mind, as much as He puts things into our minds to see truth.

He said, **It'll come from another place, but you and your father's house will be destroyed.** So, it's going to happen, God's going to take care of us.

And who knows, powerful, what he said here, And who knows if you have been touched in the kingdom for this time now. That's what the word means, placed in the kingdom, made queen for this purpose now. And the reality is, yes, she was.

You know, that's why I think about this, and it's so inspiring. When you think about different stories of scripture that we've gone through over and over again here, especially in the past year probably. I think of the travels of all Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and different ones and what they went through and what they did and knowing as you go through those stories God planned it all out.

He planned the number of children. Abraham, Isaac, one. Now, there were more, but that one was to be unique and special, of a special mother, in that respect, and there was only one. Because that's where He was going to accomplish various things. Then others later on.

You read stuff like this, and you realize that when God has a purpose to accomplish something He calls individuals to share in it, to be a part of something, and if someone does refuse, God's going to raise up someone else to accomplish it. That's the way it works.

It's like 144,000. But there may have been millions called to have that opportunity, especially in the last 2,000 years. The vast majority have rejected it somewhere along the way. It's hard to grasp, hard to comprehend, but that's the reality of what we've gone through. That's our history. That's what we've experienced. We're told that's exactly what has happened through time. Many have been called and few have been chosen out of all that, few have come through it all.

We can better understand that now toward the end of this age and what we've seen happen in the Apostasy and what we've seen happen in PKG since then. It's hard to grasp sometimes the magnitude of these things. But God has called us to be a part, but He doesn't force us to do it.

He's not forcing queen Esther to do this. He doesn't make people be a part of what He's doing. They're shown certain things, they're given certain things and He's worked with them, and certain ones He's molded and fashioned, candidly, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Worked with them one-on-one in a very unique way, very powerfully so to bring them to that point in time. Knowing their minds, knowing what's in them, knowing what was in them when they were born, of the kind of person they are.

Now, that's hard to grasp sometimes, but there are certain things that God has intervened with in time. David speaks of things in a similar toward of language. He had a unique purpose in time. David didn't just happen. He was molded and fashioned to be who he was, a man after God's own heart. That wasn't just an accident. God worked with him to become that man.

And so, there are occasions where people are given opportunity, but they don't take it. So, I think of the one, it says, "Let no one take your crown." And yet I have witnessed that. We have witnessed that. Some of you have been around for a long enough period of time, since 2008, and saw what happened at that point of time because of a Holy Day, of understanding Christ is not going to come on Trumpets, he's coming on a Pentecost. Wow! Why didn't we see that before? Well, because God hadn't given it before.

We go through that process and God's in control the whole time. But there are individuals who rejected it, and in time He got rid of them. They were separated from the Body. But they had a choice. They could have been a part.

Esther is being told, "If you don't do it, someone else will." "Don't let anyone take your crown." Same sort of thing on a spiritual plane, if you will. I oftentimes just marvel at how many people have said no to God because they wanted something else. Many a time because they thought they were owed more, because they deserved, maybe, a certain ordination. That's happened a lot in time because they were owed.

Who knows if you have been touched in the kingdom for this time now? Placed in the kingdom for this time now, for this very story to take place, for God to show His great power to save a mass, a massive amount of people, the Jewish people from annihilation.

Absolutely. That's what this is all about. God raised up Esther, He raised up Mordecai. He prepared this story so we can read it and learn lessons from it. Over and over and over again in scripture God has planned out 7,100 years for mankind to live on the earth. We should be in awe of what God has planned out and what He's offered at various times, what He's done, what He's brought about.

Verse 15—Then Esther told them to return to Mordecai with her answer. She wasn't vacillating back and forth anymore now, worried about whether she should go in and worrying about the scepter. She had to get to that point where she saw it more clearly and recognized the responsibility that's upon her.

What responsibility is on you? What did God call you for? Is it something small or is it something great? Sometimes we just don't grasp what God has called us to because we look at our lives and where we are, and we're scattered in different parts of the world, and we're not great in the terms of what the world is. But if we grasp our calling, if we grasp the Great God of the universe, that He's called us, so small as we are, some to be a part of 144,000, some to live on into a new age as a foundation for the Church to be raised up in the Millennium. Small.

And what lies beyond that for those of you who are in that position? What place has God molded and fashioned for you? Because the reality is those who go into that position at that point in time have awesome opportunity in God's Kingdom when their resurrection comes. It doesn't just have to be just a part of the 144,000. It's a family that gets larger and larger. But opportunities in it are incredible. Sometimes we just don't grasp what God has placed before us, what He's offered us. So, we have to make our choices in these things, of what we're going to do and how we're going to do it.

And here it is, this was an incredible thing that took place. But the lessons are for us, what we're to glean from it spiritually is for us to be moved by something that happened on a very physical plane but happens to us spiritually. That we love what God has offered us. Because if we can see it for what it is over 6,000 years, how many people have been offered it?

You think that billion-dollar lottery is big? I think I saw a stat this morning as I was going through and looking at some news items. 1 in 320,000,000 are your odds. Well, what we've been given, what we've been offered is far, far greater than that. Because that billion, after a while it's going to be paper money. Paper. Of no value whatsoever. What we have goes on and on and on and on. God has given us a place, a point for a calling of why we're called. We're all different. Not for the same thing, it's for different places He has for us.

That's why I love in John 14 when it starts out "In my Father's house are many dwelling places," and it starts with a government. That's how God's Family starts. To think where we are, who are we? Well, we're individuals called by the Great God of the universe. Not to be questioned. Not to ask why. Not to try to understand it, because you can't. But to just be thankful and to know that God is in your life working with you, molding you, offering you things

that one day are going to just—and I'm sorry to use it so much—boggle, boggle, boggle your mind when it comes to pass. Over and over again it'll come to pass because that too will grow.

Verse 15—Then Esther told them to return to Mordecai with her answer. Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast for me; and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. Be thankful for her (back in 2009) and what she said.

And so, if you grasp that, what I just said, do we grasp the opportunity of what God gave us to do back then? Was that just by accident or fluke or a whim, to have a two-day fast? Or has there been a great purpose in it, of things we don't even fully see yet? Because the reality is, yes there is. We are unique to our calling, to our time, and one day you're going to grasp it even more.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise. And so will I go in before the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish! That's the way it should be. "I belong to God. Whatever happens to me, it's God's decision, it's God's choice." Where else would you want your life to be but in God's hands? And when we die it doesn't matter. We're in God's hands.

In whatever we do or whatever is coming in the future here, this should even mean more, in that respect. We're going to go into some really bad times, so whatever happens happens. So be it. "If I perish, I perish."

So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther had instructed him. It's really beautiful, the way it's written there.

A very physical story, but for us, if we see it, it's a very spiritual one.

So, with that, next week... Remember, it's not always good to read ahead. Just wait. We'll cover it next Sabbath.