

Today we are continuing in the series *God's Glory and Greatness*, with this being *Part 6*.

This will be the last of this particular portion although the series coming after this is going to be a continuation of the same sort of theme. But it'll have a new direction in one respect. I just didn't want to have a really long series with the same title. It makes it a little more difficult sometimes. So anyway, we'll start the next part next week, but this week, *Part 6*.

Now, we ended last week by reminding ourselves of what had been covered in the series entitled, *Humility and Seeing Ourselves*, and that had to do with the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's reign when God humbled him, and he went into a state of being like an animal and when he came out of that, and God showed him what had happened he had a change of attitude.

God is working with the world to change the attitude. Sometimes it takes a lot to change attitudes. That's why the world has to go through what it does in order to be able to enter into the Millennium, in order to have a Millennium established. It's not going to come easy because a lot of people aren't going to humble themselves no matter what.

So again here, it's an amazing process of God working with us in our lives when we think about ourselves in the Church because it's something we have to learn. We have to learn to want humility. We have to learn how ugly pride is, and we have to fight that battle because it's not an easy battle. Hence the need for fasting, because it's acknowledging to God in spirit and in truth that we need His help. It's the conviction on our part, it's a knowing on our part that we have to have His help. We have to know those things, and so we tell God we know that; we have learned that. Sometimes we have to learn it the hard way; we have to go through a lot of things to get to a point where we want to do this.

Just like prayer. You have to grow in this relationship with God. It's a relationship with God and it doesn't come automatically. You have to grow through a process sometimes over years to come to the point where you know you need God, you need God's spirit everyday and you can't afford to be cut off from God's spirit because of stupid sins, because of ignoring things that have to be changed in our life.

What's that all about? Well, we have to learn that. We have to learn to hate sin and learn to fight it and recognize that whenever we have sin in our life we have to repent of it quickly because otherwise we cut ourselves off from God's spirit. And without God's spirit, well, what do we have? He can't transform us. He can't work with us. He can't mold and fashion us. So, we've all had that experience in our life. You can't be in God's Church, be baptized with God's spirit, and have that impregnation of God's spirit within you and live a perfect life. You have, we have as human beings, sin. Just a part of a process.

As we grow we're to be conquering and overcoming and have less and less sin as we grow. That's the goal. That's the purpose.

Anyway, God humbled Nebuchadnezzar; He knows how to humble human beings. Not everyone... What's an amazing thing to understand is not everyone will be humbled. That, to me, is an incredible thing to understand, that not all are going to humble themselves before God. Now, he did it in a very physical way, but it was very genuine in the things he had to say. It wouldn't take a human being very long, even in his state, without God's spirit in him to right back to what he was, lifted up with pride.

Because that's the way we are. We have to have God's spirit to be able to continue in that. So, I hope we understand that portion as well.

As was mentioned, Nebuchadnezzar was the first part of that great statue of the dream that he had and that Daniel interpreted for him or gave him the interpretation of what it was all about, that God gave to Daniel, placed in his mind the understanding of what the dream was all about. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar about it and said, "You are that head of gold," in essence.

The Babylonian kingdom is what we're talking about here and that period of time. Nebuchadnezzar was the longest-ruling king of that specific kingdom, 43 years. He reigned from 605 to 562 BC. And after that, there were different ones that came along and reigned in Babylon, but they were short-lived reigns if you will. They didn't last very long until the end. Then that wasn't really that long compared to Nebuchadnezzar because his was the longest.

So, the last king was Nabonidus. Nabonidus and his son, Belshazzar, is recognized as being a co-regent ruling with him. So, history is a little difficult in this part here. A lot of historians have written things through the ages, and it was in this particular age as well, especially the Greeks, different ones that wrote about different periods of time, and this one here is a little difficult because there is an uncertainty as to where Nabonidus was.

But Belshazzar says something toward the very end that seems to indicate in every respect that his dad was still alive, his dad was still king somewhere. So, there are all kinds of ideas about where he was, where he might have been battling or where he might have fled to. We really don't know. There's a lot we don't know. Someday we get to fill in the pieces.

Anyway, let's go on to Daniel 5 and read this once again here as we go forward because things are about to change. So, we talked about the first part of that statue, the head of gold, and we're talking about the fall of it, the end of it. It wasn't a long one compared to some of the others. The others went on and on here and it got longer and longer especially when you talk about the Roman Empire or the European empires, the rise and fall of some of those, and yet being that one area of the legs, the feet of iron and clay.

So anyway, this one here is very short-lived. The next one coming up is going to be the Medo-Persian empire, the chest and the arms of silver. Again, interesting here, we were talking about this last week. You think about the two again in the Medo-Persian Empire here, even though the Medes were involved somewhat then with the Babylonians, but the Babylonians were the primary rulers at that particular time with Nebuchadnezzar. But they come up again here toward the end of all this in the Medo-Persian Empire. So, it's the two that were together, the Medes and the Persians that take down the Babylonian Empire.

What's amazing in all this to understand, God is working all this out. God is bringing it about. He raises up kings, He takes them down if it's for a purpose. This is all for a purpose. What's the purpose? The purpose of the different kingdoms and what He'd planned for the statue. How long they would last, the kinds of lessons that would be there.

If you look at the first one here, when you look at Nebuchadnezzar and the different times he went up against Jerusalem and Judah, I'm in awe of the different prophets that God raised up at different times, one that He left in Jerusalem, Jeremiah, and then the different ones that were brought in at different times when you talk about when Ezekiel came down, when you talk about Daniel, when he came in and in different times of being conquered here.

So again, awesomely inspiring to look at their lives, and when you read some of the things they wrote, even though so much of it's about the end-time. The minor prophets, it's primarily about the end-time. What Daniel wrote, the focus of it as he went through the book, as God blessed him in going through that time period was to go toward the end-time. It's all about the end-time. It's all about the statue and then that great cube that comes out of the heavens and hits it in the feet and destroys it. Incredible!

Just the image of that itself and what it all pictures! But God's orchestrating it all through different periods of time, working with different people at different times, molding and fashioning the different prophets at different times. They all didn't have the same job, they had different functions.

Just as we talked about, well, I talked about last Sabbath when we talked about some of the things about Ezekiel, and you think about what he wrote. He wrote to Israel. So, people have had problems with that because Israel had already been taken captive and he's talking about their captivity and so forth. The primary story flow spiritually is about the Church and what the Church would go through in the end-time.

That's a marvel if you see the time we're blessed to live in and we're experiencing. Those things that were written hundreds and hundreds and even thousands of years ago. Incredible that we should have such an opportunity. It is an opportunity. It's not meant to be easy, it's hard. It's meant to be hard, too. It's meant to be difficult. It's meant to be something you've got to fight for if you want it. Because those who don't fight aren't going to receive it. It's as simple as that. You've got to fight.

So anyway, **Daniel 5:1—Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and he drank wine in the presence of the thousand. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father,** speaking in time here, not his direct father, but forefather, great-great-great-great whatever it was, and speaking of lineage as well. **...his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem.**

So, he knew about this. Just to set the record straight here he knew at the very beginning what he was doing. He knew where it came from. He knew the history of it. The reason we know that is he's told that a little bit later here as we read the story. Daniel tells him, reminds him, "You knew all these things. You knew all of this."

And so, here he's going and he's asking for these things because it was incredible wealth and so to show off. That's what it's about. It's about pride. It's about showing off to the thousand. Why have so many there? To show off, "Look how great I am!" That's what it goes back to again.

We have to learn how ugly pride and self is if we try to esteem ourselves and raise ourselves up. It is hideously ugly. Yet my experience in the Church has been that has been done over and over and over again in people's lives, and primarily from the ministry on down because they set the example in that, being lifted up. Then individuals who were given various jobs within the Church being lifted up because they adopted that same kind of mindset. Because it was very obvious what they were doing. It was about themselves. Never is.

It's about God Almighty. It's about our calling and the opportunity we have, what we really need to see. Pride reeks. It stinks. Truly does. You've got to hate it just that much. You've got to hate it within self whenever it rises up its ugly head, because it does. The more you grow and the more you fight and the more you conquer it, it's the way it should be, and that's good.

...he gave command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the kings and his lords, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem. So, the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.

Verse 4—They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood, and stone. What does that mean? It's the gods they have made of those things. That's what people do. They make, they carve something in a tree stump, and they bow down before it. This is their god, whatever that is. Bronze, iron, gold, and silver. Human beings, it's amazing. You look at any religion out there, that's what they do, even if it's a cross, just wood, they'll bow down in front of it, and sometimes put a statue on it as well, an image of a man with long hair. Everything that's opposite of what Christ was like they'll do that.

...they drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood, and stone. In the same hour what appeared as the fingers of a man's hand wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; so, the king saw a part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance changed. Can you imagine? Here he's filled with pride, riding high, showing off to people, laughing it up, drinking wine and merriment, and then he sees a hand and it's writing on the wall. Scared the you-know-what out of him. It did! That's why his countenance changed. I imagine it would change yours too. Maybe not as much as his, but anyway.

So, the king saw the part of the hand that wrote, and the king's countenance changed. Turned to fearful terror is what it turned to, from merriment and half of a stupor, you know, from drinking too much, **and his thoughts troubled him.** They should have put in there "a lot." His thoughts were troubling him, "What does this mean? What is happening?"

...so that the joints of his hips were loosened. That's kind of an unusual expression and there are those who speculate this is talking about what this is all about is when you sit down sometimes in this round thing we call a toilet and excrement comes out. God made us that way. Your bowels open up. So, it helps to be in that position.

So, it uses an expression here that is very likely exactly what happened to him. He did it right then and there he was so frightened. He was so afraid, what was taking place, he lost it.

...and his knees knocked. You think he was scared? You've never been scared like that, I doubt. Maybe shaking. Something happens that's frightful. But to have your knees where they're going back and forth, and if they're close together they're knocking together? That's scared. That's what it says here. That's what he was like.

The king called out loudly to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. He wanted answers and he wanted them right now. "What's going on?!" He was afraid.

The king spoke, saying to the wise of Babylon, Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple—that means royalty—and have a chain of gold around his neck, and he shall be the third in the kingdom. So, this seems to indicate then he's referring to his father being first, he's second, co-regent with his father, and this, he will be third, whoever does this.

Now, it says, all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing and make known to the king its interpretation. Then king Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his countenance was changed, and his lords were perplexed. What to do. What's he going to do?

The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. It says, **The queen spoke, saying, O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts be troubled, nor let your countenance change. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the Holy God.** Now, it doesn't mean that they understood about God, but that's how they referred to them because that's how the Jewish people who were in captivity in the beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, by now they were a part of the people of the kingdom who were there. They just became a part of the kingdom.

Many of them were serving and some others that had come from them generations afterwards, they were serving, even in the palace and different areas. And so, different ones knew them. And especially Daniel because of his recognition from the very first and passed down evidently then through the other kings as well that were there, though short-lived. He had a reputation of being an administrator in the kingdom.

And so, she's reminding him again of this old man. Because he's old now. (I'm not getting too far from that.) Anyway, **There is a man in your kingdom in who is the spirit of the Holy God, who in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him.** So again here, it's not that they understood or agreed with what the Jewish people believed because they heard of some of these things that they believed and about this God and so forth and things that He had done.

So anyway, **wisdom of the gods were found in him. So, king Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpretation of dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel.** So, she knew of it; different ones knew of it and the queen knew of it. Incredible.

...whom the king named Belteshazzar. So, she's going back and reminding some of the history here, this one who is Daniel, the king called Belteshazzar. **Now, let Daniel be called,** so he's about age 82 right now, **and he will give the interpretation.**

Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, Are you that Daniel who is one of the children of the captivity from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? I have heard of you, that the spirit of God is in you, and that light, understanding, and excellent wisdom are found in you. So, obviously still had that reputation amongst some there. Not necessarily him, but others within the palace area.

Now, the wise and the astrologers have been brought in before me so that they should read this writing and make known to me the interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. Then I was told of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now, if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Now, to most people, if they heard this, obviously, and the others, you saw different ones, they wanted that. People tend to want power and authority and wealth. Again, that's been a big problem within God's Church, people tend to want authority, what they think is authority. They think it's some kind of prestigious thing or something, or whatever it is that people have wanted, certain jobs, and so forth. People have left the Church – many people have left the Church because they didn't get some of those things they thought they were deserving of, especially when they saw others get it and they became jealous of them.

That's happened a lot, a lot in God's Church. It's happened a lot in PKG. It happened a lot before in Worldwide during Philadelphia. It happened a lot during Laodicea, and it has happened a lot in PKG. It hasn't ended. Why? It's part of the sifting process, something people have to go through. Incredible.

Verse 17—Then Daniel answered... See, this is the right answer. This is a right way of thinking. This is the way we should all be. **Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let your gifts be for yourself.** "It's not about that. It's about God. This comes from God; it didn't come from me." Basically, it's what he told Nebuchadnezzar, wasn't it?

Let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. How did he know? I hope we're learning. He put it, God did, in his mind. He saw the writing; he knew what it was.

I think of all the things when Christ read different things in scripture. He knew what it was all about. He knew in a way that makes us look pretty puny because he had the mind of God. He was the Word of God made flesh, so it was instant. He read it; he knew it. He knew what it was about. Incredible to understand that.

Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. O king, the Most High God... So, he drives it home. The Most High God. You have all these gods, but the Most High God **gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, a kingdom and majesty, glory, and honor.** So, if he had a mind, much of a mind, he would grasp right away what he was saying. He was saying, "Everything you have is because of what God, the Most High God, gave to your forefather Nebuchadnezzar. That's why you have Babylon. That's why you have this palace." He didn't get it.

He gave him the kingdom, glory, and honor. If God gives that which He gave to Nebuchadnezzar — He gave that to Nebuchadnezzar and then He helped Nebuchadnezzar to learn the lesson on a physical plane, "I gave this to you. You were an animal. You were like an animal. You were living like an animal out there all this time. Do you get it now? Now you can have it back." What an incredible thing!

And so, you read what he said. To me, it's almost like putting chills up and down your spine when you read what Nebuchadnezzar had to say after that.

So because of the majesty that He gave him, that God gave him, **all peoples, nations, and languages trembled before him.** That's why other nations were fearful of Babylon and their power, because of what God gave to him. **Whomever he wished, he executed. Whomever he wished, he kept alive.** So he had a lot of power. That's what he's showing here. **Whomever he wished, he set up.** Put in places of rulership. **Whomever he wished, he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride...**

That's a horrible thing, you know, to see that kind of thing take place, what happens to people. It's easier to understand in the world, but when it happens in the Church, man, that's ugly. To become hardened in pride. I've seen that happen so much in God's Church. People not fighting against the pride and not understanding what's taking place. If they allow it to fester in their heart, in their mind, they become hardened in that. Then after a while, they're gone.

I wish I could drive this home more, but I can't right now because it's going to be future sermons after the Feast. Because we're preparing for some organizational meetings and so forth and I'm going to tell the Church more at that time what we're doing, why we're having those meetings. But I'm going through a history of all that's taken place just within PKG, even within the ministry and so forth, lessons to be learned and the like, and driving those home.

But you know, I didn't fully understand when it was happening sometimes, when it took place in Worldwide, but once PKG came along then some of these things we began to live more directly. This thing that takes place in people's lives when they don't fight against pride and they think that they're owed

something. They get to a point where they think they deserve something, deserve to be giving sermons, deserve to be giving sermonettes.

“I deserve this more than so-and-so who is giving them.” That’s happened a lot in God’s Church! And you think, what a sad thing, because it shouldn’t be like that. What’s missing? Well, get into that another time.

I might interject some of that. We were talking about that today. This might be a good place for some of that. Sometimes when we go back and visit various areas we have different emotions and different feelings of things we’ve gone through. It’s a learning thing. This time here more than any other time my recollection and what I see from it, saw, was seeing from it or thankful to God about was this was an incredible training ground of molding and fashioning through different experiences, things that I’d be able to use later on, and understand more deeply later on. I wouldn’t have if I hadn’t gone through them.

Pride was always at the forefront of problems. Pride has been at the forefront of the Apostasy. Pride has always been the problem because of a lack of humility in people’s lives. So much of that started farther up. I’m going to give you an example. I’m just going to go through some examples here, maybe piece some of it together as we go along.

We were talking about an occasion where an evangelist came to visit this area, and rather than renting a car, which would have made it easier for me administering the area here, I was expected to go get him—that’s fine—over in Cleveland. Not here, but over in Cleveland because he had points he wanted to get with this one airline, and they didn’t come to here, so it was better for me to drive down and go get him.

Before he ever came he wanted to get a hotel to stay in. He didn’t like staying with families as a whole. Which is fine, too. I understand that. We strive to do that all the time rather than interfering with people’s lives and so forth. Sometimes I’m working on various things, so it works out better that way.

But at that particular time there he was wanting to know if we had children, and one was making a bit of a noise at the moment when he was talking to me on the phone, he was. He was pretty young. So, “Yes, we have children.” Basically, it was asked of me that, expected, basically, that they shouldn’t be there if he’s coming to stay there. Because he wanted to know the different hotels there, and basically we told him, well, the only one I can think of right now is the Red Roof Inn. That wasn’t quite to the level he wanted it to be.

Then on top of that, come to find out that he wants me to drive him over to Rochester (or somewhere over there) because one of the real reasons he wanted to come to this area to visit is because he wanted to get a Hickey Freeman suit. They make them over there so you can buy them cheaper over there. So, anyway, I just remember the name, Hickey Freeman, and I think he got two for himself and two for a friend at headquarters. Fine, if that’s my job, that’s my job.

But to do those things wasn’t good and it wasn’t right on his part for the motivation of it, to come into the area for that purpose, looking back on it in retrospect, because it should be one of service. It should be one of serving the people in the area.

I thought this was a great time to get all the leadership of the Church together in both Franklin and Erie and have an evangelist talk to them. That'd be great! Here they hear me all the time, let's hear from someone from headquarters. He just didn't want to do it. He didn't think that was something that was needful for the area even though I tried to encourage him to do it. I thought, well, so it's just to go to Hickey Freeman? Anyway, it was kind of disappointing.

So, you learn through things like that, not to do things like that. You learn where some of that comes from, self, and you don't want selfishness to be in the way within the Church, especially in places of service and the like.

Anyway, some other things that we were talking about along the way had to do with pride as well in different people and some of the memories that weren't very good. But there were many occasions, frankly, where my wife and I weren't sure we were going to come back alive from some visits. I told headquarters one time where I would be on one visit because I wasn't sure what might happen when I visit. I told my wife that I'm on a visit, going to go on a visit here and I'm not sure what he's going to do. Had to tell her to make sure the doors are locked and don't answer it at certain times periods because someone was out threatening and so forth.

This happens in the church and sometimes you receive the blunt end of some of those things. But again, individuals that are willing to do that in God's church because of sin, and that's what some of these things were about; they weren't addressing the pride in their life, wouldn't be humbled. Sadly, a lot of you right here know the different ones that would have been involved in some of this, but I'm not going to give any names.

But one time we were afraid for a woman that we weren't sure what the husband was going to do to her. Supposed to be in God's Church. How can you have that kind of an environment in God's Church, that people can be so obstinate against God, against God's ministry to do something of that nature?

This is what we go through in the Church. That's why God wants to get rid of all pride, as a whole, in our lives. We want to get rid of it. We want to be of a humble spirit, to be molded, to be able to be moldable.

Someone, when you go out and visit and work with someone in God's Church, should be receptive to God, wanting to follow God, wanting to do what's right, wanting to get rid of the things that are wrong, not standing up against what God is trying to give.

So, I thought about some of those experiences, and we did while we were coming into the area here, about different people and how they resisted God and so forth. Yet you learn through that process. But's not a fun process.

So, is anyone listening today still resisting God? Still holding on to certain sins? Because that's how far it can go. It can go to a point where people become so hardened. That's why they were able to do what they did. That's why people could go so far because they'd been doing certain things for so long that had never been addressed or hadn't come to the surface at least. When they have to be addressed then it's a lot harder. It's harder because they're hardened inside.

That's what this is talking about when it talks about this spirit, this mind of a hardness in heart. **But when his heart was lifted up (verse 20) and his spirit was hardened in pride he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took glory from him.** So again, this is something that Nebuchadnezzar had to go through. We can grasp and understand some of that.

But on a spiritual plane I think it's hard for us sometimes to say, "Well, the Israelites, they were hardened inside." Yet sometimes we fail to understand within the Church we can have a deep hardness of heart as well that we can't change, and we get to a point where people can't change. That's a horrible thing to get to that point in life.

You want to be of a humble spirit. You want to get rid of pride. I'll come back and circle back to some of this in a little bit here.

So again here, "But when his heart was lifted up, and his heart was hardened with pride he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him." Now, we read things through this, and we read it on a physical plane, but sometimes we don't grasp what happens to us on a spiritual one. And that's what this is all about. If we desire to be of a humble spirit you have to cry out to God to help you be of a humble spirit, to fight the pride that's in your mind, to fight resistance toward God.

A lot of times He'll manifest that within the Church toward other people. There are some things I don't want to get into yet because it's at the Feast and I'm having a hard time juggling some of these sermons in my mind.

So anyway **...and his dwelling with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven until he knew the Most High God.** So again, he's going through this story again and telling what happened, reminding him, if he didn't know, what happened. **...that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and appoints over it whomever He chooses.**

You, his son Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. Isn't that amazing? "Although you knew this history of things that happened to him, look what you've done. You haven't humbled yourself before God." And so, that part of what I'm going through in this is sometimes we can read a physical story and say that's really foolish and stupid, and we don't understand the Church, we don't understand ourselves and our place within the Church and what it's like to resist God if we hold on to certain sins.

Which some are still doing, and individuals are still being disfellowshipped from the Church. I mentioned it last year after the Feast. I've always mentioned it as a whole during the Feast period and up to the next Feast. So, this past week I had to disfellowship someone else again. Don't like doing that but it's a part of getting rid of certain things within the Body. We have to get rid of pride, of why we're not changing, why we're not addressing certain sins in our life that God isn't going to allow to continue on.

That's been a lot of my training. It was a lot of my training here because by the time I got here and certain things were brought to the surface there were situations that needed to be addressed in people's lives

that were ongoing, and so deeply rooted in some people's lives that you weren't sure how they were going to respond to you.

That might be kind of hard to imagine. I think of the one where we called headquarters real late at night one time because we were concerned for the welfare of a woman, a wife of an individual, and told them what was happening, what was going on.

I've got to back up in the story a little bit. We went to this couple's house that was having some real problems and I was having to deal with this individual on some sin that he was either going to have to address or not address. It wasn't that hard of a thing, he could have fought the battle if he'd wanted to, if he wanted this way of life, if he wanted the fellowship of the Church.

And so, it's not a pleasant job when you have to go and tell someone that this is wrong and it can't continue on. He was hard on his wife for whatever reason, I can't remember the entire story there of what was going on. As we were leaving, because we saw a gun next to the door as we were coming in, we basically backed out of the house when we were leaving, making sure that we knew where he was all the time.

So anyway, then we called headquarters and told them what was going on and they told us to call and make sure that she felt safe, that she was okay, because then you get into a situation where you may have to call the police or whatever if someone is in a dangerous situation if they're going that much off their rocker. Which sometimes happens to people when they turn from God. It happens a lot where sometimes people can become so hardened that they so go away from God that they can become a different person. It happens.

That's why you have to fight the fight, seek humility, and understand how ugly pride is and where it can lead because it can harden something inside to a point where you can't change. You don't ever want that to happen, that you resist God so much that you can't change.

So, we learn from these experiences. God allows these things to exist so we can learn from them. Belshazzar should have learned on a physical plane what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, but he didn't. He wasn't fearful of the Great God, of going against Him, and on and on it goes. He was filled with pride, doing some of the same things, basically, that Nebuchadnezzar was doing in lifting himself up and looking, "Look how great I am. These huge things, thousands of people here and we're feasting before our gods."

...although you knew this you have lifted yourself up over the LORD of heaven. See, when I read something like this I see the physical part of it that happened here to them, but this has happened over and over and over and over again in the Church. What a horrible thing that we would lift ourselves up in some way above God.

They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. Then you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know. There is nothing there. Wood is wood. Stone is stone. Gold is gold. Silver is silver. Any way you want to shape it, that's all it is. It can't hear. It can't know.

You think, how dumb can human beings be? To think that somehow you can spin this wheel and prayers are going up to this God that you have, or you count beads and repeat the same thing over and over and over again. You think, where is the sense in that?

...which do not see or hear or know, and the God who has your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. And we have to make sure. We have to ask ourselves how much do we glorify God? Because we can always grow in that. How much do we recognize God for all that we have, for all that we've been given, physical and spiritual? What honor do we show Him? When do we show Him honor? How do we show Him honor? Especially in what we accredit, give credit for, ascribe to our God?

So, it'd be something good to think about, to pray about, and to ask God for help in doing better, to see things that maybe where we're missing out on our opportunities of being thankful to Him, of being grateful to Him, of glorifying Him in various things. Because as we've been going through the series, I marvel at the Great God who had planned all these things out so long ago. He doesn't do these things on the spot and all of a sudden decide to do something.

These things have been planned, different things to fit into place for so very long. The statue and raising up a king who would fulfill the gold. That wasn't something decided just before He raised up Nebuchadnezzar. "I think I'm going to have Daniel... have this vision ... so he can interpret it to Nebuchadnezzar, what this statue is all about. And we'll just have it, so it goes all the way to the end, this great big cube coming out of the heavens." No, He did it long before. He orchestrated it all, brought it to pass.

Do we glorify God in those things, talk to Him, pray to Him about those kinds of things, tell Him what a marvel it is we have those things we can read, and we can know, and we can understand, and we can come to appreciate more deeply who He is, what He's revealing to us, what He's helping us to see on a greater plane than ever before so we can be in greater awe of Him and let Him know, "I am in awe, more awe of You. Thank you for blessing me with that kind of mind!"

Because God's Church has gone through a lot to get where we are today. It's gone through a lot to get where we are today. God has done it. Christ has done it, and we get to experience it. How awesome is that?

Verse 24—Then the palm of the hand was sent from Him, and this writing was written. So, this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, which means "to number," TEKEL, "to weigh," UPHARSIN, "to divide." So, that's what the words meant.

Then Daniel goes on and even adds a part of the phrase of the one word and gives its interpretation. **This is the interpretation of the words. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.** Isn't that incredible? God numbered it from Nebuchadnezzar down to here. God knew the kind of person. Even this was planned out. All this was planned out so it could be written, so that others could read the story, so we could be moved by and inspired by things that God has done through time. To understand how great our God is, that He didn't just do them then, but He planned them. So much of it has been about others later on who would have His holy spirit, who would be able to see and recognize these things.

I think of the Millennium and then the Great White Throne and all those who even lived during those time periods are going to be able to be resurrected and to see what happened in their time and to learn these same things and be inspired by them, what God did. The power and the greatness of Almighty God to do such things.

“God has numbered your kingdom.” Well, it’s part of His plan. It had to be numbered. It was going to come to an end. God lets people go the way they’re going to go, their personalities, the way they think, and they succumb to various things. It wasn’t going to take long, even the kings in between and things that they did, they got lifted up with pride. Now he comes along even more so, farther and farther away from the stories about Nebuchadnezzar and what happened there.

After a while even that can happen within the Church if we’re not careful, if we let down, if we forget. That’s why we go through and talk about things of our past so often. How do we get where we are? Especially what’s happened in the end-time, Philadelphia, Laodicea, the Apostasy, and then what’s happened during PKG.

We’re to learn from these things, from our history so that certain things never repeat themselves, so that we learn this isn’t the way to do it. Instead, God shows us, “This is the way.” We learn that, and we become convicted of it. Beautiful! Wonderful! Exciting!

See, just because of some of the experience we’ve had in this area here, I have greater conviction, greater determination in following through and seeing that God’s way is on top. If someone comes to a point in time where they won’t humble themselves, they want to continue in sin, I have no problem being a part of cleaning up the Church. I got to a point where different ones, and there are various sins, it wasn’t difficult. It hurts. It hurts when people don’t live by God’s way of life, they don’t want to do what God gives them to do. But if you have to, you have to take a stand. All of us.

Thinking about that very early this morning. All of us continually have to take a stand. No matter what we go through there’s coming a time when you’re going to have to take more of a stand. You think maybe you’re taking a stand now, and we do in our lives, maybe on the job, maybe with teachers.

Sometimes amongst ourselves, you have to take a stand. Sometimes you have to do what’s unpleasant and go to a brother alone so that you understand what was done or what was said in order to make sure that everything is clear and that everyone can part on right terms.

Because if something has been done that needs to be changed and corrected you have to take that stand no matter how unpleasant it is, maybe even with a mate to bring it up, to discuss it out of love. Because what’s spiritual is far more important than what’s physical.

And so, certain things mold and fashion us. That’s why I’m so thankful that I had this training in this area. It hurt. By the time we left, it was very painful because of all the individuals that resisted and fought against God. Because it wasn’t me. I just got the brunt end of it. It wasn’t her. She just got the brunt end of it. That’s what happens. Sometimes you receive the brunt end of something for standing for God, for God’s way of life.

Sometimes you get thrown into a lion's den. Daniel. That happens later on in the story. We haven't even gotten to that part of history. Incredible! Things that happen in people's lives. You just have to take a stand and sometimes you're going to suffer for it. Sometimes you're going to lose a job for it, taking a stand for the Sabbath, the Holy Days, whatever it might be.

God must be first in our life. That's a matter of humility on our part and a matter of desire on our part. We should want no other way.

We go through a lot of things to mold and fashion us, and we should glorify God for that because it's all a part of a training. We're all being molded and fashioned if we yield to the process. It's a beautiful thing to be in God's hands.

The end of 23, "And the God who has your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified." Now, I love that expression because I made this comment at different times, where else would we want our lives to be but in God's care in God's Church? But we've seen thousands go by the wayside, thousands in God's Church, hundreds, and hundreds of people we personally have known who just quit. What is more important than God, then the truth, then holding on to it, than fighting?

So, he's telling him what these mean here and what's taking place. He gave him what each word means, "to number," "to weigh," and "to divide." Then went on to give the interpretation of each word, what it is. So, now he's not just a matter of this is what is up here, but this is what it means.

So, he says here [TEKEL:] **You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting.** "God has numbered your kingdom and finished it." We just mentioned that a moment ago. So, yes, it's numbered, we're down to the end now where at the end of the head of gold it's getting ready to go into the next part of the statue, the part of silver.

So, he's telling him, "Your kingdom is numbered, it's finished. **TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting.** His life, the way he was living, what he was doing. He didn't "render according to the benefit of your forefathers and what you knew and the knowledge of what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar, your forefather," whatever. [PERES:] **Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.**

So again here, this word here he uses "Peres," he's taken from the one, "UPHARSIN," which means, it's the word that means "to divide," but he goes on and even uses another, a different word here and as a part of the interpretation. This is what it's about, "PERES: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians. So, what you had is gone and it's divided up between the two."

Verse 29—Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple... Even though he told him "I don't want it," this is what he did. So, he did it anyway, went through the formality. He clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler of the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.

So that very night after his partying, after his wine, after they'd brought all the vessels in, and then he sees this hand back there writing. Then after this is done and brings Daniel in and gives the interpretation of it, that night he dies.

Now, it's quite an incredible story because there are a lot of historians that write about this event. You go through and a lot of the stories vary in what's said about it, but it's a major event, the fall of the Babylonian Empire and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire and what takes place in history.

Because the fortification, Belshazzar was not concerned that night about being conquered. He wasn't concerned that night about losing his life because the fortification he had was one of the greatest the world had ever known. Massive. Massive. Massive along the Euphrates river.

A lot of historians have written about it through time, about some of the things that were found there as far as even remains that had been there for a long time, when different ones came along and wrote a hundred years later or two hundred years later. Their writings are out there about what it was like, how massive this structure was.

So again, he didn't have a concern, that's why he was in there partying before everyone else. Because you see, the Medes and Persians were out there. They were already there. They were coming up against them. They weren't stupid of where they were, but they weren't concerned. No one can get into this fortification. That's how unconcerned he was. Massive army that came to conquer and they were out there.

So again here, I'm going to read some things here about some of this. It's the fortified city of Babylon, considered to be invincible, basically, and that's why the term, if we understand this story here, when you see the term brought up later on at the end of Revelation, "Babylon has fallen, had fallen," it means a whole lot more, because it's about all the kingdoms of the world, indeed, and what God has done, and that cube that comes down and smashes the feet (at the end) of that statue.

But to understand what it meant on a physical plane at this time being considered, of being looked at as impossible that it could be destroyed, that's the way the people of the world are today. "You can't destroy it." "This is nuts! The end? This nation going to fall? What are you smoking? We want to get that brand." That's about how people would be, you know, in their thinking.

So again here, in that time period to think that Babylon would fall would be ludicrous to people, just like it is today. So again, incredible, an expression like that and how God has used it.

Anyway, the stories surrounding how vast this fortified city was, they vary a lot. Some of the dimensions here that I'm going to give you vary a lot by different ones, but it was massive. As one author did, took a very conservative approach from all the different things that had been written about it and took the most conservative of all—and that's what I'm going to give you today, basically—because there are some that talk about it being many, many times greater than what is even here on the most conservative take-off of all this.

So again, considering the time period, what we're talking about, and seeing something like this that's massive that was built there. Again, it's along the Euphrates river and it's on both sides. The river runs right through the middle of it. I'll read some of this to you. To me, it's incredible.

I'm going to read different sources here in what's said. "Still the broad facts remain-first, that the walls enclosed an enormous space, which was very partially occupied by buildings; secondly, that they were of great and unusual thickness; and thirdly, that they were of a vast height-seventy or eighty feet at least in the time of Alexander [323 BC] after the wear and tear of centuries and the violence of at least three conquerors."

So, it's showing here what he did, because a lot of them did when they came in and conquered, they tore down, sometimes they'd even move certain things and rebuild other things. But sometimes they'd just lay things bare or put them into a mound or whatever because they'd just destroy whatever they could of a place. Some went back at different times, and that's what he's saying here. Basically, different ones have come back and recorded at different times the massiveness even after being defeated and conquered at different times.

It's also recorded, "The Greek historian Herodotus may or may not have visited the city of Babylon in 460 BC," it's not really clear in what he wrote, what he had today, but this is what he had to write about, "... after it had been conquered by the Persian, Cyrus, and stripped of treasures, but when its walls and temples were still standing, and he described the largest city of the ancient world. The entire city was said to be enclosed within a wall of 10.5 to 14 miles on each side [16.8 km to 22.5 km]" (again, depending on which ancient historian is referenced here).

"The river Euphrates passed through the city walls, and the brick lined channel was lined by waterfront, wharves, and docks..." because again here, we're talking about their being able to travel up and down it. They had the boats out there along it as well, "along [the entire] length of the city. Herodotus stated the walls were 85 feet wide, and 335 feet tall, topped by 250 defensive towers. The top of the walls included a road wide enough that a four-horse chariot could turn around on the road."¹ That's at the top of the wall.

Now, these kinds of things are written, and some say that it was much larger than that. They report it being much taller, much higher, some three to four times higher. So, this is the conservative part of what the city was like. That's why they weren't worried. "Babylon has fallen, has fallen." Incredible.

"Conservative calculations set the dimensions of the ancient city of Babylon like this: The outer walls were 17 miles (27 kilometers) long. These walls were 22 feet (7 meters) thick and 90 feet (28 meters) high."

Again, very ultra-conservative part of this.

¹ <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/babylon-walls.htm>

“The outer walls also had guard towers another 100 feet (30 meters) high. The city gates were made of bronze. A system of inner and outer walls and moats made the city very secure.”²

So again, that’s why they weren’t concerned about being defeated by the Medes and Persians when they came up against it.

Another source had to say this, that, “Historians believe Babylon was the first ancient city to exceed 200,000 people. The city proper measured four square miles, on both banks of the Euphrates.” So again, all these vary in what they have to say. “Much of the building was done during the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar... He built an 11-mile defensive wall outside the city, wide enough on top for chariots driven by four horses to pass each other.”³ ...or turn around. So that’s how they reported some of this or stated it.

So, let’s read it again here. Incredible fortification. That’s why when going through that again it just reminded me, “Babylon, Babylon has fallen,” and what it means. God giving that to the Church that we say to the world, in essence, and what that means to us, and then what it meant back then.

Let’s go to Isaiah 45. So again, that night this “MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN,” and what it meant in the fact that Belshazzar died that night, I want to go back now and read about what it has to say in Isaiah 45. Because this is something that’s written very close to two hundred years earlier by Isaiah the prophet.

That’s why this is so moving, it was to Cyrus when he knew that this was written about him two hundred years before it happened. Because he was basically one of the primary ones, if you will, that was given the credit for the conquering of the city.

Isaiah 45:4—Thus says the Eternal to His anointed. In other words (some people misread some of these things), this is about the one to be king, in this case here the one He was going to send, his name was Cyrus. So, it’s a prophecy about **a king whose name is Cyrus** that would come along two hundred years later. But they didn’t know it then; Isaiah didn’t know it.

...whose right hand I have held, meaning “I have strengthened,” **to subdue nations before him and to open the loins of kings.** So, it talks about what happened to the one there. **To open before him the two leafed gates...** And so, there is all kinds of stuff written in history about what this is, the great bronze gates and what had happened and how they were able to get into the city and conquer it as easily as they did.

...and the gates shall not be shut. So, whatever happened this is all it says in Isaiah. This is all that’s given in scripture, but it’s talking about the fall of Babylon and what was going to happen. The great fortification was there so this is how they came in. There are all sorts of stories about the gates and what took place. They were supposed to have been shut. Whether God opened them up for them to come on in, it doesn’t say.

² <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/daniel-5/>
#:~:text=Conservative%20calculations%20set%20the%20dimensions%20of%20the%20ancient,meters%29%20thick%20and%2090%20feet%20%28%20meters%29%20high.

³ www.learnreligions.com/history-of-babylon-3867031

I will go before you and make the crooked paths straight. In other words, make the way clear by removing every obstacle. So, it was one of the easiest times for a nation or a people to come in and conquer without any resistance, basically. That's what the story is here. So, God is telling Isaiah this is a thing about Cyrus who's going to come along and do this. He's going to be the king and the way is going to be opened up for him. Nothing is going to be shut, it's going to be totally wide open.

I will go before you and make the crooked paths straight. I will break in pieces the gates of bronze. So, that's what happened. If they shattered, whatever, doesn't say. Nothing is recorded about it in that area. There are some different stories out there, but anyway. ...and cut off the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Eternal, who calls you by your name, am the God of Israel.

What an incredible thing! Because, you see, Cyrus came along ,and this was read to him. He knew by name he was mentioned. So, he does some incredible things because of this because he's moved by this.

For Jacob, My servant's sake, and Israel My elect... So, do you think when he comes along that he might have a special affinity to the people who were taken there captive by the Babylonians and that are still living there, and that certain kings coming along later might have an affinity toward them because they're going to know some of these stories or be told them later on? Because it comes up over and over again.

For Jacob, My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, so to bring to pass even things in the future, even as the second part of the statue having to do with the chest and the arms of silver. **I have even called you by your name; I have surnamed you, even though you have not known Me. I am the Eternal, and there is no one else.**

That's a verse we're pretty familiar with because we have read that in times past. We've read that in 2005 for sure in a very clear way at the Feast of Tabernacles, making it very clear that God has been the only one through eternity who is God. Yahweh Elohim; there's been no other.

I am the Eternal, and there is no one else. There is no God except Me. I will gird you, even though you have not known Me. He's going to make him strong. That's what He's letting him know. "I'm going to take care of you even though you've never heard of Me, haven't known Me until this." **So that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none besides Me.**

So, we read through this and yet God has used these scriptures for the end-time to clear up something that was hidden for hundreds and hundreds of years because of what the Catholic Church did in 325 with the teaching of the Trinity. Then, finally, what kind of started kind of working its way along and then we come up to the time of God's apostle in the Philadelphia era and God begins to shatter that belief of a trinity, that there are three people in the godhead, one referred to as (that's why they translate it that way) Holy Ghost, and Joshua (Jesus), and God, Father.

God revealed to Herbert Armstrong there's no such thing as a holy ghost person, being. That's the power of God. That's the spirit of God. God made that very clear to him so that we could begin to have some of the trinity shattered. But it wasn't all yet because it was for another time. It was for the very end here.

Actually, not to be given until after the Apostasy. Incredible. 2005, finally it was cleaned up in the Church. This verse! Isn't that incredible?

Do you think that was planned? See, God can reveal things whenever He wants to. He can illuminate things, His mind to be given to understand things that are written when it's His time. We can't know them before that. If they're hidden, they're hidden. If they're gone, they're gone. If they're restored, they're restored. If they're given for the first time, they're given for the first time. Because that varies throughout scripture, obviously, what God gives.

So again here, we're reading verses here that were about something that God gave to show His great glory, His great power, that around two hundred years before He would give to Isaiah, so that when Cyrus came along he would read these things and he would be moved in a certain way toward the Jews, toward Judah, that nation that had been taken captive into the area that he's able to conquer now.

Then we can come along hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years later and learn something in a very powerful way about God Himself to clear up things that we haven't clearly understood – that Joshua had a beginning, and it was at birth in a human mother, and he had no life before that. That's a profound thing to understand. All here. All planned out to be given at the end-time.

We should marvel at God, how He does, how He's chosen to have different things at different times for different purpose. It's beautiful, truly is.

I form the light. So, He's really pushing it forward here to Cyrus, a physical human being who wouldn't be given God's holy spirit like we are but he's going to be given something profound here very powerfully so.

I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. We have never known what that meant until the end-time, what it means that God creates evil. He doesn't make evil. He doesn't make us be evil. He doesn't make human beings be evil. He doesn't make people do the things, evil things they do. He didn't make Lucifer do what he did, but He created the capacity for it knowing full well what was going to happen when you give people free moral agency, when you give angelic beings free moral agency, their own minds to make their own choices.

So, we want to make the right choices once God calls us and continue making right choices and humble ourselves and continue making right choices, and to learn to hate pride. Because that's the story over and over and over again here that we've been hitting on. Nebuchadnezzar, all the way down to the end of the kingdom there, Belshazzar, and now a new king coming along, a new part of the statue. It's going to get them off to a better start in one respect, just on a physical plane because of the people who were there.

Because there are a lot of captives who stayed behind. There are a lot of captives who stayed behind, who never went back to Jerusalem or Judah. They stayed in that region of the world. They had families. New generations came along. That was their home. People were born there. Then another generation came along. More were born there. Until we come down even to queen Esther. Incredible. Because that's a part of the story here. She's a part of the Medo-Persian Empire later on that follows.

I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Eternal, do all these things.

Because He's God Almighty. He's created everything and He gives us free choice. That's why I marvel sometimes how there are going to be so many who will fight against God even in the Millennium, who will fight against God in the Great White Throne. Most of them are going to have had a whole lifetime of living in a carnal body and they chose what they chose. Their minds are set in various things, and they want various things, and they just will not choose God. Incredible.

Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness. That's what God desires. That only comes from Him. He's the source of it. We have to become right with God in order to have righteousness in our life. We have to become more at one with God in our thinking, in agreement with God.

All those stories, I didn't go into them very much because I didn't need to, but that was our training ground, basically, for the Apostasy and what would happen afterwards. God molded and fashioned these things. I'm very thankful for it.

We need to be very thankful for what God gives to us and calls us to and have the opportunity to be a part of, because it's incredible, awesome, beyond our understanding. You will marvel at this far more in the future, but we need to start marveling more now, be in awe of the Great God of the universe and everything He's planned out.

Just like I marvel at these verses we were able to read because some of this is for our time to give us better understanding of what it means. No one in times past has been able to answer because it wasn't given yet, how God created evil. People don't understand that in the world.

What a blessing when people come to understand. Because there are a lot of different ideas. Every once in a while you'll see a movie, primarily if it has to do with things having to do with the holocaust and what happened in Israel afterwards and the nation as it began to come together. People came together and formed a nation, and some of the different things and attitudes and feelings that the Jewish people have had toward God on a physical plane.

There are things in their thinking to be learned from some of that, and there are some who have had trouble. I think of one time on a flight we were going over to the Feast with Laura's dad. Unbeknownst to us he had asked for kosher meals because he'd heard somewhere that the food on the plane is going to be bad. It's going to be pork and other things, sandwiches and whatever, so he'd asked for kosher food.

Well, we were the only ones on the plane getting kosher meals. I didn't even know he'd done it. The stewardess comes up to me, asked for the name and hold up your hand. So, I held up my hand, they came up there and she had these containers, and they were cold. They were wrapped in some kind of clear plastic type, whatever it was, that you wrap things back then.

I didn't know that it was a Jewish thing that you were the one that had to unwrap the food. Because it's not supposed to, they're not supposed to touch anything, so you're the one who has to unwrap it to show, to know (I guess), that it hasn't been touched by others, by gentiles. Anyway, I didn't know this. I was

ignorant of that. And so, basically, I said, "What am I supposed to do? This is cold?" Well, somebody said something and so they took them back and warmed them up and brought them back out to us. The bread was hideous. It was probably ten years old. Anyway, it tasted like it was ten years old.

But anyway, there was some people on the other side of us and they were Jewish, and we didn't know that. It started a conversation. "Oh, you're Jewish." "No, we're not." "You're going through all this; you've got these kosher meals and you're not Jewish?"

And anyway, it came up that the mother of the family had grown up, and they weren't practicing Jews anymore, basically, because they couldn't understand how God could have allowed something like the holocaust. Because their family had suffered evidently in the past there. So, the mother was the last one. So, for that to have happened, for them to have experienced that they blame God, basically.

Well, you know a lot of the world has done that. You hear different things at different times. It's like, how could God allow this to take place? Have this evil? If God, if He's so powerful and so loving, how come there is this evil here and that evil there, and why does He allow it?

And you think, what an awesome thing when you come into God's Church, and you begin to understand we have choices. God doesn't make us do anything. He's given a full period of 6,000 years that you can make your own choices. What are you going to do with it? Well, in the Church we learn what people do with their own choices. We gravitate to evil. That's just the way we are. "The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." We learn that very early on. We understand what our nature is like and then it puts everything in place.

You feel for people who don't understand, the people who blame God for things that have happened in the world that's evil. No, God's not making drugs come into this country. He's not making people take the drugs, fentanyl and all the stuff that's going on there. Was it over 100,000 people die a year now of some of this?

Then we send people off to war and they come back. I was watching a thing on part of the news this morning and there's this one group that's trying to help people who have PTSD. It's very common. One individual was talking about how that there are 17 people a day and figured that the figure is probably closer to 23 – 24 people committing suicide from the military. In the military now or veterans. Every day. Every day. You add that up. I've talked about that in times past.

God doesn't cause all that. He allowed people to have governments, to make choices about wars and what wars are going to enter into. It's our fault, human beings.

It's like the Apostasy. A third of the Church quit because they had no answer. They were so shattered that "If this is God's Church, how could this happen in God's Church? Aren't we God's Church?" They had gone through enough to know there is nothing else out there. "This Christmas and Easter thing, we know that's a bunch of garbage, and so basically, this must be too." Almost to the point of not believing there's a God, because how could God allow this to happen in His Church?

Well, who is to blame? We all were. Isn't that amazing? That's what the answer is. We all became a part of Laodicea. We all began to let down. We all had to admit that or those who would come through it had to admit it or they couldn't grow. Because that's the beginning place for growth once again to be restored. A lot of people just couldn't come to the point where they could say, "I was Laodicean." Why? Too much pride. Too much pride. They weren't wrong. They did what was right. Huh. Sad. That's when pride becomes hardened, that you will not repent.

My wife and I were talking about that on the way over here. We know a lot in the ministry today that are scattered out there, that if they were told Ron Weinland is an apostle, and Christ told them that, they wouldn't accept it, basically. Because who is he? Look what he's done (what they want to believe). People believe what they want to believe.

So, it's easy to do as human beings. You think, what a sad thing that you would have such feelings of pride to think that you're so much better, so much greater. That's not what it's about. It's about the truth. It's about God. It's about God's way of life. What a horrible thing that people let personalities get involved.

I'm starting to get into some of the sermons later on in November, so stay away.

Anyway, what an incredible thing to read through a story like this about Cyrus and realize some of this wasn't just for Cyrus. Much of it was for us at the end-time. Awesome. Awesome, awesome, awesome. He says, "I create evil." We know how. To have that knowledge is a beautiful thing, it really is, because it puts everything in place.

It's just like the Great White Throne. When you can come to where you agree with God about things and about why the Great White Throne and what its purpose is you have more peace in your life with death. Because death is hard because it's about relationships. Those things are always hard. But when you have more peace in your mind to know it's just a time gap?

Sleep is a time gap. You don't know it until you wake up in the morning. You've been asleep. You don't know what happened while you were asleep. That's why I turn the news on first thing. Knowing the world we live in you want to know what's happened during the night. We live like that.

So is death. It's the time that nothing is there, no consciousness, no thinking takes place until God brings it about again, makes a body and puts you in it. Awesome! I think, what a beautiful time.

That's why people sometimes become all concerned and I understand. But sometimes people go too far and talk about children. And I think, you know, living in this body in this world in the first 6,000 years, a child that doesn't have to live in this world in that 6,000 years and yet they're going to have opportunity to live in that time when there will be no more children born? There'll be no more children born during that hundred years, just those resurrected as children because they died when they were a child. And what a world! What opportunities they're going to have!

So, we come into greater agreement with God, and we have more peace in our minds and our understanding.

I, the Eternal, do all these things. Drop down you heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together. I, the Eternal, have created it. So, God's letting us know it's all created, His Family, as though it were done. But it's not done because there's a lot of work to do. The 144,000 in God's mind, created when He first planned it because He's going to do it and it's going to come about in it's time. Because some are going to be taken out of generation after different generations and different time periods. Incredible!

I, the Eternal, have created it. Woe to him who strives... It's a word that means "contends" or "argues" **with his Maker!** It's an easy thing to do. I've known a lot of people fight with their Maker, resist God, resist what they're taught.

Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! If you want to strive, go strive. That means the broken pieces of pottery. Go argue with the other broken pieces of pottery because God won't have that. We either humble ourselves, yield ourselves to the process, love what God is showing us, what God is revealing to us, we embrace it with all of our being – and not only that, we fight for it. The main thing we fight is self. What an incredible plan.

Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to Him that fashions us, What are you making? "What are you doing?" God's not asking for our agreement. He's saying you can be a part of it, you can have it when it comes our time. But I've known of so many who came back with that kind of an attitude.

They asked Herbert Armstrong over and over again, in essence, "What are you doing?" They wouldn't say it. They disagreed. Most of the evangelists disagreed. Why? Because they had a better way of doing it some other way. They didn't realize God's leading and guiding him in things and the way he was doing it. That's the way he functioned. That's the way he worked. Because he put God first he wanted to do it God's way. He recognized it was God's Church!

And so, there are those that came along that resisted that. I have experienced that on a much lower scale. It's been very painful. But we all have to learn from some of those kinds of things. Depends on what God is molding and fashioning in each one of us.

So again, **Shall the clay say to Him that fashions us, What are you making? Or of your work say, He has no hands?** Finding fault, tearing down. **Woe to him who says to his father, What are you begetting? Or to the woman, What have you brought forth?** Why would anyone do this toward God? It shows how shallow the understanding really is, how much we don't know. And you think, how did an era come along that thought it knew so much, "rich and increased with goods?" So lifted up with pride, hardened with pride. That's why the Apostasy happened.

Thus says the Eternal, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker. Now, all this is written, and basically, it's going to be shown to Cyrus. Then all whom God works with at one point or another are going to be able to learn from it. There are a lot of people who have to be resurrected who lived before, even in the Church in

the last 2,000 years, who are going to be resurrected to read this again and learn from it, of what was written where God says, "I make peace, and create evil," and come to understand what it means.

Thus says the Eternal, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker. Will you ask Me things to come concerning My sons, in other words questioning God. **Will you command,** in other words, "charge, order" **Me in the work of My hands?** And yet we don't think that as human beings.

Most in God's Church would never ever say that's what they did. But I think of those in Philadelphia when they found fault with Herbert Armstrong and didn't yield to the process and seek to be at one in how things were administered. When they resisted and different ministers resisted, administering things the way he gave them to be done and they did it some other way, this is what they were doing. This is exactly what they were doing on a spiritual plane.

Will you command (charge, order) **Me in the work of My hands? I have made the earth and created mankind upon it. I, even My hands have stretched out the heavens, and all the host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness**—"for a righteous cause" is what it's about—**and I will direct all his ways. He shall build My city.** So, it gets into some things here that come to more of a spiritual plane of things that are going to happen as well by using something physical as an analogy here, but it's really more about what's coming later.

"He shall build My city." So, if you want to talk about New Jerusalem and the things that are coming and what Christ has been doing and so forth, that's what much of this is about as well.

He shall build My city. Now, this is about what's given to Cyrus about rebuilding Jerusalem because that's what Cyrus does, he starts it, starts the process of the Jews being able to go back. So, when he reads this and he's told about it on a physical plane, it's Jerusalem. That's what it's about. He's already said who he is and what took place.

...and he shall let go, or send away or send forth, **My captives, not for price nor reward, says the Eternal of hosts.** He's going to do it because of what he read here. He's moved by it. So, there are spiritual things that come as well, that have to do with the end-time and also with this time.

So again, all the glory and the greatness belong to Almighty God.

So, we'll continue on in the next portion that gets into some of the story that shows how Cyrus responded and how he reacted to all this.