

Preliminary Comments before HWA Sermon

I'll just take a few minutes on one subject that I did not intend to include this morning but I think it would be important since I had written on the subject before, some may be aware of it.

I would like to bring to your attention that we used to assume that the 2,520 years from the fall of Babylon represented the times of the Gentiles, not realizing that Jesus, not Daniel, uses the term and he refers to it as that time when Jerusalem is trodden underfoot for three and a half years.

In fact, the last century and most of this century has been the time of the British Empire, the French Empire, the Dutch, a little of the Danes, the Belgians, and not to mention the United States or that three quarters of the world geographically was under the dominion of the lineal descendants of the children of Abraham and therefore it could not have been the times of the Gentiles in the sense of domination at all.

What we have to realize is that Daniel chapter 4 is the story of how long it would be for Babylon to be knocked out before the final arrival should come, during which time Persia, Greece, and the various revivals of Rome, till the last one would be occurring.

And that tree that was cut down that represents ancient Babylon that had the brass and iron round about was protected from total decay so that it would be available for growth.

Just because the brass and iron were taken away from the chopped stump of the tree did not mean that after 2,520 years it would suddenly become a great tree.

Every tree takes time to grow.

And 2,520 years does lead us to the year 1982 or the early part of the 1980s and therefore we also should recognize that there may be a time of growth and development politically, economically, religiously that follows before a period of tribulation and the day of the Lord would set in.

We have to bear in mind, as I have said before, that there is a need of a long range and a short range view.

And it is advisable in our planning, as Mr. Armstrong did Ambassador College, to plan an institution that would take care of everything even if we had 100 years to go.

He did not build quantseth huts for the college or the auditorium, but that we should be willing to leave it at any time in the interim when our job is finished.

Too many tend to plan either long term, long term or short term rather than to be willing to think in both terms.

And in this sense it is important to realize that we are near the close of a period of seven times of punishment that befell ancient Babylon and the final political structure that is to rise again is called again Babylon, it is not called Persia or Greece or Rome.

And in that sense we recognize where it will arise as the last revival of the Roman system, but it will have the characteristic of the unity of a single man, unlike a Hitler and a Mussolini who headed up both parts.

The last one will be a single political leader heading up two parts, like the five toes on each of the feet as I mentioned this morning, and then will come a political crisis on the world scene that will be called at times of the Gentiles when they will be in domination over Jerusalem, because Jerusalem will be the issue that the Arabs once settled, understandably, at the same time that the Europeans want oil.

And the problem now that is taking place at the head of the Persian Gulf and all along it perhaps before it is over is just one of a sequence of events that show how typical the Middle East is as a volatile area.

I would mention for some few who may not be aware or may be many, most of Americans don't see any difference between Iranians and Arabs.

The Iranians as a whole are Shiite Muslims and speak an Indo-European language, a language like the people of India or Russia or Western Europe as a whole.

The Arabs speak a Semitic language and the bulk of them are Sunni Muslims, which is the overwhelming percent of Islam.

So that Iran and the Arab world are divided in terms of a sect within Islam, and they are also linguistically, historically separate as a people.

And there is a reason for this conflict that is not just something that is on the surface, quarrel over a little border region or islands determining the control of the oil flow.

It goes back to the fact that they are people of different ancestry whose language has been separate all this time, even though they use the same script today, the language is different.

It would pay you, therefore, to be aware of these prophetic events that are happening just like the Feast of Tabernacles two years ago occurred at the time of the election of John Paul II.

There are often significant events that are taking place at the festival, and it would behoove us to be aware of these things, to listen to the radio and or TV or look at the news, listen to it on your car if you drive back and forth, to keep abreast.

One of the most important prophecies in all the Bible, in a sense, is not a prophecy at all.

It says, watch, because that's what we would have to be doing.

So many things would be taking place, but not everything is listed in the Bible, and we have to take the Bible as that broad outline, and the prophecy which says watch is what fills in the details, because the nations have the right to choose.

The nations' leaders are not always forced, either by the devil or God.

They tend to reflect the state of mind that the people are in, or what God permits or allows, or the devil wants.

But sometimes we have leaders who play no major role, and it's just time and circumstance that happen to all men.

The same thing is true of nations, the decisions as to who will be and what configuration in the future will heavily depend on circumstances both within the nation and of its leadership, because human beings have their own minds and what the devil himself would like to do and what God allows.

We cannot say for sure which nations will be in or which will be out without a revelation, and when that is not given, we simply must say we do not know.

I am happy to have a chance, at least momentarily, to say a few of these words.

Was Mr. Armstrong expected to be on before three, or in a few minutes? Then let me say a word on another subject, for we will probably have a bit of time, and this doesn't matter where I interrupt.

I would like to give you just a little background about the program that is taking place in Thailand.

Our Ambassador College students and one adult and a married couple, and one previously who graduated making 12 and all, were invited by the Supreme Patriarch of Buddhism of Thailand to assist the Thai community in the education in Western culture in the English language of some of the refugees in Thailand, and we volunteered to assist the students to pay their way, of course, and to give them a certain amount of scholarship credit for this work that is financial credit against their tuition.

They are doing very well.

As far as we know, they are observing the Feast of Tabernacles in Malaysia, then they will be returning to Thailand.

They are located on the far northern border of Thailand, that is, if you were to take a bus from the capital, Bangkok, you would ride the bus to the last town in the country, and that's where the students are, on the border of Burma, Laos, and Thailand, in a little house for the men, and another one, well, not so little, I guess, these are larger than we think, another one for the women.

Every young man and a woman act as a house man and house mother.

The custom in that part of the country is you throw the garbage out the front door of the window because it decomposes.

That's before plastic and tin and such things arrived.

So the when our students got there, they found that the houses were being littered with the garbage that was just being tossed out the door of the window, and so they dug holes and placed them in the ground where they should be.

The tin goes here, and the decomposable garbage goes over here, and the water from the sink is drained over here, and within two days, the community was already copying them within two days' time.

Now this shows you how quickly the world tomorrow can be changed by way of the example of people who have the rudiments, such as hopefully we all do, of hygiene and common sense.

We in fact had to explain to our brethren in Tonga the same thing.

They just simply tossed all the coconut and the banana and everything on the ground.

But when Western ecology came, their plastics and your metals, it didn't decompose and it started to look bad.

So we explained the need of burying some things.

It just looks better in the ground than on it.

Those are very important contributions that our students can make, and I hope that we can have it again for the next semester with a second group.

But the Thai government, the military, for that matter, the United Nations, the American Relief Organizations, and the religious Buddhist community in Thailand has all been appreciative of the example we set for the religious community learned long ago that we are not trying to make converts.

That is, we help people where there is a need, even though we do not expect people to respond and become members of the church.

And because of that, the Thai community thought that we should be the one to set the example of how to teach both a Western language, in this case English and or French, for we have some one student from Canada who is French speaking on the group, and the Laotians grew up in the French community, so that was a help there.

But we are an example to others to show how it ought to be done, because most missionaries and or organizations went in with a soup kitchen idea that is, if you don't get converted, you don't get the soup.

We go in with the idea that we not only help the refugees, but we want to also help the Thais in the community and be even handed there and to show what our example is.

This is the way we would want to do things, and the government officials at highest level in Thailand and in the United Nations in Thailand are aware of the way we would do things.

And that's very important in terms of essentially showing, as we do in Israel with our students at the excavation, the character of our young men and women of Ambassador College, which doesn't exclude some of those of you who have been or will be going there.

Now it is about three, I suppose about four, one o'clock their time, Mr. Armstrong should be coming in at any moment.

I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Ost for their hospitality and seeing that our arrangements were made on the 64th floor.

Some of you thought it was 67, the 64 is high enough.

But this is a very remarkable city, and I hope that you will all living in the area of Michigan realize your responsibility in keeping the churches sound.

It is a duty of the ministry in part, but it cannot be done by the ministry alone.

It does depend on those who have been for years in the church to be loyal.

It is remarkable to see people who go back into the early 60s or late 50s, whom I have met here who had been at Big Sandy, who have remained solid and stable during all this period while others have come and gone.

This is an important factor, and every local congregation reflects the stability of the membership and certain leaders in it, that is, in personality and in spiritual stature, age, I think is good to have, older as well as younger people playing the same role, because there are always new people coming, individuals whose families have been broken up, and it is these people who have a solid home that God calls and spiritual sound minds that will determine the character of every local church.

And of course the cooperation of all of you is reflected in the state of affairs.

As we see every time we have the choral presentation, that kind of cooperation and harmony does reflect attitude as well as training.

We will be leaving tomorrow morning, just before services begin here, the plane is scheduled to leave, and we had no choice, we have a four hour layover in Minneapolis in order to get a plane to Rapid City in South Dakota so that we have no way of staying here for the morning service, but it will be at least our pleasure to have been here.

Detroit was not my first choice.

Israel has a public image that has not been that good, however, every city has its bad and good sides, and I think that the image that was created in July at the convention and that is reflected in the city's concern, at least for a major area for guests such as we are, is important.

And I will carry a very good message back to Mr. Joseph Tkach and the ministerial services who works with Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Armstrong mentioned the cooperation he has from Pasadena.

That's due to Mr. Tkach, who was from Chicago, Russian ancestry, who is a very cooperative responsible individual, and I think I can convey the mood that we have had here that Mr. Ost mentioned this afternoon in terms of warmth and responsiveness and the lack of division.

I don't mind questions and raising issues about where we are going and what should be done, but it is important to recognize that the big question should be asked from a perspective of goals of the work rather than from the so many did hostility.

One of the classes I teach in the ministerial refresher course is Mr. Armstrong's trips around the world and what his role is there, and I have had to explain what I think is most important and that it is more important for Mr. Armstrong to be seen for what he is than even for what he says.

Both are important.

He's commissioned for what he says, but the ultimate impact on people will be what he is, and whether you like it or not, it is not your words alone that count, but it is what you are that people will judge you by.

Hereby you know that you're my disciples, that you preach the gospel.

That's not what it says.

It says that you love one another.

When the resurrection occurs, when some of the leaders now in positions of power may still be there, as an illustration hopefully, the king of Thailand, where Mr. Armstrong has been, can you imagine the impact on world leaders when they see that the new world leader, Jesus Christ, who has come to take over the governments of the world, has associated with him, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Rader, other members of the staff whom they might have inadvertently seen on TV, and they discover that the bulk of all the rest were members of the Church of God, and they will have to ask themselves, how did Herbert Armstrong become immortal? And I didn't.

What went wrong with Buddhism? What went wrong with all of the rest of Christianity? Why is it, in other words, that the one person who spoke about a world government to these leaders is now

playing a role in it? We've had some in or out of the ministry who said that Mr. Armstrong's role was at a banqueting.

Now it is nice to have a meal with Chinese leaders, but that's not the reason Mr. Armstrong travels.

You may find that Jesus, from time to time, talked in such a setting to the scribes, or especially the Pharisees.

That's the way human beings are in sociability.

That's the way we're treated when we're here, but that's not the reason we're here.

And so in the same reason we have to recognize that Mr. Armstrong's real role is the example that he sets, and that what he taught and what he lived is the way that makes someone immortal.

Without the living that way, we would not have the Spirit of God.

Any message? All right, thank you.

I'll give some comments.

Everything is clear from Chicago to here.

The problem is out in the desert.

The transmission in Arizona.

Now I'm glad that we don't have any problem in a great city like Chicago.

It's confusing enough to be there in any great city.

That's just the way life is.

Anyway, we'll hope that it will come through.

Having been, as my wife and I have traveled to Southwest Africa in 1976, very good, I will just mention that we always found the human example the most critical and the most important rather than just what is said.

So we'll now see what's coming in from Arizona.