

Trumpets in Prophecy

This morning, in advance of our regular service presentation on this holy day, I checked and found that Mr. Raymond McNair is not scheduled to speak and I was scheduled twice and I want to say for any of you who might have had plans, I will be speaking this morning here and I've asked him to speak in my place, which is only proper at the auditorium. I do not account for why he was left out, that's not my responsibility, but I didn't even know he was going to be here or we would have made some changes in advance. Anyway, he chose to speak this afternoon because his favorite Bible is not with him, not that that's necessary. We do appreciate your presence here on this day and the fact that there has been this loyalty that takes us through the trials of the 1970s. I would like to mention a few things with respect to the 1970s.

Well, they obviously do impinge upon the meaning of this particular holy day, which is not only the beginning of a new year, of the civil year. It's also the festival that pictures the culmination of events to end 6,000 years of human civilization or its absence. And in this sense, we have gone through a number of experiences in this decade that should teach us some lessons of importance.

We are in a period that is indeed a transition and it has been a period of unexpected events also in the church. This year, 1979-1980, is a significant year internally in the history of the church in terms of how we come to grips with the problems that have been presented to us.

It's also important at this time, since we are ending at this point in the 1970s to reflect on what has happened, I did recently present to some in private and sometimes in public a view of what it was like to look at the 70s from the point of view of the 1950s.

And I would like to address that, but before I do, may I mention the importance of this year from another perspective, so we see a little something of our roots. This is the beginning of the year for the Hebrew calendar. It's also the beginning of the year 5740 on that calendar. And since we have some people who have given heed to outside ideas pertaining to the Hebrew names cults, I would like to explain a few things in this connection, which many of you may be aware of, some may not be. From the Jewish point of view, this year 5740, beginning today, which is the civil year, represents so many years from creation week as accounted in Genesis 1. Now the Jewish scholars today would recognize that this is a rabbinic tradition, unverifiable. The Jew therefore in general has two compartments when it comes to this matter, one that holds the traditions, the other which evaluates the material that does not conform to those traditions. This is the year 5740 of the Hebrew calendar. This is not the year 5740 of civilization or of human experience. That is, the Hebrew calendar did begin with the year 3761 to 3760 BC. The reason we observe it today is because the calculations on which this festival, this date has been established, go back to traditions, shall we call them, because they are not directly written in the Bible. The past through the period of the Exodus, through the period of Abraham, through the flood, through the lifetime, of course, of Adam and Seth and Enos.

What we perceive from this picture is that when God gave time to man, God did not reveal to man a solar lunar calendar as we have it. He told man that the moon and the sun would be for signs and for seasons. We have the implication in those seasons that we would have the passage of years.

But to integrate those years into a solar lunar calendar as the Hebrew calendar is, will take some time. Now, Mr. Armstrong has perceived, as many other writers through the centuries, that it looks as if there were initially a calendar of 12 months that was essentially solar, having 30 days to a month. An arbitrary calendar, if you please, a calendar that today we might call a businessman's

calendar. The ancient Egyptians, to my knowledge, were the only people who ever preserved both a calendar of 30 days to a month, 360 days to the year and five days outside of the year, along with a solar lunar calendar. And it is my judgment that indeed the Egyptians in their wisdom did preserve both that which man started with and that which man acquired after a few centuries.

In other words, it was not possible for man, at first, to truly understand the nature of the heavens. That as I have discussed with our friend, many of you do know, who was for years the Registrar of Ambassador College, Mr. Herman, it is possible, if you remember the number of years that have elapsed, that is, season to season, if you remember the number of months that you see going by, and if you happen to know the days of the week and you don't lose the weekly cycle, it is possible, it is possible, in just a little over 200 years, to determine the length of a month, which is what our Hebrew calendar is based on. You don't have to have any astronomical tools, you only have to be careful in how you keep a record of the Sabbath, how you keep a record of the number of months that go by, and the number of seasons which represent years.

And you need not have anything more than whole days, and it is possible by the year 3761, 3760, to come to a point very clearly, and you can determine the length of a month is 29 days and 12 hours, and if we had our minutes and seconds, we would call it 44 minutes and three and a third seconds. That's just by knowing a little addition and subtraction and multiplication and division without any further astronomical needs. Mr. Herman was persuaded that that was indeed feasible, and it is significant, therefore, that the Hebrew calendar is not pictured as a calendar that begins after the flood, but before, and it begins very early in human experience. The Egyptians had a solar lunar and a solar calendar also before, as well as after the flood. It's also interesting that we are told that the exodus, the departure of the children of Israel from Ramses, occurred 430 years even to the self-same day that something else occurred before. In this case, the 99th year of Abraham's life, Genesis 17, and in that instance, the implication is that the children of Israel had a knowledge and a working knowledge of a calendar that bridged the period from Abraham to the exodus, and the Jewish tradition would certainly tell us that the principles both of observation, that's the Pharisee rabbinic method, and the principles of a fixed calendar, which is the traditional method that the priests used, and the later rabbis after the Romans prevented observation, that all these go back to the days of Moses. Now, not only is this then an important day in prophecy, but I would like to have us realize that it is a significant day in another sense that is the only holy day of the year that actually begins the calendar. Every other holy day falls somewhere within the calendar. Now, there are people who have given heed to Hebrew names who say you must not speak English when it comes to God, or when it comes to anything else you can.

There are people who have followed some men who believe this, who think that Paul made a mistake when he wrote Phaos instead of Elohim in the New Testament, when he wrote Cutios instead of Adonai in the New Testament, and these people therefore believe the New Testament is wholly corrupt, or corrupt in part, and they themselves know not what part, which of course is a fallacy of their ideas. There are also people who go back to an earlier tradition who say we must observe the New Moon, but they're not in Jerusalem to be sure, and you may not always see the New Moon in Hawaii the same time you do in New York, for it appears earlier in the West and later in the East.

It's possible to think in Hawaii that the New Moon is today, and in India that the New Moon is tomorrow.

And in a great round earth such as we have, God led the Jewish community to recognize that unless we are in a fixed place where we can all see it together and immediately communicate, we must not

go by a calendar today of observation where each one may be a month off or a day off, but a calendar that is based on averages, which is what it is, the average length of a month, and therefore is suitable for an entire world, because even observation will not answer our question for the simple reason that it's all right to observe it in Palestine if all the church had ever been in Palestine, but if you were scattered elsewhere there would be another day, and that's the reason the Jews today in general keep two holy days in a row except for atonement, because they go back to this tradition that was imposed on the Jewish community after the death of Jesus and the overthrow of the rule of the Pharisees, the rule of the Sadducees who were the priests, and the Pharisees who were the house of Judah, not the house of Levi, dominated and imposed that kind of calendar, which was observation for a temporary period. Now in our day therefore we should know that Mr. Armstrong, when writing for the Bible Advocate of the Church of God's seventh day, was invited to write an article and did and explain to the brethren that the Hebrew calendar is the only one that avoids confusion in today's world, and from that time on the churches of God's seventh day who have not followed the Hebrew name cult have basically observed, there may be a few individuals who do their own thing, that they have basically observed a calendar and take a note of a calendar that is the Jewish that we follow, and I think it is significant that Mr.

Armstrong himself established that in the early 1930s in an article that he wrote in the Bible Advocate when the Church of Eugene, Oregon, from which this works, was linked up with the Oregon Conference of the Churches of God's seventh day, and I think it is important that we do not overlook this significant fact. Now the New Testament does indicate that the churches of God in the later part of the first century and for the next into the fourth century, let's say roughly 300 years, was subject. So let us make it plain so there's nobody who can say something to overthrow our practice. It was then subject to a calendar governed by the rules of observation, only not calculation as we have it today, and this is indicated by the fact that Paul in Colossian Speaks of Holy Days and New Moons and Sabbaths in a unique way that the church at that time had to take special note of the New Moons. Throughout church history we are told for this period that the Jews did have authority over the calendar and that it was governed in all Jewish literature by observation, but in 359 AD the Jews came to a conclusion that once the Romans forbade the public announcement month by month of the calendar to keep the people informed. In 359 the Jews said that henceforth the rules of the calendar that we now know are those that are basically to determine our religious conduct and heritage.

Moses gave the children of Israel according to Jewish tradition both the knowledge of how to observe carefully and accurately and what to expect as well as the knowledge of a fixed calendar as we have it today. You don't have to believe it, it just happens to be that you're under the authority of either one or the other anyway, and in this case we are under the authority of a fixed calendar until Christ shall change it if he chooses. That is a calendar governed by averages and not by the peculiar perturbations or variations of the Moons and its movement. I think it is important because there are people in the church from time to time who have attempted to say that we have been wrong in this matter. In this round world you and I know we could not get to the brethren in the New Hebrides of the Solomon Islands or Tonga. People in Tonga observe a Sabbath approximately 22 hours or so before we do, and if we make the decision after we see it their day is already gone by, you see. And this is why, from the point of view of administration, I give no heed or credence to anybody who comes up with any other idea. And I want to lay that to rest, but we should do it because this is also a unique year in another sense. This begins in the Hebrew calendar, unrelated to the calendar, let's call it Hebrew practice, the sabbatical year, beginning with the day of atonement. Remember the trumpet was blown on the day of atonement, announcing the introduction not of a civil year, but whether that year was sabbatical or a Jubilee.

1979 to 1980 in Jewish tradition is a sabbatical year, which brings me now to another question that I would like to answer at the beginning of this autumn holy day season, or we look more closely to the festival itself. Why does the Church of God not have a Jubilee or a sabbatical year that everybody follows at the same time? I ask the question, why do the Jews not have a Jubilee? Does Herbert Armstrong merely pick and choose what he wants out of the Bible and toss the rest out? This was the argument of those who basically left in 74 that we picked and chose from the Bible those things we wanted to do and what we found in convenience we didn't bother with.

I should like to answer this once and for all, apart from the question of the laws of Moses pertaining to the temple and the sacrifice and circumcision. I'm talking to those things that's governed society. We do not pick and choose. We happen to know what our responsibility is.

The Jews also happen to have learned what their responsibilities and limitations were.

So that when the Assyrians invaded the land and stripped a number of tribes of their territory and took over the authority to determine who owns what land and who has to be ousted and others replaced. Other nations have done that since, some of whom are their own descendants.

The Jews from that time on have never observed a Jubilee in the manner in which Moses prescribed.

So let me state the following so we understand. From the days of Joshua to the days of the Assyrian invasion, in the eighth century BC a sabbatical sequence and a 50-year sequence was observed.

There were two such cycles in a century. That is you had seven sevens and then a 50th and then seven sevens and 100. Seven sevens and 150 and then 200 and so on.

When the Assyrians came in, murdered some people off the land, ordered other lands confiscated and people placed in their stead, the Jews found it was no longer possible to administer the Jubilee.

They did observe a sequence of seven years.

This is why we find that when Zedekiah came to the throne in the beginning of his reign, which is the fourth year, and the beginning of any man's reign isn't the fourth year, it is the fourth year of a seven-year cycle. And why we find there is a sabbatical year during the time of the final siege of Jerusalem, read it in the book of Jeremiah, is possible to note and to reconstruct a series of seven without a Jubilee.

Then came the period of Babylonian captivity when the Jews observed neither sabbatical year nor Jubilee. And we come down to the time of Darius and God says in the days of Darius, he says, henceforth I'll begin to breast the land after this time it hadn't been breasted, still lying essentially subject to drought while it rested for a period of 70 years.

From that time on, a sequence of seven only without a Jubilee has been observed by the Jews for the simple reason that the Jews have never had full and absolute authority to determine who owns what property that has been divinely allocated.

That sequence of courses continued so that we know the year in which Alexander came to Jerusalem in 332 to 331 is a sabbatical year. The year before the fall of Jerusalem, 68 to 69 is a sabbatical year. There was no sabbatical year in the ministry of Jesus Christ in 1979, 1980 is, but the Church of God is not the Jewish community.

The Church of God therefore has also recognized that you are called into a spiritual organization that we do not have custody over the title to decide the title of property holdings as a church.

But furthermore, even when you own land, much of it is from borrowed money and you don't always have to say on what shall happen to the land if you're a farmer, many of you rent. And further, some of you come in one day and some another spiritually speaking to the knowledge of the truth. You may be baptized in January or February or March or April. You may learn of these things in May, June or July and August. You come into a spiritual relationship in which we have reviewed the matter and have come to the conclusion that administratively we do not impose for the whole church the third tithe on the same third and sixth year or a sabbatical year on the same seventh or a jubilee on the fiftieth. It is an administrative decision. It is not a question of picking or choosing. It is the fact that we teach it shall be done. And the world tomorrow is going to be based on this and not the economic policies today. And any society such as the one in which we live that does not do it is suffering the consequences. That's why we have our great periods of depression roughly every half century. I've repeated this so often, but it should later rest as foolish idea that we pick and choose. I tell you clearly that when society does not observe a jubilee to equalize the fact that there are some of you who would get most of the money and others of you would have most of the debt in the churches would happen in the world it does. So that God says every 50 years we have a little shakeout, but instead of calling it a recession or a depression, we call it a jubilee. Now that's the positive view of life. And all the land you thought you had acquired returns to its rightful owner. But because the world does not do that today, we live in a situation where we've had great economic crises in the industrial sequence that go back to the 1780s, the 1830s, the 1880s, remember Grover Cleveland's depression, the 1930s, Hoover and Roosevelt and that terrible period of depression and now ahead of us of the 1980s. It's almost as if inevitably we know there's going to be some economic crisis coming in the 1980s, not in 1980. I don't believe not in 1981 either, though it may be shaping up by then. I would doubt brethren that it will be later than 1982 for reasons of my sermon today. But before we get to that, I think we should take note that this tells us that if we don't observe what God gave us as society suffers the consequence that you and I as individuals cannot impose on society, what is the societal matter? And the jubilee, the sabbatical year, the same year for that time, that's the societal matter that should have been regulated, shall we say, by a church state. This is the way God began.

We do not pick and choose, we know rather our limitations. And on this period of time when we're beginning this interesting year, which is in one sense a sequence of sevens, they're going back to the days of Zerubbabel, the church that was called out and separated from the synagogue and the temple, does not impose this but leaves it to each individual at this time because you're not called as a part of an ongoing community in which your ancestors all played a role. You are called as individuals from time to time, from year to year. And there is no way adequately to administer these laws that take their toll in the world until the coming of Jesus Christ.

I mentioned in 1982, I would like to take a little time today again to repeat what I have from time to time given in other areas and here, but this is the festival of trumpets and tells us something of the crisis at the close. And I think we should have a perspective or a view so that we take a look at world events. There has been a tendency in the church to say at these times of the year when we begin to expound on the close of God's plan that so-and-so and so-and-so are the two witnesses and so-and-so is the beast. When we don't know, the we is all inclusive, doesn't exclude any of you, because it is a decision that God makes. And he has not yet revealed it to anyone in the church that he has absolutely made it. As I said, we came through a period of crisis at the end of the Second World War when we approached the early 1950s that shaped our thinking for the 1970s. Stalin believed in the late 1940s that he would have India by 1955. Twenty-four years later, India is still not communist. The Russians miscalculated by a quarter of a century and by much more, possibly right now, they're glad they never got it.

It's a big headache. Well, I won't speak for their thinking, but they miscalculated, anticipated far in advance what was to happen and it didn't.

Later, the far left in this country assumed that 1972 would be the time they would be able to create a revolution sufficient to tear this country apart within. And they hoped to have wrought about world communism by the middle of the 1970s. And this was the thinking that went back to the 1950s and early 60s. It was not a doctrine of the Church of God completely in isolation, but 72 to 75 was a critical period. The extreme right took the opposite view. If there shall be a revolution in 72, there shall be a counter-revolution in 72. And we have articles quoting that very year. They looked upon 1972 as a period similar to 1932, which brought Hitler to power, the party to power in Germany. And Hitler, of course, became the chancellor in the beginning of 1933. You know, you have elections before the transition.

So that was before those events that took place in the secret chambers in which President Nixon laid out a conspiracy more clever than the communists ever agreed and worked their way into the new left and discerned what the new left was up to and woke it up.

And for that, he was driven out of the presidency because a part of his plan involved preventing the far left from capturing the Democratic Party and hence Watergate.

That's all part of the story that most people don't realize. Watergate was not an attempt to see who was at some party at the Democratic headquarters. It was far more serious.

And then came the blow in 1967, which completely altered the shape of the Middle East, in which we could say that although we in the church or I did not perceive it then, what happened in 1967 was not the forerunner of an immediate series of events in the early 70s. It was a releasing of tension by the Israelis that so shattered our immunity that they are not going to get together in the entire decade that we are now ending.

And all the dreams of the communists and the far right and our own dreams and anybody else's dreams took on new shape. And further, we really didn't understand Daniel 4 as we had assumed in our thinking. And since I wrote the article, I have said I'm taking responsibility also to correct it. We have assumed that Daniel chapter 4, the story of that great tree in 2,520 years time, remember the fall of Babylon, the things we learned from Daniel 4 and 5, that this was somehow to end by 1982. And therefore we must have three and a half years tribulation before. And so some thought the spring of this year was the beginning of it, had its problems. You live in a fool's paradise and you think this is all the devil can do.

Actually, it's, I may say so, we've had a lot more peace and harmony within the church as a result of the crisis than we had before. It wasn't a tribulation, it was a solution.

Now Germans do like solutions, but it was a solution to an ongoing problem.

And the people who fought to do otherwise were dissolved from out of the body.

What we didn't understand is that Jesus, when he said the Jerusalem will be trodden down until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, or be fulfilled, we tried to apply that to Daniel 4.

Like the Protestants who study the Bible, like the British Israel World Federation.

We never realized that what we said about Daniel 4 contradicted what we clearly were saying in United States and British Commonwealth in prophecy. Because we said that in the last century, the

birthright came to a people who spread all over the world. And it was the time of the British and the French and the Dutch and the Americans and the Belgians and the Danes.

So this group of people dominated, if you please, communications by sea and ultimately by air, dominated part from South America where we had in Central America and parts of South America are banana republics. We practically dominated the whole of Africa. We dominated the shores of Asia and we certainly dominated the ports in the commerce of all South America. And it was not the time of the Gentiles, it was the times of Israel's blessing. And if we had seriously thought that we should have known there was something wrong in our view of Daniel 4 that said that same time was the times of the Gentiles, it was not. Jesus said Jerusalem is going to be trodden down with armies. That's what he's talking about. And many centuries Jerusalem wasn't trodden down with armies. I grant that there might have been Turkish feet or Arab feet. There were also Jewish feet there, but that's not what the issue is. The times of the Gentiles is to come. And it most certainly would parallel the events of a three and a half year period at a minimum that we have defined in Revelation chapter 11 and chapter 12 and parallel verses.

But here in Daniel chapters 4 and 5, I want to go into briefly some thoughts that will guide us in terms of the future. This is the Feast of Trumpets. It is a time of the crisis at the close.

Now, when could the crisis at the close begin? Well, what we know is that we really don't know when it could begin, but we could clearly see when it couldn't begin before. How much afterward is up to the man who makes decisions in each of these great countries and the God who determines what that man is able to do? In Daniel chapter 4 and chapter 5, you should take time to read them during this period of time. We have the story of a message that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon sent to all peoples and nations and languages that dwell in all the earth. That's the message for everybody. And Nebuchadnezzar never preserved this in any way by himself or his people. It happened to be that the Jews preserved it for him. He recommends that everyone consider what God has done in his life and its implications. How Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. And in this dream, he was greatly puzzled and no one could make known in verse 7 the meaning. And in verse 8, Daniel was brought before him whose Babylonian name was Balthaschazzar, who by the way does appear in the Persian record of the Babylonian King List, which is an interesting fact, therefore, of history. That Daniel was not an invention of Jews in the second century after they had experienced Antiochus Epiphanes, which is what the higher critics would like to say, but Daniel was a historic figure. He was told the dream, Nebuchadnezzar says, I told him the dream, verse 8, and Daniel therefore, Nebuchadnezzar says, gave an interpretation.

You should know already the basics of this dream. It is a giant tree, very strong. Its top reaches to heaven, verse 11, and ultimately a decree was issued that the tree should be cut down, and its branches lopped off, verse 14. The root and the stumps were to be left in the earth bound with the band of iron and bronze amid the tender grass of the field, verse 15. And somehow it appears that the tree is looked upon as a person. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven and let his lot be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. I'm reading from the Revised Standard Version at the moment. Let his mind be changed, and here obviously you see the tree is pictured as a man.

Daniel then gives the explanation, verse 20, the tree you saw, verse 22, it is you, O King, who have grown and become strong. Now you will discover that the decree, verse 23, which says, hew down the tree, means that a decree is coming in which, verse 25, you will be driven from among men till you learn that the most high rules in the kingdoms of men gives it to whom soever he will. And all this came upon Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of 12 months he was walking, and now we have the third person used, not the eye. This might be viewed here as Daniel's editorialization.

Nebuchadnezzar, however, continues in verse 34. At the end of days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the most high.

My counselors and my Lord sought me, he says, in the last part of verse 36, and I was established in my kingdom. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the king of heaven, for all his works are rights, his ways are just, and those who walk in pride he is able to obey. Now this chapter is not so difficult to understand, because Daniel already explains it, basically. But like many things Daniel didn't tell at all. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that in this dream there would be this period of time, the seven times, seven years. And for seven years Nebuchadnezzar was driven from his throne. Nebuchadnezzar we read in Daniel chapter two is a type of the kingdom of Babylon.

Remember the story of the great image, the head of gold. Daniel says the head of gold is the first kingdom. Daniel says the head of gold is the king. So we perceive here that the tree is both Babylon and its ruler, because it was a government of absolute authority.

This could really be good drama. I've often been amazed at what Hollywood chose as its themes, instead of the really vigorous things. I mean if they want to have something that is, you know, far out, why don't they picture Nebuchadnezzar during these seven years? You can imagine, you know, what that would be like on the screen or the stage. But they haven't done these things to dramatize because they don't understand these biblical records and revelations.

What we note is that this chapter precedes the next chapter. Now that isn't hard to discern, it's chapter four and then you have chapter five. Now the next chapter is what throws some light on the previous one. Now you note that this is the story of Nebuchadnezzar. We are certainly in the year 562 when he wrote this, this is BC, and then we read that King Belshazzar made a great feast and we jumped to 539 over 20 years, maybe 23 years that he last. And there were things that happened in between that are missing here. The juxtaposition of these two chapters should tell us that perhaps something in chapter four is better understood when we read chapter five. Now Chasor made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, the Persian armies that already overrun the countryside.

But what was that? Babylon had its walls protected and it would only be a matter of time in which the incursion of the Persians and the Medes would be forever over and he wasn't concerned. His father was elsewhere in the kingdom and a battle had yet to take place. Belshazzar was a king. He was second in command. His father, Nabonidus, was first whose army was to be gathered near the Euphrates, but he had previously been in Arabia. They sat down on this occasion, ordered that the vessels of Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple be brought out so they could use these gold and silver vessels to drink to their gods, verse four. And when they drank this delicious wine, praise the gods, a hand immediately appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace opposite the lamp stand and the king saw the hand as it wrote. And of course this is the famous handwriting on the wall which means things are about over. Sorry, King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed. This doesn't ordinarily happen in the king's palace. Spiders may be there but not a hand like this writing on the wall and his lords were perplexed. They were probably also drunk and the queen now suggests that it would be advisable to call someone in who can interpret it. And the one most likely to give the explanation of such a mysterious thing as this was Daniel.

So Daniel was called and he was asked to give an explanation.

He was offered to be the third ruler in the kingdom, the end of verse 16.

Now Daniel said, I am not interested in your gifts but I will explain the enigma on the wall.

And now he begins to explain how Nebuchadnezzar had to learn a lesson, how he was deposed from his kingly throne. You see how verse 20 ties in with the previous chapter.

Here is a clear reference that Nebuchadnezzar's experience should have taught the nation something but the nation didn't learn or it's succeeding rulers.

And how he was fed grass like an ox and his body was wet with the dew of heaven.

Now you, his grandson, it says his son here but that's a common Hebrew expression.

Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart. He was actually a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar on the mother's side, not the father's. And you knew all this.

And you lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven and brought all these vessels.

Thence from his presence the hand was sent from God's presence who saw all this and this writing was on the wall. Now in the language of the day Aramaic, a Yosemite dialect, Hebrew is another one, you have the consonants and if you only have a single word it may have more than one potential reading or meaning. So this is, Daniel says, the way I read it to you now. May they, may they take ill parthenes. I'm reading from the RSV.

This is the interpretation of the matter. May they means God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end. Take health. You have been weighed in the balances and found one thing, one wanting, excuse me. Perez, your kingdom is divided and given to the means in the presence.

So you already have one enigma. Why Daniel said, may they take ill Perez when the message was may they, may they take ill Parthenes. So his interpretation was only one possible one and he even didn't bother to include the last letter which was what we see as a letter in or new. See, may they, may they take ill Parthenes or it starts in the King James with a U in front of it. Ufarsine or however it's written in the various forms but this is the modern English way of expressing the Hebrew vowel pointing. Now Daniel was telling them a message for that day.

The message for that day was the kingdom was numbered. Why did he say it only once? Well, because the kingdom is also going to be numbered again. May they, may they.

But he didn't tell the whole story and he says instead of parsing we just call it Perez and it means your kingdom is divided and given to means in Persians. Perez, you know, the leaders Persians because the word Fars or Fars P-R-S is the same root as you have here and the I-N would just have been a kind of plural form.

But this isn't the whole story. We'll come to the implications momentarily.

Then Daniel was commanded to be clothed with purple and a chain of gold and the proclamation was made that he should be the third ruler of the kingdom and after that was done that very night.

It says the king Belshazzar was slain and Darius the Mede received the kingdom while the ruler of Persia went to meet Nabonitis in battle. And finally he returned in triumph in the month of Tisry or October in 539 and Babylon belonged to Cyrus, the king of the Persians, Darius, the king of the Medes. Now what is significant about this is that we note that at this very point it was only hours away that the city fell and weeks away that the whole kingdom was finally absorbed and it happened that fast. Note also that it is said that the kingdom is numbered, it is weighed and it is divided. Now we have perceived and others have perceived before us that this is significant in another way not

merely that the morals were weighed not merely that the kingdom was its days were numbered and that it was cut up for other people, Persians and Medes but that we have here not only this interpretation but another.

Mayne take El Peres or Parsine or Parsine as it is given in the RSV could just as well be weights, W-E-I-G-H-T-S. Since Babylon is the head of gold, Persia was silver but Babylon is the head of gold. Mayne mayne could just as well have been read minor, minor. A minor is a half a talent.

A minor of gold had 50 shekels to a minor. So you actually have a minor of 50 shekels and another minor of 50 shekels and then you have a half a minor which is Peres and you have a take-her which is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew shekel. The S-H or shin has become a T sound. So you have actually two minors, a half a minor and a shekel. And if you divide this up it says you see you weigh it and then you divide it, you number it. And so if you were to weigh all this you would have 126 shekels. That's the weight in gold. Now if you divide it all up into the minimal parts, we read of course that all the Middle East follow the same procedure, Exodus 30 verse 13, a shekel had 20 giraffes. So if you divided the minor, if you divided the other minor and the shekel and the half a minor, the Peres, you would have altogether 126 shekels and now 20 parts to each one or 2,520 giraffes. The lowest division would be 2,520. And it is interesting you see that just as 7 times 360. I hope you've already done the math. Equals 2,520. There were seven times so the symbol on the wall indicates that if you were to weigh the worth of this gold kingdom and to divide and cut it up into the smallest figure you would end up with 2,520 parts.

Divisions, giraffes. And this is an indication symbolically that just as Nebuchadnezzar had seven times pass over him, so the kingdom of Babylon would have 2,520 years pass over it.

Beginning in 539, which is an absolutely fixed and firm date confirmed by later historians, confirmed by contemporary business records, confirmed by the nature of the Babylonian calendar of the time, which has its intercalary months just like the Jewish calendar today does. And it's possible to reconstruct all the intercalary months so that we have no doubt from buried archaeological documentation from business records, the known dates of the 13th months, the Babylonians had a Hebrew kind of calendar, in other words the solar lunar, it is impossible to have any doubts whatsoever that in the late summer and the beginning of autumn in 539 the kingdom of Babylon fell. So that Daniel chapter 4 is not an interesting history that should tell us about Nebuchadnezzar and we forget it, but it is the background of chapter 5 that is essential for us to understand chapter 5. And then in chapter 5 we have the story of Babylon and the fact that Babylon in that year ceased to rule the nations and 2,520 years should pass over it, it was the head of gold. Now what we never really perceived before was that when John writes and when Jeremiah much earlier wrote and when Isaiah wrote they didn't speak of the final power as Persia the Great, Media the Great, Macedon the Great, or Greece the Great, or Rome the Great, it's called Babylon the Great. You ever notice that? The last power that God deals with at the close of civilization is not called by the name of any interim government, it is if you please a final revival of a system that terminated 2,520 years before. Therefore we would have to conclude that Babylon politically could not rise before 2,520 years is up. So 1972 would be too early, 1975 is too early, if you please brother in 1979 is too early, if you're going to have three and a half years, here it's already September, tomorrow is the beginning of autumn, probably less than three years to the end of 2,520. But instead of seeing what we thought that Daniel 4 was telling us the 2,520 years would bring about the close of the tribulation, that it would all be over by that time, the implication is that when the tree was chopped down and the bands were put around it was to be protected because the same system would rise again just like Nebuchadnezzar was restored to the throne and that the time that would elapse would be 2,520 years. And so 1979 for its beginning is too early, 1980 is too early, 1981 is too early.

Now you know why I mentioned 1982. Now if your math is not too difficult, you can add 539 and add in 1982 and you get 2,521, you subtract one because there's no year zero, we have a monk to thank for that problem, Dionysius Exiguus, so we end up with 2,520 years.

And when Mr. Armstrong says this work does have some time to go, he was not amiss.

When he said that when he was preaching in the 30s and 40s and 50s and into the 60s of the Book of Ezekiel he was a man before his time.

And it is the charge of the church today not to neglect the Book of Ezekiel and accompanying prophecies that we must take note that a generation has come and gone who heard his message and a younger generation is made up which has heard only in part and seen in part on TV or read in part.

The real emphasis that Mr. Armstrong used to give and that we used to give, you remember the plain truth of the 50s and the radio broadcasts, that was the time of drought. The things were looking as if they were coming to such a climax and were droughts in the 1950s of serious proportions affecting the church, affecting our grain. We had them even into the 60s and then we've had the blessings that we've never really counted of the 70s. So many that we can afford to sell all our grain that's extra to our enemies and to keep our enemies from having revolts in their own lands so that they may continue to arm themselves. I used to ponder how it is that Moses could describe our enemies eating up our grain before they ever have entered our land. I remember, you know, thinking of those things in the 1950s and that was the period of the Cold War.

We never would have thought of selling the Russians what we are now selling. See what we do is when the product is in heavy quantity on the market then we arrange to sell it at the low price for the Russian. After it is sold then the price goes up because we have so much less and then we buy it in this country. This way it's done. You want to know why they think capitalists are sap heads? Well this is a good explanation. What we have now is a picture that when Mr. Armstrong said indeed a church today has a duty that it cannot forget to continue what he was able vigorously to do in the 40s and the 50s and into the 60s to warn this nation that the message of Ezekiel is for now and for coming years. That he set the standards for a generation that would not see the crisis at the close that has been dying off in the 50s and 60s and 70s. People who knew in the Second World War and the depression, the tragedies of adult life, who didn't know how it was all going to end, they have heard and in the resurrection those who remember, most of them of course in the second, will know that what they had heard did come to pass even if it were later than we all thought. And they could have avoided the second and been in the first resurrection if they had least given heed to the moral of the story which is fear God and keep his commandments for this constitutes the whole man. And if our time frame was obscure because we did not understand either Revelation 3 or Daniel 4 and 5, God is adjusting that so that our vision becomes clearer. We do have a responsibility.

What we now perceive very clearly is that we are drawing toward the clothes of the times of Israel's blessings. And we are approaching the times not yet beginning when we shall have Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles and all international decisions will be made by the Gentiles or the nations. Now I would point out that if you want to know how those things take place you must take note of Daniel chapter 11. There are references also in chapter 8. May I just give a word of warning in conclusion? Nebuchadnezzar did not found Babylon.

Napoleon did find, did found the French restoration. Hitler did found the German restoration.

Mussolini in reality did not found the Italian restoration. But he did come as a vigorous, shall we say prime minister, who created an empire for a king. In that sense he did found an empire.

But I would take heed to all the experiences and to point up what Jesus implies, to take note of that person of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is said, in his place shall rise a contemptible person, Daniel 11:21, to whom royal majesty has not been given, and he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries, operates on the premise of deceit. I do not at this moment draw the conclusion that 1982 will see necessarily a final ruler who will clearly restore in his own authority and power, and suddenly leash on the world a tribulation.

I think if we carefully read these chapters to which Jesus said in Matthew 24 that he will understand, and when we read Revelation 17, we may well find that a restoration of a political power in Europe, which has character in a way that the European Parliament does not now have, may be precipitated by economic stresses of the early 1980s. Political activity precipitated by economic stresses, but I draw attention that the man who is the final beast in Revelation 17 does not create the power, but the power is given to him by others who have created an institution.

Take note of that. That man receives certain powers that others have established.

How long it shall be before he steps on the scene, whether a contemptible person like Antiochus Epiphanes is characteristic of either man we have watched in Europe, Otto of Habsburg, a man of royal majesty.

Franz Josef Strauss, if you please, the most brilliant German, not the most contemptible of his time.

I just say before we draw the conclusion and pin labels, on individuals we should take note that this is 1979. Many things can happen, presidential election in 1980, the German election in 1980, an economic crisis, political power in the hands of a group of men recreating a kind of Europe, not before a certain time if Daniel is correct and he is a prophet. And Mr. Armstrong says we have some years to go, he's not finished. And the beast himself does not create the system, but is created by having power given to him, which would clearly indicate that a three and a half year period of the times of the Gentiles and tribulation, however you perceive it ending, whether in the spring or in the autumn, would take us well into the middle of the 80s at the earliest for the end of human civilization. And before you decide that if it isn't going to end now, you're finished. You better rethink your responsibility. But this church is told to have patience for any number of reasons, one being that it isn't over yet.