

Welcome, family, to another day of God's annual fall Holy Day season.

As I was going through my primary education in school, my favorite subject was history. My favorite part of history was American History, from the time President Jefferson bought the Louisiana Purchase from France. He then commissioned Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to head and organize the expedition that would be known as "The Corps of Discovery." This took much time and planning before they could leave for St. Louis, where their journey began. They had to have boats designed and built. They took experimental equipment with them to test on their journey. They were to document and map the land that emerging United States of America had bought. The animal and plant species were noted, logged, and preserved, and sent back to Washington for analysis.

A friend of mine with the same interest of this time period gave me a book entitled, *Undaunted Courage*. It is a detailed account of what they went through on "The Corps of Discovery." Their efforts opened up the west to the expansion of what would soon become the greatest nation the world would ever know. They went through many trials and hardships to accomplish their goal.

Because of their efforts, the next group of people moved west. The next group of people were known as the mountain men, or trappers. Lewis and Clark had found that the west was rich in fur. Because of the fashion of the day (the beaver hat), the fur trade boomed. This lasted for many years. Each of these men had to learn skills to keep themselves alive so they could prosper in their trade. Much of the skills they acquired were taught to them by the native Indians that lived in the wilderness. They also learned to navigate through the Rocky Mountains, which would assist them in the next group of people that would move west. Soon, fashion changed and the beaver hat was no longer the fashion of the day. The trend went to silk. Now these men found themselves, basically, out of work.

The next group of people that came on the scene were known as the pioneers. Promise of gold in California and fertile land in Oregon started the western expansion. Most of these pioneers didn't have the skill and know-how of how to get to California or Oregon. This is where the fur trappers and mountain men would find employment again as guides to the massive amount of people that would move west. Without these men as guides to all the pioneer who went west, they wouldn't have been able to survive. These pioneers had dreams of gold and farmland. Each of them were seeking one thing in common, the promise of a homeland, a place for their own where they could raise their families. These dreams did not come without a price. Many hardships were endured and reached their dreams. They left behind families and civilization and went into the unknown.

Just west of where I live here in Idaho is a town called "Baker City." It is in the state of Oregon. There is a museum that is called "The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center." From the vantage point on the hill

that it is built you can see the ruts of the Oregon Trail. I have had a chance to go through it. There are actually diaries of pioneers that tell of the hardships of what they went through, what they had to endure to reach their goal - that of a homeland.

Brethren, all of us, of God's people that have gone before us, have had to endure hardship as they looked to a homeland. We are no different.

The title of today's sermon is *The Promise of a Homeland*.

All of us listening today are looking forward to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings. He will establish God's government in the thousand-year reign. The homeland of God has promised all of us, His people, through time will finally be realized. This is what this Feast of Tabernacles pictures. Each one of us has to struggle with tests and trials, fighting our own selfish human nature, something we all have to do in our physical lives. We sin daily. Sometimes we can be overwhelmed and discouraged.

Let's look at some of the lives of those who have gone before us. They, too, endured this life. Other than Jesus Christ, all have sinned. But what is encouraging is they are mentioned in the "Faith Chapter," which is Hebrews 11 (and we'll go through that later).

First of all, let's turn to Proverbs 24:16. Proverbs 24:16. And we just need to keep this in mind as we go through these lives that we're going to look at, and in our own lives. But **Proverbs 24:16—For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again.** In other words, we're going to sin and we have to go to God and repent and get up and keep on going. Just like those people that went west. They endured hardships and, you know, made mistakes, and they had to keep going or they weren't going to reach their goal, and that was a homeland. ...**but the wicked shall fall by calamity.** You know, you give up and you sin and you don't, we don't repent of it and we can't move forward. And we've just got to keep God's Kingdom in mind, and especially what this Holy Day season pictures. And it's just not too far away. It's just right ahead of us. We have to always keep fighting ourselves with the power of God's holy spirit and never give up. We have to keep moving forward towards a reward, what God has promised, that of a homeland.

Alright, the first individual we're going to look at that's gone before us, that God's going to use mightily in His Kingdom, in His government structure, and that's Abraham. So let's start in Genesis 12, and we're going to read verses 1 through 5. This is when God asked him to leave his homeland. So, **Genesis 12:1-5.** Alright, starting in **verse 1—Now the LORD said to Abram: Get out of your country,** in other words, the civilization he knew, where his relatives, his family was, **and from your family and from your father's house, to a land I will show you.** You know, there again, the people that left St. Louis, they didn't know what was ahead of them. Even from Lewis and Clark to the mountain men, to the pioneers, it was the unknown they were going into. And it's the same with Abraham. And **I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.** In other words, through Jesus Christ that came from Abraham. And the whole world's blessed by that.

Verse 3—And I'll bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abraham was seventy-five years old. I can't imagine at 75 (well, even, course, they were in a lot better health than we are now-a-days), but anyway, And Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abraham took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

Alright, for our next verse in the life of Abraham, let's go to Genesis 12:11. And there again, people would just... We're all human. We all make mistakes, make poor decisions in our life. We sin. You know, Abraham was no different. He made some wrong decisions at times and had to pay for it, just like we do. But anyway, **Genesis 12:11—And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, Indeed, I know you *are* a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore, it will happen that when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, This *is* his wife; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.** You know, in other words, he wasn't putting his trust in God at that time, you know, that God would protect him. Just as we go ahead and we seek this promised land that God's promised us, that's just ahead of us, we've got to put our trust in God over the next 3½-years and just know that He's.... anything that happens in our life, He's aware of it and He's going to get us through it.

Verse 13—Please say you *are* my sister, in other words, that's a lie. He's not only deceiving but he's asking Sarai, his wife, to lie, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you. So it was, when Abram came to Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman and she *was* very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. There, again, we go through life. We have ups and downs. Just talking about financially here, there are times in the lives of people in God's Church (as we're going to go through and see) that there were up times and down times, you know.

But anyway, going on in **verse 17—But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called to Abram and said, Why have you done this to me? In other words, he deceived Pharaoh. Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife? Why did you say, She *is* my sister? In other words, he lied. I might have taken her as my wife. And now, therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go away. So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.**

Alright, for our next verse, let's go to Genesis 20:2. And basically, Abraham, just, he did the same thing when he was there with Abimelech. **Genesis 20:2—Now Abraham said to Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister. And Abimelech, king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Indeed, you *are* a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she *is* a man's wife.** You know, there again, Abraham deceived Abimelech, just like the Egyptians.

And we're human beings, we make mistakes over and over again. But there again, as we started this out, "righteous man falls seven times," but we get up and we keep going and we keep trying to overcome our sins through the power of God's holy spirit working in us. And we just keep going until we finally reach that homeland, till we're out of this physical body and we won't sin anymore.

Verse 4—But Abimelech had not come to her; and he said, LORD, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said, He is my brother. In other words, they were both lying. In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this. And God said to him in a dream, Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore, I did not let you touch her.

Alright, the next part we're going to look at in Abram's life is, you know, he's had to leave his country, showed his weakness, that he sinned just like the rest of us, and then there's this part of Abram's life. You know, we read over this and it's just, I have never been in the military, had to go to war, thankfully. But Genesis 14:12, we're going to read how Abram had to go and save Lot. I mean, it was war! And it has to be a scary thing. I know there's people, and my dad was in the 2nd World War, and it just, I can't imagine having to do something like that. But Abram, this is, again, part of his life, trial he went through, things he had to go through to... He was seeking that homeland, as we'll read in Hebrews.

But anyway, let's look at **Genesis 14:12**, and this is where Abram goes to save Lot. Okay, starting in **verse 12—They also took Lot, Abram's** (these are the kings that... I'm jumping into the story here)... **They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. Then, one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt in the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother had taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is in north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the Kings Valley), after he returned from the defeat of the (I'm not even going to try that one), and the kings who were over him.**

So we see that part of Abram's life is where, you know, he had to pick up from his everyday routine life and go fight a battle. And we do the same, brethren. You know, we're not out fighting a war, but spiritually we are in trying to overcome Satan and his demons who are trying to take us captive.

So we've seen that, you know, he's left his homeland, he's had problems in his life, and he's had to battle battles, but now we're going to move on to another part of Abram, Abraham's life, and that's in Genesis 16:1-9. And that's where he had family problems. You know, a lot of people in the Church today have had to deal with unconverted mates, and it's a problem when you have turmoil in the family. So let's go to Genesis 16:1.

Genesis 16:1—Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no *children*. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abraham, See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing *children*. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her. And Abraham heeded the voice of Sarai. There again, you know, just, we have got to learn to trust God, especially with what's ahead, and that He'll provide for us in His time. It's all in God's timing.

Verse 3—Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. So he went to Hagar, and she conceived. And when he saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. And Sarai said to Abram, My wrong to *be* upon you! I gave my maiden unto your embrace; and when you saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me. So Abram said to Sarai, Indeed your maid *is* in your hand; do to her as you please. In other words, Sarai was in charge of Hagar. And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. Now the angel of the LORD found her by the spring of water in the wilderness, and by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going? And she said, I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the LORD said to her, Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.

Genesis 21:9, and we're going to pick up the story. Genesis 21:9—And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore, she said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *namely* with Isaac. So she's had Isaac by this time, so there again, there's some turmoil in the family, jealousy between the two women and the children.

Verse 11—And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, Do not let it be a displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. So there again, you can see that Abraham, he had problems in his life, you know. It's just, just like the rest of us. It's just there's nothing new under the sun, brethren, we all have to fight everything God sends our way to build the character that He's trying to build in us. He's the one that's molding and fashioning each and every one of us, and we have to go through these tests and hardships to build that Godly character, and we'll see that in the next example in Abram's life, and that's in Genesis 22:1.

Genesis 22:1. Alright, starting in verse 1.... And we all know this story, but there again, it's just something that God put Abraham through to test him. And it was going through this test that, you know, God said, "Now I know you." And this is about putting up his son, Isaac. So starting in verse 1—Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Here I am. Then He said, Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering in one of the mountains of which I shall tell you. So Abraham obeyed, just like when he was told to leave his homeland, he did it, and, just, God's instructed him to do this and he did it.

So, verse 3—So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to the young men, Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we shall come back to you. So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. So, in other words, Isaac had to carry the wood for his own would be sacrifice.

Verse 7—But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father! And he said, Here I am, my son. And he said, Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for the burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering. So the two of them went together. They came to the place in which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And I just.... We read through this so many times but I just can't imagine, you know. He waited so long for a son and now he's to be offered up. And, you know, Isaac is a physical "type" of Jesus Christ and what God did do. He did sacrifice His Son.

Verse 10—And Abraham stretched out his hand and took his knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, Abraham! And he said, Here am I. And He said, Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me. You know, just quite a trial that he went through, and tested, but, you know, God knew him after that. Just, did Abraham sin after that? Yes. Did Abraham have trials after that? Yes. And that's what we're going to see here in the next example of his life.

So let's go to Genesis 23 and we're just going to read verses 1 through 2. And this is where Abraham's wife dies. You know, it's just, a lot of us have lost loved ones, whether it be mates or parents or children. You know, it's a horrific trial to go through, but God puts us through it for a reason, you know, and it just, there again, God's the one that's molding and fashioning each and every one of us.

So Genesis 23:1-2—Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah. So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that *is*, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came and mourned for Sarah and to weep for her. You know, he'd been married for quite a few years, and you know how close you get in a marriage. And then to have that taken away from you, it's a hardship.

So we see that Abraham had many ups and downs in his life, but they were to build the character in him so God could use him in the upcoming Kingdom. This is no different for us, brethren. We all make mistakes. We all go through trials in life, but we have to keep going forward. You know, the people, again, that went across the prairies and then they came to the Rocky Mountains and they had hardships, but the only way they were going to get to where they were going and that reward was to

keep going. They couldn't turn back, and neither can we. We can't quit this way of life. We have to stay strong and just rely on God. And that's just what it's going to take.

Alright, the next example of someone that God's going to use mightily in His government is Abraham's grandson, Joseph. He went through some things in his life, ups and downs, you know, sold by his brothers. And that's where we're going to start, in Genesis 37, and we're going to read the story of what happened to him, the hardship he went through. So **Genesis 37:3—Now Israel loved Joseph, in other words, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son in his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, Please hear this dream which I have dreamed. There we were, binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.**

Verse 8—And his brothers said to him, Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed still another dream and he told his brothers, and said, Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and even the stars bowed down to me. And so he told *it* to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, What *is* this dream you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come and bow down to the earth before you? And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*. Then his brothers went to feed their flocks. And Israel said to Joseph, Are not your brothers feeding the flock? Come, I will send you to them. And he said to him, Here I am.

Verse 14—And then he said to him, Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me. So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and went to Shechem. Now, a certain man found him, there he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, What are you seeking? He said, I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding the flocks. And the man said, They have departed from here, for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. Now, when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, Look, this dreamer is coming! Come, therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into a pit; and we shall say, Some wild beast has devoured him. We shall see what will become of his dreams!

Then Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said to them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into the pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay hand on him — that he may deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to their father. So it came to pass, when Joseph had come with his brothers, that they stripped Joseph *of* his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* put on him. And they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; *there was* no water in it. So you can see he's betrayed by his

brothers and thrown into a pit. A pretty miserable life right now. And they sat down to eat a meal. And they lifted up their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, and were on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt.

Verse 26—So Judah said to his brother, What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh. And his brothers listened. Then traders passed by and *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned with his brothers and said, The lad *is no more*; and I, where shall I go? And they took Joseph's tunic and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. And they sent the tunic with *many* colors, and they brought *it* back to their father and said, We have found this. Do you know whether it *is* your son's tunic or not? And he recognized it and said, *It is* my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces. You know, there again, it's just losing a child or going through the things we have to go through in life, and Jacob (Israel) was no different. He had some problems in his life too.

Alright, verse 34—Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. All of his sons and all of his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, Shall I go down unto the grave of my son in mourning. Thus his father wept for him. Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, the officer of Pharaoh *and* the captain of the guard.

Alright, we're going to jump up to Genesis 39:2. Genesis 39:2. Alright, starting in verse 2, and this is where Joseph was sold to Potiphar. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. So you can see from being in a pit, sold by his brothers, then sold in Egypt, but he became... God blessed him and he became successful. Ups and downs in life, just like all the rest of us. And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him and the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. He then made him observer of his house, and all *that* he had was put under his authority. So it was, from that time *that* he made him overseer of the house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field.

Verse 6—Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread that he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass after these things that the master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, Lie with me. In other words, she was trying to seduce him. But he refused and said to his master's wife, Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my

hand. Therefore, *there is* no greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

So verse 10, it just, see, that, you know, Joseph he's going to obey God and do what's right before God. So, starting in verse 10—So it was, as she spoke to Joseph by day and by night, that he did not heed her or lie with her *or* to be with her. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, that none of the men in the house *was* inside, and she caught him by the garment, saying, Lie with me. But he left his garment in her hand, and fled out and ran and ran outside.

Verse 13—And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, that she called to the men of the house and spoke to them, saying, See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. So she pretty well framed him up and we'll see how Joseph's life is about ready to go into hardship again.

Verse 15—And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside. So she kept the garment with her until the master came home. Then she spoke to him with words like these saying, The Hebrew servant, whom you brought to us, came to me to mock me. So it happened as I lifted my voice and cried out he left his garment with me and fled outside. So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, Your servant did to me after this manner, and his anger was aroused.

Verse 20—Then Joseph's master took him and put him into prison, you know, there again, lied, framed. You know, God's apostle is sitting in prison right now because of false witnesses. ...a place where the king's prisoners *were* confined. And he was there imprisoned. The LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. You know, he's going through hardship but God's still there showing him mercy and favoritism. And that's what's ahead of us. We just got to put our lives in God's hands as we look forward to that Kingdom and that homeland. And God's going to take care of us. Doesn't mean we're not going to have hardship, as we're seeing Joseph's going through.

Verse 22—And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who *were* in the prison; whatever they did there, he was doing. There again, God's training Joseph for something in the future. You know, when he was put in Potiphar's house he was put in charge. He's put in prison, he's put in charge. And we'll see in the next part of his life, he's going to be put in charge. The keeper of the prison did not look to anything *that was* under Joseph's authority, in other words, both Potiphar and the prison master trusted him. Continuing on in verse 23...because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made *it* prosper.

Alright, the next part we're going to go and see how Joseph interprets dreams. And just moving on, it'll be Genesis 40 and we'll start in verse 9. Genesis 40:9. Alright, verse 9—Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, Behold, in my dream a vine *was* before me, and in the vine *were* three branches; and it *was* as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters

brought forth ripe grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup on Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said to him, This *is* the interpretation of it: These three branches *are* three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. But remember me when it is well with you, in other words, you know, I've done this for you (through God's inspiration and helping Joseph interpret the dream), and just remember me when you get empowered and to get me out of this prison, and please show kindness to me; and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into this dungeon.

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, I also *was* in a dream, and there *were* three white baskets on my head. And the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate out of them, of the basket on my head. So Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation of it: The three baskets *are* three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you.

Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and the chief baker among his servants. (Verse 21) Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. Alright, we can just see in Joseph's life too, it's just things up and down, and good times, bad times, going through trials and going through times of prosperity, too.

So we'll move on in Joseph's story in Genesis 41, and this is where Joseph eventually is put in charge of all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. And we're going to break into the story here in verse 8—Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled (Pharaoh's) and he sent and called for his magicians of Egypt and all the wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but *there was* no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker, we each had a dream one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his *own* dream. Now there *was* a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams to us; each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream. Then it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.

So Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, so they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and they shaved, cleaned his cloths, and he came to Pharaoh. I can't imagine being in the prison system back in that day and age. But anyway, they cleaned him up and brought him before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh

said to Joseph, I had a dream, and *there was* no one who could interpret it. But I have heard it said of you *that* you can interpret a dream, so interpret it. So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.*

Verse 17—Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: Behold, in my dream I stood on a bank of a river. Suddenly, seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in a meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, and fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they *were* just as ugly as in the beginning. So I awoke.

Verse 22—Also I saw in my dream, suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. And behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was* no one who could explain *it* to me.

Verse 25—Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; in other words, the cows and grain heads. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: Seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after the seven years, the seven years empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This *is* the thing I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. Just look at what we're going through in California and the drought they're going through right now. And that's where we get about 51% of our produce from, is there, and it's in a severe drought now. There's some tough times ahead of us, brethren, but we've got to keep moving forward. We've got to stay positive. We've got to stay close to each other.

Verse 32—And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because of these things *as* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth *of the produce* of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years.

Verse 35—And let them gather all the food to those good years that are coming, and store them up in grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then the food shall be a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, and the land may not perish during the famine. So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the spirit of God? Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. There again, God showing him favoritism, you know, and just taking care of him.

Verse 40—You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. In other words, he was second in command of Egypt. You know, God raise him back up from being in a pit by his brothers to being with Potiphar and then back in jail and now God's raised him back up.

Verse 40—And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garment of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, Bow the knee! So he set them over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. You know, so we see that Joseph was given tremendous amount of responsibility, you know, and when you're given a tremendous amount of responsibility, yeah, there's reward that comes with it, but there can be some headaches, you know, and some things you have to go through. As you're given responsibility, whether it's at work, you know, I remember Mr. Matthews saying that it's people that work harder get more responsibility. But we in God's Church, as ambassadors of God, have been given great responsibility to live this way of life and be examples to this dying world. You know, we can see that Joseph had to go through trials in his life as we do, and it is all training for what is just ahead of us, the return of His Son and that of a promised land. You know, God is continuing to mold and fashion each and every one of us and we just keep going forward. We cannot quit.

Alright, the next individual we're going to look at is King David. But before we look at David's life, let's turn to Acts 13:22. **Acts 13:22—And when He had removed him, speaking of Saul, He raised up for them David as king, to whom I have given testimony and said, I had found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart. He will do all My will.** So, you know, we're going to go through David's life. You know, he went through triumphs and also trials in his life. He was human like us and he always went back to God in repentance and to look to God for all things. But there again, he had ups and downs in his life.

So let's start in **1 Samuel 16:1—Now the LORD said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, this is after Saul didn't do what he was told and go down and destroy the armies of the Amorites, I believe, seeing I rejected him from reigning over all Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hears, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take a heifer with you, and say, I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.**

Verse 3—Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you. So Samuel did what the LORD said, and he went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Do you come peaceably? You know, he was a prophet of God so they had respect for him. Then he said, Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. So it was, when they came, that he took Eliab and said,

Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before Him! But the LORD said to Samuel, Do not look on the appearance nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him.

For *the LORD does not see* as a man sees, you know, our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and, you know, His thoughts are as high as the heavens are above the earth, you know. It's just that mind of God, He looks on different things than man looks on. Man looks on the outward appearance. ...for man looks on the outward appearance, and the LORD looks on the heart.

So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither has the LORD chosen this one. And Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, Neither has the LORD chosen this one. Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, The LORD has not chosen these. And Samuel said to Jesse, Are all the young men here? Then he said, There remains the youngest; there he is, keeping the sheep. And Samuel said to Jesse, Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here. So he sent and brought him. Now he *was* a ruddy, and bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him; for this *is* the one! Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel anointed and went to Ramah.

God started working with David from a very young age, preparing him for the work that he would do in his physical life as King of Israel - more importantly, of what he would do as King of Israel when Christ returns. So, again, we're going to go through the ups and downs in David's life and we're going to start in Samuel 17 and we're going to read the story of Goliath.

Alright, 1 Samuel 17, let's start in verse 8, break into the story, Then he stood and cried out to the armies, this is Goliath, and said to them, Why have you come out in a line for battle? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down here.

Verse 9—If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistines, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Alright, drop down to verse 17—Then Jesse said to his son David, Take now for your brothers an ephah of dried *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to your brother's camp.

Verse 20—So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took *these things* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the armies were going out to fight and shouting for the battle. For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up a battle array, army against army. And David left his supplies and his brother in the hand of the supply keeper, and ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. Then as he talked with them, there was a champion of the Philistines, of Gath, Goliath by name, came up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard *them*. And all the men of Israel, when

they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. So the men of Israel said, Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defile Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich him with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption *from taxes* in Israel. Then David spoke to the man who stood by him, saying, What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away this reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defile the armies of the living God? You know, there again, when Samuel anointed David God gave him His holy spirit.

And the people (verse 27)... And the people answered him in this matter, saying, So shall it be done for the man who kills him. Now Eliab, his oldest brother, heard when he spoke to the men; and his anger was aroused against David, and he said, Why do you come down here? And with whom have you left those sheep in the wilderness? And David did responsibly; he left them with a keeper. I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle. And David said, What have I done now? You know, it's jealousy, just like Joseph's brother, and, *Is there* not a cause? In other words, "What are you mad at me for?"

Verse 30—Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones *did*. Now when the words of David were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for them. Now David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you *are* of youth, and he is a man of war from his youth. But David said to Saul, Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion and a bear came and take a lamb out of the flock, I went after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant... You know, there again, he knows that God's going to be there and deliver him. And we have to go through this next 3½-years knowing the same thing. You know, we're going to have some hardships, but God's going to help us and we're going to get through it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defiled the armies of the living God. Moreover, David said, The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and the LORD will be with you! So Saul clothed David with his armor, and put a bronze helmet on his head; and also clothed him with a coat of mail. And David fastened the sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. And David said to Saul, I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them*. So David took them off.

Now, if you want to hold your place there we're going to go to Ephesians 6 and see what kind of armor that God wants us to wear as we go forward. So, Ephesians 6:10. Alright, it's Ephesians 6:10—Finally, my brethren, be strong in the LORD and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For you do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of the age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Therefore, stand, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking on the shield of faith, to have the faith to know that that promised land is coming, God's Kingdoms going to be here very shortly. ...taking on the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. This is the armor we walk with in God's Church. This is the only thing that will be able to help us through what is ahead before the return of Jesus Christ.

Alright, let's go back to 1 Samuel 17:40. Hopefully you held your place there. **1 Samuel 17.** Alright, starting in verse 40—Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and he put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine. So the Philistine came, and began to draw near to David, and the man who bore his shield *went* before him. And when the Philistine looked out and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *only* a youth, ruddy, and good-looking. So the Philistine said to David, *Am I a dog*, that you come to me with a stick? And the Philistine cursed David and his gods.

Verse 44—And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field! Then David said to the Philistine, You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, who you have defiled. You know, he had that Godly courage to, with God's spirit living in him, to go out and face this trial in his life. And that's what we have to do.

Verse 46—And this day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, and all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all the assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword or spear; for the battle *is* the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands, exactly what we have to keep in mind as we go through this next 3½-years.

Verse 48—So it was, when the Philistines arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistines. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and slung *it* and struck the Philistine in the forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell to the face of the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistines with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. And *there was* no sword in the hand of David, therefore, David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. You know, brethren, we all have Goliath's in our lives that we have to face; that we have to run towards the sin in our life and conquer it through the power of God's holy spirit, through repentance. And we've got to keep our eyes fixed on that homeland, God's Kingdom, which again, this time period, Feast of Tabernacles, pictures. We, too, can overcome with all God's spirit, God's armor working in us just as it was working in David. We have to have the courage to face

ourselves and use God's armor to win over the wickedness in our lives, and the sin in our lives. And that's what the holy spirit is there for; it's a helper.

The people who went west faced many problems with the Native American Indians. They, too, had to arm themselves. It wasn't easy for the first who crossed the plains, but as the years went by it did get safer for the pioneers who followed.

Alright, the next example we're going to look at in David's life... There again, he's a human being and he sinned and a lot of times it affected other people. So we'll start 2 Samuel 11:1, and we're going to go through the story of David and Bathsheba and how that affected it.

Alright, 2 Samuel 11:1—And it happened in the spring of the year, as the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab, his servant with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked onto the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman *was* very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, This is not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, and she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. The woman conceived, so she sent and told David, and said, I *am* with child. And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. There again, David's going to try to cover up sin in his life, you know. We're all guilty of it. We just have to admit it and move forward. And, just, we can learn a lot from this part in David's life and how he reacted to it.

Alright, verse 7—Then Uriah had come to him; David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to your house and wash your feet. So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift *of food* from the kings followed him. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

Verse 10—So when they told David, saying, Uriah did not go down to his house, David said to Uriah, Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house? And Uriah said to David, The ark of Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I go down to my house to eat and drink, and lie with my wife? *As you live, and as your soul lives*, I will not do this thing. Then David said to Uriah, Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart. So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him drunk. And at evening he went down to lie in his bed with the servants of the lord, but he did not go down to the house. In the morning it happened and David wrote a letter to Joab and he sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote the letter, saying, Set Uriah in the foremost and the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die. So he's going to cover up his adultery with murder. You know, there again, this is someone God is going to use *powerfully* in His Kingdom, you

know, when that promised land gets here. But, you know, he made mistakes in life and we have to learn from our mistakes, brethren, and just make us stronger. And there again, and just go to God in repentance and God's going to help us through it.

Verse 16—So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there would be valiant men. Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And *some* of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also. So now he's committed adultery and committed murder. Then Joab sent and told David all these things concerning the war, and charged the messenger, saying, When you have finished telling the matter of the war to the king, if it happens that the king's wrath arises, and he says to you: Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was not a woman who cast a piece of millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?—then you shall say to your servant, Uriah the Hittite is also dead.

So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent by him. And the messenger said to David, Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field; and we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate. The archers shot from the wall at your servants; and *some* of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. Then David said to the messenger, Thus you shall say to Joab: Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it. So encourage him. So when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her into his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD. You know, he'd sinned a great sin, and it's just something that we do as human beings. And everybody that's gone before us has gone through trials in life and made wrong decisions, and we suffer for wrong decisions.

So let's jump on down to 2 Samuel 12, and this is when Nathan confronted David. **2 Samuel 12—**Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: There were two men in one city, one rich and one poor. The rich *man* had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor *man* had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank of his own cup and lay on his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.

So verse 5—So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he has done this thing and because he had no pity. Then Nathan said to David, You *are* the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: I had anointed you king over Israel. I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your

keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I would have given you much more! Why have you despised the Commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife *to be* your wife. You have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will rise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun. For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel. So David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. There again, David, a man after God's own heart. He was shown that he'd sinned and he was wrong and he admitted it. And Nathan said to David, The LORD has put away your sin that you shall not die. However, because of this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall die. And Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had bore to David, and it became ill.

David, therefore, pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. And so the elders of the house arose *and went* in to him, to rise him up from the ground. But he would not, for he did not eat food with them. He was fasting. Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And for the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, Indeed, while the child is alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm! When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore, David said to his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, Yes, he is dead. So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, changed his clothes; and went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to the house, his own house; and when he had requested, he sat food before him, and he ate. And his servants said to him, What *is* this you have done? You have fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food? In other words, David accepted God's decision, and while the child was still alive David was fasting and pleading with God, but God made a decision and took the child.

So, verse 22—And he said, While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell *whether* the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, and he shall not return to me. Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay down with her and they bore a son. They called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him. You know, God loved David. David made mistakes. David's going to be high in God's Kingdom, you know, when that promised land gets here. But the reason that God loved David was because of his attitude.

And now we're going to go to Psalms 51 and just see what David prayed while he was... that seven days that he was fasting. Psalm 51, we go to a lot of times, and Passover, and just when sin comes into our lives just go back and throw our self on God's mercy and He will be merciful to us. So Psalm 51:1—*To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone to*

Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving kindness. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin *is* always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in Your sight—that I may be found just when You speak, *and* blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in an upward parts, and in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, *that* the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide my face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, nor take Your holy spirit from me. Restore me with joy of Your salvation, and uphold me *with Your generous spirit.* *Then* I will teach transgressors Your way, and sinners shall be converted to You. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you know, the death of Uriah, the God of my salvation, *and* my tongue shall sing aloud all of Your righteousness. O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, you know, repentance, a broken and contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure in Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, and burnt offering, and whole burnt offering. Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

So, you see, that was David's attitude after Nathan had confronted him. He, you know, he knew he'd sinned a great sin and he went in with that attitude and repented before God and then was willing to accept God's decision to take the child.

Alright, we're going to look at another decision that David made that affected Israel, and it's in 2 Samuel 24:1. **2 Samuel 24:1—Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, Now go out, go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people.** You know, sometimes we can be guilty of this too, brethren, as we prepared for the upcoming time that's ahead of us. You know, we've been admonished to put some food away and stores and whatnot, but we just can't put our faith and trust in those because those can be taken away pretty quick. We've just got to trust God and that He's going to give us the strength to move forward to the promised land that He's promised us. And when God promises something, God can't lie, so it's out there and it's coming. You know, His Son's going to be here in a very short period of time.

Verse 3—And Joab said to the king, Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of the lord the king see *it*. But why does my lord the king desire this thing? In other words, Joab knew it was wrong to number the tribes of Israel. They were to put their faith in God.

Verse 4—Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army, and therefore, Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

Alright, now drop down to verse 8. Alright, starting in verse 8—So when they had gone throughout all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew a sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men. And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, I have sinned greatly in what I have done. You know, God put it in his head what he had done. You know, he wasn't trusting God but putting his trust into his numbers. ...but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.

Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and tell David, Thus says the LORD: I will offer you three *things*; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you. So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, Seven years of famine shall be upon you and your land or you shall flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you. Or there shall be three days' plague in your land. Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me. And David said to Gad, I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died, just because of something that... wrong decision, sin that David did, it affected the nation of Israel.

So verse 16—And when the angel struck out the hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented, showing mercy, God is showing His mercy from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, It is enough; now restrain your hand. Now, David was a man after God's own heart. He will be king over Israel in the Kingdom. He made some major mistakes in his life, but God's great mercy, he overcame the hardships of his life. You know, we're now fighting our own carnal human nature as we live through this way of life. Only by God's mercy and love for each of us will we enter to that thousand year period and the reign of Jesus Christ; again, a homeland.

Alright, let's turn to **Hebrews 11**, which we know very well is the Faith Chapter. And we're going to read through there, and you know, there's a lot more people that are mentioned there, that we just went through the lives of three people that are mentioned there, that will be a part of God's government and Kingdom in the very short future.

So starting in verse 1—Now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he

obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it being dead still speaks. It's his example, still speaks out to us to this day.

Verse 5—By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found because God had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those willing to diligently seek Him. And we do. We seek a Kingdom, a homeland, and we just have to have the faith that God's going to protect us and get us there.

Verse 7—By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, preparing an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go to a place which he would receive an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise, *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, and the heirs with him of the same promise, and we're of that same promise. You know, it's just, again, I can't say it enough, that what God's people look forward to since Abel is very shortly going to be here.

Verse 10—And he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. By faith Sarah herself who received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in the multitude—innumerable as the sands which are by the seashore.

Alright, verse 13—These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. You know, just like those pioneers going out across the prairies and then the Rocky Mountains. They knew there was a promised land out there, but they didn't know what was between them and that promised land.

Verse 14—For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly, if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. You know, that's just it, brethren, we can't go back. We have to live this way of life and keep on... just keep on keeping on.

Verse 16—By now they desired a better, and that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Verse 17—By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom He said, In Isaac your seed shall be called, concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he had also received from Him a figurative scene. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Verse 21—By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of his sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, remember what Joseph went through. And anyway (22)—By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses, when he came of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward. The reward of a promised land, and what God's promised for us.

Verse 27—By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest He who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by *dry land*, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she received the spies with peace.

And what more shall I say? For the time...fail me... of Gideon - you know, we went through a sermon series on that about seven years ago, about running down the hill. And, you know, they did it with lamps and horns, went after an army. ...and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, because valiant in battle turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trials of mocking and scourging, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented—of whom the world is not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, *in dens* and in caves of the earth. All these, having obtained a good testimony through faith did not receive the promises, that of a homeland that's coming. And it's a promise.

Verse 40—God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. And that's, in other words, a 144,000 are going to be raised together at Christ's return.

Just as the people who were part of the western expansion, whether Lewis and Clark, the trappers, or the pioneers, when they left St. Louis they had no idea what was ahead of them. They were leaving the life they knew behind and going into the unknown. The same is true for those that God has worked with through time. After baptism we leave a spiritual "St. Louis," we go into a new way of life. There will be hardship, wrong decisions (in other words, sin), but to get to the homeland we must overcome whatever is put in front of us. We have to keep going forward.

Alright, for our next verse let's turn to Romans 8:27. **Romans 8:27**—Now He who searches the heart knows what the mind of the spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*. And we know all things work together for good of those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. And that's each and every one of us in PKG. That's, God working through us in this end-time to.... And a lot of things are going to happen in the next few years.

Verse 29—For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He predestined, He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore, is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor heights nor depth, nor any created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Alright. I'd like to read something from the post Ron just wrote about his health back in June of this year. I'll start right in; it's close to the end of the post: "Yet in all this, as everyone should strongly know, my life is fully in God's hands, just as with everyone who has been called, begotten, and is then yielding to God's purpose in their life. This has happened to me as a part of God's purpose in what He intends to accomplish and produce through it, as well as it occurring precisely at His timing in those things He is working out. There has already been some incredible good that has come out of this, which will be revealed more fully at a later time. Although it was a pretty rough and difficult thing to experience (as my pain tolerance is not high, and this was extremely painful), it is truly nothing compared to the good that it has already produced. We should all keep in mind and realize that in those things we experience of hardships, trials, and pains, that often others can be helped and/or strengthened by our experience. Then of course, we too can learn personally and become more fully perfected through such things we may go through in life, and especially in how we go through them.

It is a very true and inspiring thing that Paul wrote when he basically stated in Romans that when our lives are in God's hands, everything will work together for that which is good. This includes the trials, hardships, and pain we experience in human life. That "good" may be, and often is, to the benefit of others, and often it is to our benefit for what it can mold and fashion in our being - in our thinking and in our mind.

"After the heart attack, that following Monday, I was released... into the prison camp. This Thursday, it will be two weeks since the heart attack and I am doing quite well at this point in my recovery. On

occasion, I get a little light-headed and must rest when it occurs. I've had one occasion where I broke out in a sweat and felt that my heart was acting up somewhat, but by the time someone in the medical unit hooked me up to an EKG it had stopped and probably lasted only twenty minutes total. I'm walking short distances each day and getting a lot of rest to recover. There is a great work ahead and I know I will be fully ready when the time comes. Our lives are in God's great care, and regardless of what might happen to us, even if it is to death, the Church of God continues on and our future is still in God's great care and timing."

We are about to go into the final 1260 day period. God wants us to fear not and look to Him for all our needs. The only thing we should fear is God, and we need to be putting our trust in Him.

Okay, for a few quick scriptures let's go to Proverbs 1:7. In fact, you don't really need to turn there, I can read them to you. **Proverbs 1:7—The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.** You know, we're told turn left or turn right, we just got to do what God says and fear not to obey God.

Proverbs 9:10—The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

And then Ecclesiastes 12:13—**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His Commandments, for this is man's all.**

And then you can turn to Matthew 10:26. **Matthew 10:26—Therefore, do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak it in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach it on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs on your head are numbered. That's how well God knows us. Do not fear, therefore, for you are the more valuable than many sparrows. Therefore, whoever confesses Me before men, I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.**

The mountain men and trappers served as guides to unknowing pioneers of the western expansion. So, too, will those of the 144,000 and those of God's remnant Church guide the people who survive the next time period. We have all lived this way of life fighting Satan and his demons, just as the mountain men had it a lot tougher than the last of the pioneers that came west at the close of the century. The people who come out of this next time period and go into the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ will have it easier. They won't have to fight Satan and his demons. We have some tough times ahead of us, brethren. We don't know what God has in store for us, but we do know this, that He will be there for us.

I'd like to read something out of *2008-God's Final Witness*. It's from page 172 and it's called "The Big Question," and it's in the chapter, "Why Such Massive Destruction." "This brings us back to the beginning

of the chapter. Knowing that this world is about to enter the time which will have enormous global destruction, in which billions will die, the big question is 'Why?' Why will God allow this? Why will such a thing have to happen? Why won't God prevent it?"

"Simply put, mankind does not want God's way. People must learn what their selfish ways produce. Man has always rejected God, except for those few (144,000) through time whom God has specifically called, converted, and personally molded and fashioned to be among the first to enter His Kingdom." The promised land. "These are a unique group of men and women. They have fought far greater battles than those in the future will have to fight because their battles were fought during man's time of self-rule. The 144,000, who have conquered and overcome, have paved the way for all others to follow. The rest of mankind, over the next 1,100 years, will have things much easier. Over the past six millennia, the people of God have suffered great persecution from the rest of the world around them, even while fighting their own human nature, in order to develop Godly character."

"The world will become thankful to Jesus Christ and all He has gone through to be their Passover sacrifice, High Priest, and King. People will also become thankful for the faithfulness of the 144,000 who have helped pave the way for them, so that they can more easily become a part of God's Family."

Alright, for one last verse let's turn to Joshua 1:9. Turn to **Joshua 1:9—Have I not commanded you?** And a commandment from God is a Commandment from God. It's whether it's clean and unclean meats, Sabbaths, it's a command. **Have I not commanded you. Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid,** in other words, fear not, **nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.**