

We began a new series last weekend entitled *God Establishes Israel*, and this will be *Part 2*, obviously.

Before we pick up from where we left off last Sabbath there is one matter of news that I had skipped over at that time that I want to mention here today toward the beginning, at the beginning here, actually, before we get into the scriptures and stuff of the story flow, and even to add some other news items associated with that particular portion that I skipped because they're pertinent to what we're talking about here.

Anyway, the particular area I skipped over had to do with something that was stated in **2 Samuel 4:1**. I'll just read it to you, when it said, **When Saul's son, referring to Ish-bosheth, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled.** Thinking about that then and talking about some of the news articles that followed last week you look at the world, you look at how people are viewing the things that are taking place, and we live in a unique time, we really do. It's quite incredible to watch some of this take place.

As Johnny has referred to, we have a front row seat. Sometimes we don't know what we're seeing though even though we sit on the front row. We know that certain things are taking place, but we don't know exactly to what extent or what they have bearing on. This is one of those particular cases.

But thinking about the world and thinking about how people are responding; just like with COVID, people want things to get back to normal. Well, what is normal? And the normal has changed, may have, and likely has until the end is completed here. But you see this process working in people. You see the different attitudes, the feelings, and they don't really know how to deal with everything that's going on, but there's not this great fear yet.

There's not the kind of thing that has to be there in order to establish God's Kingdom, in order to help mankind come to the realization that we can't solve our problems. We are making our problems worse. The world is getting worse, progressively so, and with technology especially it just gets worse and worse and worse. Things are accelerating right now in a way that the world doesn't even grasp what's taking place.

I was watching some things today about China, and it's really quite incredible, and to see their viewpoint, because this is with a news station that has their influence in it. But anything you look in the news you have to know what their influence is. I don't care what news station it is, they all have a prejudice, they all have a particular push, if you will, as a whole—a prejudice is the best way of saying it—because human beings aren't without prejudice.

When it comes to news, depending on what it is, whether it's Al Jazeera or RT or CNN or BBC or FOX, you have to know what those prejudices are so you can wade through some of those

things. Otherwise, people can drink that in, and as so often happens, people begin to think one thing is true over another.

Candidly, out there in the world there is much confusion and there really is no real truth if you want to know the truth about it. You have to be careful about what you're doing because anything is said about everything! People say anything they want to, and people make choices about what they choose then to believe. It's a choice because there is a prejudice in their heart of what they want to see, of what they want to believe, and so people receive things in that light.

We in God's Church have to be careful of that and we have to understand we live in a sick world. Things are not presented in a matter that you can know what the truth is as far as the world is concerned. You can wade through a lot of things and you can weigh these things out, but to take a side is an error. It really is. To wade through things is one matter, but I just want to caution people again to be careful what you take as being absolute truth.

Because there is no absolute truth except what comes from God Almighty and when Christ returns and the Kingdom of God is established on this earth to rule over this world, then everything can begin to be addressed in the sense of what is told out here and given as a matter of truth in everything.

Again, it's so difficult to wade through things and we just have to be careful how we judge, how we determine things and so it is we live at a time when I think back a few months when this COVID thing began and in the beginning I was struck by certain hypocrisy that exists anyway in the news, and people's attitudes toward some things. Because a big deal is made about certain things where people begin to die but other things it's like it doesn't mean anything.

The example I often use is the number of people killed in automobile accidents every year. Where is the outrage? More than in Vietnam. You know, you start comparing these numbers. That was atrocious, that was hideous over all those years and the numbers of people that died in a war. And look at it today. What was gained? That's the way wars are. Then after a while, you start trading with them; they're trading partners.

You think, what a crazy world we live in! Just like people who have fought in some of the wars here of recent time. Now, if they pull everything out and they just let it go the way it was, what was accomplished? Well, we protected things on our shore, on our country. You think, "Oh, did you really?"

Anyway. I'm sorry I get a little upset about some of these things, but I loathe hypocrisy and the fact that a lot of things could be done when it comes to safety that aren't done today. There are a lot of things in infrastructure that could be made to make things a lot safer on highways, but it's not done because, eh, they want to use it somewhere else.

Same thing is true here when some of these things began and thinking about some of the numbers and I thought, well, think of the number of people that die of flu every year. We didn't know at that point how bad this really was. Well, this turned out to be really bad. It's gotten worse and worse as time goes along.

I know the numbers aren't totally accurate here in the U.S., and other places in the world, but thousands and tens of thousands of people have died—that's a fact—of COVID. Okay?

Now, other people have been thrown into the batch to get the numbers higher in some cases, and some nursing homes and even medical centers because they get more money if it's COVID, so they write it off as COVID. It's a sick world. But now I also know that in China they're not reporting as much as they should be counting either.

So, you look at the different parts of the world and you realize everybody plays their games, everyone has this image they want to portray to other parts of the world, and so you have to wade through this garbage, this cesspool. We have to be careful how we wade through it.

But this is a serious thing that's taking place and it's getting worse. It's not getting better. It's just the beginning of things. We live at that time. This is not a normal thing. Back in March, April, we weren't sure where this was headed. Now we can be of far more certain.

It's pushing the world in a particular direction, nations of the world in a particular direction. It's affecting governments and how they work with or control, try to control populations. A lot of the garbage that's going on out there, how they interact with each other as far as nations are concerned, a lot of politics, a lot of games that are played out here. But there's a lot going on behind the scenes that we don't grasp and don't comprehend that aren't told in the news.

As I started to say even about China that I didn't finish, they're admitting out there now that, as a whole, there is a jealousy between the U.S. and China. There are certain decisions being made because they're a threat, they're getting bigger. No one has stood up and threatened, in a sense, the superiority of the U.S. to this degree, as what's taking place now.

They have learned to steal technology and they have made it better in many cases. Because, they have a lot of smart people. This nation has a lot of smart people. A lot of countries have a lot of smart people and a lot of smart scientists. But when you catch up and you start building upon what you now have at a faster pace because you see the need to do so, well, that's basically what they're doing. They're passing us up as they have as far as their navy is concerned. Okay? And other technology that's out there.

Anyway, we live at a time of great change in the world and it's forcing the world into a third world war. It's coming. It's a reality. How quickly it comes is all in God's hands. We ought to know that.

Anyway, I want to read some of this that's just come out in the past week. But I want you to think about this. Again, these things having to do with how—and I hope we're able to see it in

this light—how people respond to what’s happening around them. That’s why it should be clear to us that so much more has to happen on a far greater scale to shake people to the core of their being.

Because with haughtiness of human beings they think they’re going to get beyond it and they’re going to correct, they’re going to make things right, they’re going to do ‘this’ and they’re going to do ‘that’, and the reality is no, they’re not this time. They can deal with certain things to a limit and that’s it.

Anyway, I think of this particular thing here, of how people are becoming numb, in one respect, apathetic in certain respects. They truly are. Apathetic of how they’re dealing with reality in the world and apathetic to the depth of the devastation that’s taking place. So, think about this.

“In one day in the US, on December the 3rd, there were over 2,800 deaths reported due to the pandemic.” So, we can argue about how much really, how many really died on that day and how much of the numbers were inflated. Nevertheless, they’re bad, okay? For that entire week then (I think about this, too), “consider how 9/11, the death toll was 2, 977.” So, almost the same. But the world is not looking at it like a 9/11. The U.S. isn’t looking at it like a 9/11.

Then also consider how in that week that saw the highest daily death rate in the U.S. due to COVID-19; in the same week the toll was nearly 16,000 deaths. “That week saw a daily average of 2,249 deaths per day for seven straight days.” It’s not being seen in the same light and it’s not seen by other nations in the same light. Because they’re suffering through this as well, they’re dealing with this as well.

I remember back after 9/11 and visiting different countries. I think about going to Australia and how that they were so close in their attitude and feeling, when you’d meet strangers, I don’t care whether it was a taxi or where you might get in a conversation with someone, their feelings were very strong in empathy toward what was taking place over here and what had happened. Whereas you could go from the east coast to the west coast and it wasn’t even the same feeling on the west coast as what they had clear down in Australia toward what happened in New York.

So, people respond to things in different ways. Today is unique, what you’re living through and what we’re watching on the front row, if you will.

Even those daily tolls, that daily average for seven straight days is not far, just a hop, skip, and a jump to being that number that was killed in one day on 9/11. That’s a number that’s stuck in people’s minds because it was so different and unique in what happened.

Well, something that happens over a long period of time, people learn to live with it. You wear your mask. You learn to sanitize your hands more. You learn to do things in a different way, and you begin to think in a different manner, and you look forward to that time you can get certain things back to normal. But it’s not happening.

And the economic impact? We haven't even begun to see. Haven't even begun to see. These games that are played. Whether it be \$600 or \$2000 or \$20,000 it doesn't solve the problems. It just creates more in the long run.

Now they're acknowledging in the UK, the world is, now it's on the news finally after it was already said a long time ago here (I marvel how some try to hold some of these things back, as it were), but the reality is there is a new mutant strain in the UK and there's another one coming out of South Africa, and there's evidently some others out there as well. I wish I could remember the number that was stated either by the CDC or WHO (The W.H.O.). It's in the teens of mutations. How is that going to affect things? What's going to happen? There are things they don't know just as they didn't know in the beginning of this.

We live in some strange times. We truly do and there are certain things our lives are changed—they truly are—until this is over. It's going to continue to change, so we need to be ready.

In the midst of all this, as I'm talking here, I want to warn and to encourage the brethren everywhere they are to put first things first. Because this is a time where you will tend to let down. Because most people are not able to meet like we are in Cincinnati. They're on their own listening, not able to meet in places like we normally have in halls and so forth, not able to come together and when you're on your own that's a dangerous time because God's people need the Sabbath day, and they need the fellowship that they've had in the past. Without the fellowship you're missing a lot, you truly are.

You need to realize that this is a tempting time, a time you can be tempted to let down, a time you can be tempted to let up and become lethargic and apathetic right along with the rest of the world! But you can't afford to do that.

I'm just going to tell you right now this is a time of testing for God's people. Okay? This is the time of final refining. It is a time of final refining for God's people. You have to be determined to have that heart like David, that you want to keep God in the forefront, and that you recognize the danger of the time you're living in.

Don't let this world rub off on you! Because it's very easy to get wrapped up now in what you're doing to cope with what's happening in the world and with your jobs and everything else that's out there! Very easy to get so wrapped up in those things that God begins to take a back seat, that your focus on God begins to take a backseat.

This is a time to fast and pray. This is a time to fight! Because you're in a battle, and if you don't know that, you're on very dangerous ground.

I want to see everyone in God's Church come through this, but everyone will not. That happens year by year anyway. But this is one of the most dangerous times that we've been in for a long time. Truly is, as far as God's Church is concerned and you need to understand that.

Worldwide there are 1.75 million deaths due to COVID. Some say, “Well...” I don’t care, it’s in the millions and I can guarantee if we had the right numbers out of China and some of the other nations that don’t report like they should, or like they could if they were really truthful, it’d be a lot higher - a lot higher!

I remember well the kind of devastation back in December the 26 of 2004. Most people don’t remember what that date was or what happened and don’t think about it because it was clear over in Indonesia. The tsunami. That affected me because I know the times we live in. God’s made it very clear we live at the end of an age. It’s very sobering to see that kind of thing happen so quickly, so powerfully, in such a devastating manner, and to know that there are things coming that are far, far worse, far, far worse. At that time nearly 230,000 killed. Tsunami. Incredible.

That affected some of my thinking and perspective of certain things and realizing, sobering, if you will, and that which was followed as far as some things that were written.

So again, what’s happening right now should sober us and not make us apathetic. That’s the last thing that should happen.

I want to read just a few headlines right quick like. **“New COVID strain found in South Africa.”**¹

“Johnson,” speaking of Great Britain, “may cut off London from the rest of the UK over new COVID strain amid rumors of looming Tier 4.”² “Due to a mutant strain of COVID-19 that has believed to be 50% more contagious than any strain detected before...”

Now, they’re shaken up over there, they really are, as far as London, and then the retaliation to some of that then because they’ve been locked down. And when you’ve been locked down for so long and then now you have something else where you’re going to get locked down again because something else is come along? It’s putting people to a test and it’s creating an atmosphere and doing things in the heart and minds of people, getting them just a little closer to what comes next, to where people are going to be scared.

People are going to learn to be scared. They’re going to learn to be afraid. They’re going to learn that their governments can’t solve their problems, that scientists can’t solve their problems, that religion can’t solve their problems.

That’s exactly where they have to be to come to a point where they’ll begin to listen to God because today people don’t care. They already have their minds made up, what they think is right, what they believe is right. They haven’t been brought to that point where people are forced to their knees. That’s what God’s going to do to this world before His Kingdom comes.

¹ <https://thelogicalindian.com/health/another-covid-19-mutant-found-from-south-africa-what-do-we-know-so-far-25652>

² <https://sputniknews.com/uk/202012191081508311-johnson-may-cut-off-london-from-rest-of-uk-over-new-covid-strain-amid-rumours-of-looming-tier-4/>

Another article here, that that was last Sabbath news. This is just about COVID that I'm reading. I'm not reading all the other kind of news that's out there right now because there's a ton of it. So many things about war and military and weapons, it's mind boggling.

Another article entitled, **“‘Trying To Get The Hell Out’ –Emergency Lockdown In London Triggers Mass Exodus.”**³ Now, this is affecting how people think and their response to certain things that are taking place. So, now here we go again! Now they have to get certain places. You have to get out of town, get out of Dodge! Something bad is getting ready to take place. It'd be easier if it was the O.K. Corral. Anyway, sorry.

Another one: **“Italy suspends all travel from the UK...”** You think nations aren't starting to feel some things again in how this affects people, and now you're talking about maybe a little bit of hope, a vaccination comes out, so now maybe the restaurants can be opened again and maybe the movie theaters, we can go out, and sporting events. I kind of marvel at some of the attitudes and things, **“We've got to have our sports!”** And when they get COVID and they have to shut down something it's nationwide news because **“This team can't play now because COVID is sweeping through the team!”** **“We got to have our sports!!”** And if they don't have that, what happens? Pretty tough. **“Can't go to the Colosseum today!”** I'm sorry. We're sick. The world is sick, it truly is. Priorities are sick.

“Italy suspends all travel from the UK... France considers suspending flights and trains from the UK... Londoners face being arrested if they try and leave city...”⁴ I mean, this is almost like science fiction. I just, some movies pop into my mind, movies I probably shouldn't have seen.

“Expect all EU countries and possibly the US and Canada to suspend travel from the UK.” Well? What have we seen since Sunday when this came out, finally? Finally, finally came out. This has been in little smatterings of news anyway, that this strain is already out there and it probably has already come to the United States, has probably already gone to the world. So has the ones from South Africa; it's already got it's start.

Now they're finding out it's affecting young people, in the sense of adults, didn't hear children. To me it was in the context we're talking about younger people, where in the past here people are getting by this and it's not as harmful to them. Now, one of these strains—I don't remember which one—is more contagious to younger people. They don't escape. They're not going to escape. God's not going to let anyone in this earth escape when it comes down to it. In time here, as time goes along, God's going to allow those things to take place.

³ <https://www.activistpost.com/2020/12/trying-to-get-the-hell-out-emergency-lockdown-in-london-triggers-mass-exodus.html>

⁴ <https://www.investmentwatchblog.com/italy-suspends-all-travel-from-the-uk-france-considers-suspending-flights-and-trains-from-the-uk-londoners-face-being-arrested-if-they-try-and-leave-city/>

Another one: **“After reports of COVID-19 mutation Netanyahu plans new lockdown.”**⁵ No messing around in some of these cases, the kind of lockdowns they’re having and people don’t respond well to this. Catch-22. What do you do?

It says, **“Italy has patient with new COVID-19 strain, nations ban UK flights”**⁶

“The new Coronavirus strain is out of control, British health secretary Matt Hancock has told the BBC news.”⁷ A little bit more fear than before because now it was just the one COVID. Vaccine for that. Now this is happening, and so what can they do now?

“DEADLY SPREAD: New COVID strain is 70 per cent more contagious as experts fear South East outbreak is racing out of control.”⁸ The UK. Incredible. It won’t be long it’s going to sweep through here too. It’s already here.

Monday: **“U.K. Braces for Possible Shortages of Some Foods as France Closes Border to Trade Over New Covid Strain.”**⁹ So, here we go again. Shelves bare. Because that’s what people do. You know, understand that.

Tuesday: **“Lorries,”** or semis as we would call them, **“Stuck in Traffic as Europe closes borders in Response to Mutated COVID Strain Found in U.K.”**¹⁰

“UK Retailers Urge Government to Ensure Food Supplies as French Border Shut.”¹¹

“World Scrambles To Isolate UK Over Fears ‘Mutant’ COVID Strain Could Spread.”¹² You can’t stop it.

⁵ <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/293422>

⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/20/countries-close-border-to-britain-as-new-covid-variant-surges>

⁷ Can’t locate statement or article outside of BBC twitter feed or YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xyUrNhR_pk

⁸ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13521261/new-covid-strain-mutant-south-east/>

⁹ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/uk-braces-for-possible-shortages-of-some-foods-as-france-closes-border-to-trade-over-new-covid-strain/ar-BB1c6T8v>

¹⁰ <https://sputniknews.com/europe/202012221081537247-lorries-stuck-in-traffic-as-europe-closes-borders-in-response-to-mutated-covid-strain-found-in-uk/>

¹¹ https://www.theepochtimes.com/uk-retailers-urge-government-to-ensure-food-supplies-as-french-border-shut_3627225.html

¹² https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/world-scrambles-isolate-uk-over-fears-mutant-covid-strain?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+zerohedge%2Ffeed+%28zero+hedge+-+on+a+long+enough+timeline%2C+the+survival+rate+for+everyone+drops+to+zero%29

Another one: **“The Virus Has Adapted to Our Cells’: ‘Mutant’ COVID Strain Detected in UK Stoking Fears in Europe.”**¹³ So, here we go again, this thing of fear. That’s what it’s all about. It’s about, candidly, sadly, the need for mankind to fear, to be troubled, to be troubled to the core of their being until an attitude begins to change so that God can work with them. Because in their current state, as long as they have hopes of something else, they’re not going to hope in God, they’re not going to look to God, the possibility that God could intervene and help them. They’re not going to do that.

The spirit in mankind, candidly, has to be broken and in many it will be. But in so many it won’t be all the way to the end when Christ and 144,000 come with him and they begin destroying those who are destroying the earth. Because that’s their first job. They’re going to begin to destroy those who are destroying the earth. And candidly, the potential for how much they destroy can be as great or greater than the third of all mankind that’s killed as a result of the Sixth Trumpet. Third of all mankind. Something could happen that would be far greater. Candidly, I believe it will be because human beings are so far away, so haughty, so proud, going to fight to the end rather than accept the fact that there could be one God, to believe that there could only be one truth to live by.

Another one: (Just crazy articles.) **“Hollywood Boulevard Struggles Amid Pandemic: ‘75 Percent Is Boarded Up’”**¹⁴ Well...? Nah, I won’t comment.

“Safe to assume new Covid-19 mutation ‘is already here’...” This is from Ireland. So, hop, skip, and a jump, so they know it’s there. Today with travel, even with the restrictions that exist, there are still people who have been travelling between different nations and businesses and different things of that nature. **“...Ireland’s PM announces shutdown of pubs and restaurants amid new fears.”**¹⁵ So, here we go again.

People, there are people out here who have already lost their livelihoods. They’ve lost everything. There are people out here who have lost their businesses and they’ll never recuperate from it. Even now! So, if you bring another wave in, what’s this going to do? Just a lot more.

The governments of the world can’t bail people out of this. The reality is missing in all this, and the apathy out there, because, candidly, they know there’s only so much that anybody can do. A lot of talk goes out, a lot of talk, politicians and so forth. That’s all they can do is talk.

¹³ <https://sputniknews.com/world/202012221081535782-the-virus-has-adapted-to-our-cells-mutant-covid-strain-detected-in-uk-stoking-fears-in-europe/>

¹⁴ <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/hollywood-boulevard-struggles-amid-pandemic-75-percent-is-boarded-up>

¹⁵ <https://www.rt.com/news/510467-covid-mutation-ireland-shutdown/>

Wednesday: “...**Supercharged mutant Covid strain is ‘probably already in the US and may even have started here’, scientists warn.**”¹⁶ So, maybe it didn’t even start in the UK. It may have started here.

Thursday: “**California Is 1st State To Hit 2 Million Cases, And Hospitals Are Out Of ICU Beds.**”¹⁷

Friday: “**Man Behind Pfizer Vaxx Warns COVID-19 ‘Will Be With Us For The Next 10 Years.’**”¹⁸

Crazy world we live in. Truly. So, be on guard. Be alert. Strive to put God first in your life because you can’t afford to be apathetic to what’s going on around you. We need to have some fear as well.

2 Samuel 5. Let’s continue on in the story. Last Sabbath we ended with the beginning of the account of David having been made king over all Israel, and with him and his army going up to take the city of Jerusalem, called Jebus at that time by the Jebusites. We’re going to pick up those last few verses and then continue on from where we left off.

2 Samuel 5:5—In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months... Looking at this area of Hebron, up towards Jerusalem, and then Bethlehem, which is about six miles south of Jerusalem, watching a special on the news last night, a part of this, of what was taking place in the area of Bethlehem. There is incredible history and you can’t help but be struck by the fact that this area has been at war generation after generation after generation after generation. They were fighting over this region the time the Israelites came in and there have been nothing but wars in this region ever since. Incredible! Generation to generation of what has been happening in that area.

They were showing some pictures of the area of Bethlehem and the wall that’s there and the different sections of the city, divided up as far as zones. They call them zones, different zones they have. There are certain zones, well, people live in different ones whether they be Christian, Muslim, whatever, and you have this giant thing. I’ve seen some of the fences personally between some of the areas of Palestine and the West Bank and so forth, from the Palestinians in Gaza I should say, and the military that’s all along there. But this was unique because it’s a high concrete wall. High! Much higher than what we have on the border with Mexico, the new ones.

They were interviewing different ones and talking about how they felt they were in prison because of the inability to go in and out is highly restricted. Especially now with COVID-19. It’s even worse. But you think, this whole part of the world has been under siege, people fighting, and it won’t have peace until God’s Kingdom comes.

¹⁶ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13547944/mutant-covid-strain-already-us-started-scientists/>

¹⁷ <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/12/24/950038710/california-is-first-state-to-hit-2-million-cases-and-hospitals-are-out-of-icu-be>

¹⁸ <https://www.zerohedge.com/covid-19/man-behind-pfizer-vaxx-warns-covid-19-will-be-us-next-10-years>

You think about a situation like this, and the Jebusites, if you remember, they weren't too concerned that David could take them because of the types of terrain that's there. They felt safe. Well, they weren't safe against David because God gave them favor to destroy them.

Verse 5—In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. Again, we understand this story and the type of what it's all about. It's about how God establishes Israel, that He established a physical nation, a physical people with that name, but the name means far more than the lineage of a particular race of people. It's about all mankind who is going to be able to become a part of Israel - because of the name, because of what it means. It's about God and it's about His people, and it's about Elohim, the Family of God.

There are those things that we can learn from it ourselves and profit from. But to be in awe of the Great God who designs and prepares and has prepared all these things for us going so far back, and things we're able to use to this day that encourage and help us and strengthen us. To realize what God is doing now of the first phase of Israel that's about to be established, spiritual Israel, 144,000 returning with Christ. What an awesome thing.

Verse 6—Then the king and his men (soldiers) went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who sent word to David, saying, If you do not turn away the blind and the lame will keep you from coming here, because they thought, David could not come in there. Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).

Now, you read through this in other Bibles and it's so screwed up. They don't have comprehension of the Great God of the universe. They don't comprehend what's taking place and why. Some of these translations just slay me.

Verse 8, it says, **Now David said on that day, Who will go and climb up by way of the water shaft and strike down the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who hate David's life).** So, they take some of these things literal and they don't grasp what's being said. He's responding to the mocking of the Jebusites and so he is saying something like this then to his soldiers, "Who is going to go up there to meet the lame and the blind?" Because that's what they said, basically, so, "Who is going to be the one who will lead the way to defeat them, because they're just the lame and the blind, basically," knowing full well, no, they're soldiers and they're skilled in war.

I want to add here then (you don't need to turn there), **1 Chronicles 11:6-7** here, **Now David said**, because this is a part of the story to make it complete, **Whoever attacks the Jebusites first...** So, he was talking about this area and going up this particular way, and the one who jumped up to the head of the line. This is what he added to the story here. **Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain.** Who do you think would be that kind of a person? Well...?

Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went up first and became chief. Not a surprise knowing the family, knowing their being with David all that time as they were down in another part of the world to the south as they were fleeing from or trying to stay apart from, if you will, Saul and the army.

Then David dwelt in that stronghold; therefore, they called it the City of David. The story goes back and forth a little bit here at different times because depending on what it's addressing.

Going back then, continuing on in 2 Samuel from where we left off. **2 Samuel 5:9—Then David dwelt in that stronghold and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo,** which is a landfill. Basically, it's talking about a particular area here that was known for that, **and inward.**

So, David went on and became great, and the Eternal God of hosts was with him. God was establishing Israel. It's what God was doing physically. A lot of work went into preparing all this. A lot of work with David, for a long time with David before He finally brought him to this point. Though David knew what God had promised to give to him he waited upon God. This is a part of that story.

I think of different verses, different scriptures we could read, but **Nahum 1:7**, if I have this correct. You don't need to turn there. I'm just going to read the verse to you. It says, **The Eternal is good, a stronghold**, which means "strength." Referring to the same thing here. But it's about God. It's about what God does.

And so, yes, he had something physical. We have something spiritual. That's why I marvel sometimes in the story about Petra, of how an entire Church, because we didn't know any better, because we hadn't grown to that point, because truths were being restored to God's Church because they'd been lost during Sardis, and it takes time to mature in various things so God can build upon and give to human beings more. We have to mature and it takes time for that kind of maturity even in a large organization as the Worldwide Church of God. Well, actually, the Radio Church of God was for so long, and then it became the Worldwide Church of God.

But even with that, still held on to a lot of physical things because it's so hard sometimes to get past those things. And so, because our minds are so physical in thinking it's difficult at times to grow, to go on and leave some of that that is physical behind. It really comes down to a relationship with God because God has to give you His holy spirit, He has to work with us to mold and fashion us, to help us to mature and to help us to see things that are on a spiritual plane.

Like what we're talking about concerning Israel. But the same is true about so many things in our past. As with Petra. People looked to a physical location. A scattered Body looks to a physical location where people can go to be protected from the end-time. No, it's not about a physical location. It's about God. It's about our relationship with God and what He's going to do

in giving His help and favor and blessings as we go through some of the kinds of things we will go through.

God is not restricted to having to take us to a little place on the earth in order to be protected from something so we don't have to suffer anything, so that the rest of the world can suffer... anyway. But we don't know until we can see it. God had to give that to us.

So it is with things like this. **The Eternal is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who trust in Him.** Because that's what it comes down to. It comes down to a matter of living by God's word—faith—and believing those things that God has given to us, which is a matter of trust, in that respect. God knows us. He knows His people.

And so, to the degree that things happen in our life, go back to that. Is God first? Is that our mind? Do we have the heart like David that pursues God, that thinks about God, that keeps God in the forefront - especially in big things that happen in our life or the more important things that happen in our life, and if we're doing that properly we're going to do it in the little things as well! We truly are. Because if our minds are on the little things the big things will follow. It's a simple thing. Truly is. But it's something we have to grow in.

Going on in **2 Samuel 5:11—Then Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees.** Now, this is an awesome story. You think about things like this, we just read through things like a story flow, like the Bible Story. We just read it as a story but there is so much more here, there truly is, as you go through things like this, because it doesn't elaborate on certain things.

But you have to consider other nations around there at that particular time. They saw David (and we're going to get to it in time here [probably not today at the rate I'm going]), but God made Israel really strong. The other nations around knew it. Now, through Saul it was a matter of organizing it and bringing it together, but it didn't really come together. It was still divisive. It was still sporadic in what they were able to accomplish, a very small military, if you will, because God wasn't establishing Saul. He was going to establish David.

But when God began to give favor to David, the word spread. Nations, there were still nations at this time talking about what had happened back in the time of Egypt when Israel left Egypt. They knew the Israelites. They knew certain stories. Those things were around other nations. God works with different ones at different times. It's an awesome thing.

He gave the king of Tyre and we've gone through it, the beginning of the year, going through some of the history of that region of the world. When you think of Tyre and how great it was as a civilization and here this king took a liking to king David. He saw something unique. Didn't understand it all, but he had to have seen something incredibly unique, and took a liking to king David, truly did, and desired, in that respect, a close friendship and an alliance with him. That's what developed over time. It's an awesome thing. All the way up to the time of

Solomon, the things that happened because of some of the things that took place here. Incredible! And so, this is very early on.

So, he sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons. Now, the reason he was able to do that is because they already had a very, if you want to look at it in that respect, strong civilization in the sense of what they had built in their seaports, the ships that they had. Incredible, at that time, of the world.

Some of these things are being addressed here a little farther away, not in that particular region right there, and he wants to be a friend with him. Because probably, in that respect, if you think about different nations, some nations weren't so friendly. Some of the things going on with certain nations weren't so good. So, to see someone who had character, these things spread. World leaders know how other leaders are, their reputations. They hear stories and so forth. At this time, it was similar, in that respect, and so he took a liking to David.

And they built David a house. That's incredible for a king to send his people, construction workers, materials? It wasn't just a little hut, you know. It wasn't just a two-room shanty. They. Built. A. House. Awesome! It was awesome.

So David knew that the Eternal had established him as king. Awesome! It gave him that confidence. There was that within him, now he knew, he saw the fruit of it, he saw the result. Because these things don't just happen. Other nations may threaten you and want to go to war and take what you have, but here a nation so powerful as Tyre was, in that respect, and willing to send in all this to him in friendship, in alliance. Incredible.

David had this confidence of what had just taken place. That has a great bearing then on what followed as well. God was establishing Israel and David knew it.

We live at a time where we see God establishing Israel. We see a time of things that the Church has gone through and the Church has gone through for two thousand years. But we're toward the end and toward the beginning, if you will. We are toward the end of six thousand years and toward a point in time where we're ever so close in God's timing. God has timing in a different way than we do so often. Ours is a little bit shorter in span. Until you get toward the end of your span, and then, oh yeah, it's about over. Things hit you at different stages of your life, they truly do, and you learn from that process.

Here, we understand that God is at a point where He's about to establish His Kingdom. After so long a time, 144,000 to help rule and reign over the earth for the next 1,100 years.

So again, God has been doing a lot of work. He did a lot of work in preparing all this. He worked with king Hiram, if you will, of Tyre. He worked with David for a long time. These things don't just happen. They're by design. Different things happen in the world and God is over all. He allows good and bad to exist for a purpose, but He's over it all.

He established him as king of Israel. He knew that, as it says here, and **that He had exalted His kingdom**, lifted it up, being recognized now by others, **for the sake of His people Israel**. Beautiful.

I want to look at a couple of Psalms here about how it is God who establishes us. Psalm 10. I want to go through some different ones here.

Psalm 10:14—But You have seen; for You observe trouble and grief, to repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to You. So, going through here, a Psalm of David in this case, prophetic in nature. So many of the Psalms were. There are things here that are prophetic as you go through it. But there is that which God gave through the power of His spirit for David to write, as you go through different Psalms to read them.

But here it says, **You are the helper of the fatherless**. Now, we can read through that and think on physical terms. I think of how some of those things have been looked at in times past when you read different scriptures about the widow and so forth. But there are things that happen on a physical plane that have to do with people's attitudes and thinking, and then there is that which is on a spiritual plane. The purpose of this is on a spiritual plane.

You can begin to learn from things on a physical plane, but if we don't understand them, we can't go on and learn that which is spiritual. So, what does it mean? What is it saying?

"The helpless commits himself to You." When is a person helpless? When do they commit themselves to God? It takes a lot. It takes a lot for a human being to humble themselves, to come to a point where they will look to God, even acknowledge that there might be a God.

"You are the helper of the Fatherless." The point being is everyone on earth is without a Father until our Father reveals Himself, calls us, and begins to show us He is the Father, the true Father. You know, there is that relationship that's on a spiritual plane that's within the Church that we're going to have within God's Kingdom that goes so far beyond what human beings are able to do because we as human beings are selfish. We're all selfish.

I don't know how much to go into in some of this. But our family, the real family is God's Family. We can have physical family but it's not God's Family unless we happen to be in God's Family, which those who have that are incredibly blessed to experience that portion of life as well. But God is our family. That is the family. You don't really experience true family until you begin to experience it on a spiritual level in God's Church.

The more we learn that and the more we see that in that light and see one another in God's Family, and we judge according to that because it's God's Family... God did the calling! Who are we to judge anyone in God's Family? We recognize this is God's Family and we're to love everyone in God's Family.

If we're not thinking in that light then we have something we'd better repent of as fast as we can because we're hurting ourselves on a spiritual plane and not able to drink in of God's spirit

to the level and degree that God wants us to so He can give us more. Because we can't grow in that case. Then when we come to that point where we humble ourselves, then we can begin to grow more! And that's beautiful.

God is our family! This is the beginning of our family, in embryo, and this is where we learn what we have to learn. But the reality is that's the family to fight for. Sadly, and truly, physical family is secondary. It doesn't come first.

That's why I think back to times when some leaders in God's Church after the Apostasy put family, physical family, supposedly, which wasn't true (they deceived themselves), above Church family. Big mistake. Big error. No longer with us to this day because of that kind of thinking. The reality is God is first. God's Family is first. Physical takes a back seat to it.

Now, the backseat can be blessed if that is in the forefront. Those relationships have the potential of being blessed. But not all people respond to that in family. We experience many things in God's Church. God is first. God's Family, God's Church, should be first in our hearts and our minds. That's why sometimes we don't grasp the importance and the magnitude of fellowship and the importance of building those relationships the best we can within the realm of our ability to do so.

So, what a beautiful thing here. "You are the helper of the Fatherless," because He reveals Himself as our Father, as the Great God who desires for us to be in His family. He has longed for this for so long. He has worked so long. He has sacrificed so much through millions and millions of years to come to this point in time. Things we can't really grasp and comprehend fully. We can know about them and strive to appreciate them, but to grasp it fully, we don't.

Break the arm of the wicked and the evil: seek out his wickedness until You find none. The desire is then that as we're called and God reveals Himself, that we respond, to fight against those things, to enter into a spirit war, if you will, spiritual in our own lives, to fight against sin, evil, wickedness.

I'll tell you, the more you grow, the more you'll come to understand that our human nature is evil. Our human nature is not just bad, it's evil. Selfishness is evil. It's wicked. It truly is. The more we can see ourselves in that light, the more we will want a different spirit, one that's from God, and to become more like God, to be more at one with God, to be in agreement with God, to have that heart like David who sees those things and desires those things in their life. Because that's what he saw, because it was spiritual.

You can't tell this to others in the world. "You're saying I'm wicked? I'm evil? Boy, you're a sick person, aren't you? Your religion is really sick, your God, and what you believe." That's why you can never tell them anything, period, exclamation mark. Some people try to tell people sometimes and "You, our human nature is evil. It's wicked." Anyway. It is.

The Eternal is King for ever and ever. God Almighty is the King. That's why I love that series and different things we went through during the Feast in 2005, all those sermons about God

that God gave to us. That He is the King of Kings. He is the Lord of Lords. Because there were those who were raising up Christ above God Almighty. No, he is His Son. They have no problem with that relationship. They understand. It's a spiritual thing.

But we as human beings, we let other things enter in when it comes to how people think in such things. He is the one who has given to His Son titles and honor and power and might. That's why I love the example there by Paul in Corinthians where it makes it very clear that when it's all done, he returns everything to His Father. Because all power has been given to His Son to fulfill the purpose until Elohim is there. Which it's all under God anyway, but it's a unique and meaningful way to express everything.

Break the arm of the wicked and the evil; seek out the wickedness until You find none.

That's an admonition for us. It's about what God is doing, yes, because evil must be gotten rid of on the earth. There's coming that time, and we understand that, when it's all going to be destroyed. All evil, all wickedness that's ever existed will come to a single moment in time when it's all destroyed in the spirit realm and in the physical realm. Awesome, beautiful picture. And what's left? Elohim and loyal, convicted angelic beings.

The Eternal is King forever and ever. The nations have perished out of his land. Eternal, You have heard the desire of the humble. That's not until we're humble and our mind turned toward God and our thinking turns toward God. Anyway, it says, **You have heard the desire of the humble. You will establish...**

So, basically, we don't even respond to God until we're humbled, until we come to that point in our lives. Then God, if He's calling us, and when He calls us, then He can begin to work with us. It says, "You will establish." Oftentimes translated as "prepare" because the words go together, in that respect, depending on what's taking place at any moment in time. That's why I love what God has given to us, *Preparing for the Kingdom of God*. Because we're the last phase of that before that Kingdom becomes established on the earth.

You will establish their heart. It's God that does it. "You will establish their heart." We're all Fatherless until God reveals Himself and becomes our Father, until we receive Him as our Father, until we see Him and know Him as our Father on a spiritual plane, and that relationship that begins then. So incredible. But He is the one who establishes us. He's the only one who can transform the mind. It's up here, but it's the core of our thinking. That's what it's about. He is the one.

It's incredible to understand that what God has revealed to us as well. Given us that spirit essence and His holy spirit then is combined with that; He made us physical so that He could do this with us. Because, if we're spirit, we're set, and so if we choose something wrong then we're set in that evil forever, as beings were. But being made physical God can create within us a mind, by choice as we choose it and fight for it, over time for this mind to become transformed to where God can bring it into His family. Awesome, to know that and to see the marvel of what God has done. To just to know that is incredible, indeed.

You will establish their heart. You will cause Your ear to hear, to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mankind of the earth may oppress no more. It's the way mankind is to mankind, oppression, oppression, oppression.

That's why I think of Bethlehem, as they were doing it for reasons, because, obviously, we understand that Joshua was born there, and they don't understand the truth of all that. But still talking about that region and how it's been under war after war after war, century after century, religion after religion fighting each other. Going through the crusades, the Muslims before that, and all the things that took place over time. Incredible.

Oppression. Governments that oppress each other. Governments that go to war with each other, that try to conquer each other, that try to rule each other, that try to control each other. I think of the banking system in the world today and the petrodollar. It's a matter of control. And the world is so sick and tired of that. That's what's leading to world war three.

You hear them talk about it more now than ever before. If you're listening to news and hearing some of that kind of news that comes out of Europe and out of China and different places of the world, they're so sick and tired of the bullying. They really are. That's the way they see it. It's been a type of bullying to get our way.

The world, candidly, is looking forward to the time of our destruction. They really are. There are different ones who are looking forward to the time that we have no more say and getting in their way. That's where they are today. That's why it doesn't take much to push it. Just a little bit and it's all over.

Psalm 51:10—Create in me a clean heart. That's what our desire should be, needs to be. We have that desire. We want to be right before God, but we have to be willing to look at ourselves, examine ourselves, humble ourselves, cry out to God to reveal to us those things that we can't yet see in ourselves. Because every one of us have things that we need to see that we can't yet see. You'll never be fully clean in this physical flesh. You'll always have selfishness. There will always be something to work on. There will always be something to conquer. There will always be something to pray about that you ask God to help to remove out of you, to help you to control, until we are changed.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right... It's that word "an established, prepared ...an established spirit within me. It's that same word that we've been reading about. It's God who establishes us. It's God who establishes Israel. It's spiritual. It's God who establishes His family. So, it's that desire to renew an established heart. That's why I love the series and what God has been taking us through.

Psalm 78. There are so many scriptures that make it clear that we have to make the right choices as these things take place in our life as well, to have God direct our ways, our lives, to have a heart that truly wants God. We have to make the choices in that. It doesn't just happen.

We can't just have a prayer here, and maybe some other Sabbath hear something and have another prayer that we mention. It's a battle. You have to fight for it. You have to want it.

That's why I've been saying so long here now, you have to really want and fight for God's way of life. Because it doesn't just happen, a mind that's determined that God is first in everything. The reality is in our lives, because of selfishness, He isn't. The truth is He isn't first in everything.

So, in what things is He not? The question to ask and to pray about. Our number ones, twos, and threes. And generally, you don't have to go any farther than that because as you take care of those the others will either be taken care of because they are connected or another one comes in and you've conquered the other. Beautiful.

Psalm 78:5—For He, speaking of the Eternal, caused to arise a testimony in Jacob. So again here, it's about what God establishes. It's about what God does and how God works with various things. Here is a testimony, **and appointed a law in Israel, of which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children.** So again here, this desire that God has had, what He had for a physical people as He brought them even out of Egypt, and had a desire that each generation would pass these things along.

Now, Judah, when you look physically at it, their history has been one that they did pass along more, in that respect, of the stories, of the law, the exodus, the Ten Commandments, but we understand what happened with the religion. Christ condemned it when he came.

But at least on a physical scale they kept knowledge of the Sabbath and the Holy Days, whereas others totally abandoned it and accepted Baal and Ashtaroth and all kinds of other things and mixed them together and swirled it in a big fat cauldron—worse than witchcraft—and went astray and lost their identity even.

What a conversation to have with people. “Do you know that Manasseh is one of the twelve tribes?” “Boy, you're a fruitcake, aren't you?” You can't show anybody. You can't convince anyone.

For He caused to arise a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel for which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, so that the generation to come might know and that the children would be born... It's going on here showing so here are the children. If they'd teach it to their children so that the children born to them, **so that they might arise and declare them to their children.** It's this thing of just passing it on, that prayerfully this is what people will do.

Well, that hasn't been what's happened as a whole, obviously. Because we're selfish as human beings and we see things out here that glitter. We see lights on trees at certain times, and everybody else has this, so to be different than them is like swimming upstream and very difficult to do, so, people accept it. They give into it. Because that's what you do to get along,

to be friends with others and you don't want to stand out as a sore thumb. So, people give in to those kinds of things as they have for thousands of years. Nothing new under the sun.

...that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God.

What do we take from something like this? We have choices. Even as God is establishing us, we have a part in how we live our lives in working to hopefully pass along - but again we come to this thing of callings and choices. It becomes kind of a tough situation considering the history of the Church and what the Church has gone through. But everyone is responsible for their own choice, as are children.

But a parent should strive to do, to the best of their ability at any given time, what they can. Now, what happens in the future is their responsibility and their choices as they enter into teen years. Because that's when they make their minds up, as a whole, before they even establish, come to a point of adulthood. Then, especially then at that time, will make their own choices. Sometimes people are riddled with various guilt, "I could have done this... I could have done it..." Yes, people could have. But what we can look at is what we knew and didn't do and repent of that, see.

It's like in tithing and offerings or whatever to God. Every child as they grow up should be taught the most basic of things. I'm just using that because that's the one that seems to be something that people can begin to grasp a little bit at least. I'm saying that a little facetiously because there are some who themselves never really learned that, and because of that in time God will take care of that and they won't be around any longer because they're not a part because they're lying spirits and God won't have lying spirits in the Church of God.

God takes care of those things, especially at a time like this within the Church as things are being cleaned up, cleansed up, cleansed, if you will, and purified, made ready for Christ's coming. Whether it be 144,000 and those who live on.

But still, to this day there are people who are not teaching their children. Now, I'm not talking about three-year olds. I mean, you have to teach certain things whenever you can, when they can begin to understand something, and you do it within your family. But I've made comments about certain things like this in times past.

But as someone is getting older into school and they're able to do the arithmetic and on their own and they're able to write on their own and they can begin to do some things on their own, then there are things you want to encourage them in. That's one of the most basic of things in their life that you need to encourage them in, to teach them about saving back something. You have to have something for them to do, maybe an allowance or something, certain jobs to teach them because they can't go out and get a job somewhere else, so how do you work with children? Well, you give them certain jobs or something to do around the home and then they have an allowance or whatever. Some people, "Well, that's bribery! That's just bribery! You

can't teach people by bribery!" Give me a break! God deals with us as carnal, selfish human beings. That's how we begin our journey. That's the only way we can begin to even see.

A child is very carnal, very physical. You see it very early on in life. You marvel, "Oh, that's us, just grown up and more expert at it."

The point being is I still marvel to this day how sometimes we don't do what we should do. But that's God's hope, is that we will teach.

...but keep His commandments. So that they may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that did not set their heart aright. To be established. See, same word again. To be established. Our heart to be established. There's work that has to be done and choices along the way that we have to make in order for this to be accomplished.

But that's God's heart, if you will, to ours. But we have to make the choices, don't we?

You have to make the choice at a time that the world is rapidly changing, where you're confined to your homes or you're cut off at different times from fellowship or for a long time from fellowship. It's totally in your ballpark, if you will, to fight and to understand that that is an exceedingly dangerous spiritual state in front of you that you have to address. And if you don't address it well, you'll be conquered by it. You truly will.

It's really my greatest fear right now in the midst of all this, is that there are those who are pulling back, pulling away. I'm not able to go around, we're not able to go around and visit different areas, which gives a boost and gives an encouragement. They're not even able to meet together on the weekly Sabbaths in different areas like what we have here. So, remember them. Remember one another. Remember this is a time for a great need of fellowship amongst the Body.

We have our part to play, every one of us in that, and to realize these are very—I can't stress this enough—these are very dangerous times, and if we're not careful, we're not going to see it for what it is. Just like the world doesn't really grasp what is there already.

Just the economic impact alone is really destroying the earth. Truly is. Something else would have to step in and take its place and that's exactly what some are planning on. It's already in the works. There are nations that want to truly totally destroy the power of this nation, and the power is in wealth, in money and who controls it in a carnal physical world.

...a generation that did not set their heart aright. So, why not? They didn't choose to. They didn't choose God. We have that choice in front of us, but you have to fight for it. **...and whose spirit... whose spirit was not steadfast,** a word meaning "faithful" because it's the same thing. To be faithful, to put your trust in God is a matter of being steadfast.

So, this is not a time to let down. It's a matter of being steadfast, to persevere, to press forward, to realize this is a time to press forward more strongly than ever before. Truly is. I

wish I could say it in a stronger way the danger that's in front of God's people at this point in time.

...that did not set their heart aright, whose spirit was not steadfast with God. We want to be steadfast. We want to be faithful. You have to work at that because it doesn't just happen.

Proverbs 4:20—My son, give attention to my words. That doesn't just happen. You have to make choices. **Incline your ear to my sayings.** So, we have to think about what we hear. We have to act upon those things. Choices. We're to receive and take those things and strive to put them into practice in our lives. But to fight and to fight hard, and more now than ever before.

Do not let them depart from their eyes. I know by the power of God's spirit that some are letting some of these things depart, slowly ebbing away because of this COVID thing we're in right now. What a shame! The very thing that's starting to shake the earth. Because this is not happening by chance. This is not an accident that escaped out of the lab. This is the beginning in a very powerful way to push things forward in a more pronounced manner to bring this world down. Truly is. It's a part of the process. It's already happening.

...do not let them depart from your eyes, keep them in the midst of your heart. God Almighty, His ways, His truth, the purpose He's given to us to fight until we're through this, to make these choices.

For they are life to those who find them. You know, there's nothing more beautiful than God's word, God's way of life, God's purpose. It's just a means to an end, whatever we have in this physical life, and we have to use it to the best of our ability, truly. That means we look to God, we cry out to God for the help to do what He's given us the ability to do.

For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Life, power, strength.

Keep, the word that means "watch; to guard." That's what this word means in Hebrew. **Keep your heart...** Guard! Watch! This is a time to do that more zealously than ever before. Because the world is in a spirit and a state that is tearing it apart, and a stubbornness about it as well, apathetic minds.

Because they don't have the answers and they don't know what to do. So, what do you do? Well, you look ahead and hope. Because the pride is so great that you have to hold on to the belief you're going to be able to do this, you're going to be able to make it through this, you're going to be able to change this, you're going to be able to get things back to normal. Not going to happen this time.

We in God's Church, keep, guard, watch, because we're in the midst of this, and if you don't think it affects you, you're sadly mistaken. Because that exact same spirit can be in your heart and in your mind if you're not careful. You have to fight against that thinking and instead respond to God more zealously than you ever have, to realize that you're in a spiritual fight. You truly are.

So, where do you want to be by Passover? Where do you want to be by the next Feast of Tabernacles?

...keep your heart... I marvel at some of these things that God gives to us, a heart like David's, to see over and over and over again it was always putting God first, of not being lifted up with pride but having a humble spirit. Truly.

...keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from yourself a deceitful mouth. So again, choices. **...and put perverse lips far from you.** So, it's this matter of fighting against selfishness and wrong thinking and on and on it goes. **Let your eyes look straight ahead.** In other words, to keep focused on what God has placed before us. Keep focused on God and God's truth and God's way of life.

...and your eyelids look right before you. You know, God's put it right in front of us and all we have to do is keep fighting for it, keep crying out for it day by day.

Verse 26—Weigh the path of your feet. That's what we're supposed to do. We're to look at ourselves and be honest. Where are we? What are we fighting? Are we dealing with our numbers one, two, and three spiritually and striving to conquer and overcome them? Or are we still playing games with God at this point?

Weigh the path of your feet. I'll tell you what, we need to be more convicted than ever before that we're not playing games, we're not just going through the motions and trying to give this aura about ourselves or projecting something that is not totally true. Because there are people in God's Church, attending God's Church or listening on the Sabbath, which is attending God's Church on a Sabbath day, who are letting this way of life slip between their fingers because other things are starting to be prioritized in their thinking, in their minds. Because they're being pulled away by other things happening around them because of what's going on.

...and let your ways, again, here we go, **be established.** To have that heart prepared, as that word means, set, another way of use of the word, to be set. Isn't that what you want? To be set in God's way of life? I can guarantee that's a desire of anyone who desires and has hope in that first resurrection. It's not a wrong hope to have, and if it isn't that one then you keep fighting and it's whatever is beyond that, so be it. But you have to think this way. It has to be a part of your heart and your mind, your desire.

Let all your ways be established. That means to be set in God's way of life, that God comes first, firm in God's way of life, not letting something else interfere and pull you aside.

Do not turn... It literally means, as in "turn away." **Do not turn away to the right or the left, but remove your foot from evil.** Choices, choices, choices, a lifelong way of life. It's a way of life because this is evil, our nature. It's the spirit in us that's good, that's from God, in the mind. That's what's beautiful and good and right, and that's what we want to embrace and hold on to with all of our being.

Well, let's go back to the story, continuing here in **2 Samuel 5:13**. It says, **And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also, many sons and daughters were born to David.** Then it goes on and names some of them, the children here.

Now, there are people in God's Church in times past, "Well, how was it that they had all these... back then... all these wives and concubines? And hundreds in some cases? Why did God...?" Well, they lived then. We live now. Things have been progressive about what God has revealed in the world to mankind. God has allowed mankind to live in certain environments for a purpose and for a reason through time.

There's a lot more involved to the story than just seeing this. Because those who had more than one at that particular time, they really, actually, had a lot of problems. But you don't read about a lot of those. Some of them are written. Some are recorded. Because human beings are human beings, jealousies are jealousy, envy is envy, hatred is hatred, on and on it goes. Abraham had to deal with it, didn't he?

But God allowed it for a purpose and for a reason through time. Until the establishment of the Church. Then God began to progressively reveal more in the Church. One. A husband and a wife. It hasn't really been until the very end here where God has even revealed more about that, about the bond and the teamwork and the way that life was meant to be and is meant to be for men and women. God is revealing the reality of something so different than a carnal, selfish, physical world, that because by the very nature of it's creation God had to deal with human beings very much so on a physical plane.

And so, David, different ones, Abraham, they were very few with whom God worked with in the first 4,000 years, and they lived in the world of mankind and mankind had different things it lived by and did, and so God allowed various things within that environment to deal with it.

Sometimes people have judged things, erroneously so, foolishly so, ignorantly so because they haven't known the truth about how God works with us and leads us and works with us in different times, in different time periods. I'm glad I live now in this time. It's the richest time of 6,000 years. Truly is.

Verse 17, skipping on down, Now, when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. Now, here is the situation now toward the beginning. So, it's going back now and talking about the Philistines. Because as soon as they heard about this... See, Tyre heard about it, different places, but the Philistines, oh, there was this animosity and hatred and fear, and so they had this power at different times, they did at the time of Saul, and they won that great battle, killed Saul and so many of his sons there.

And so, this is now, “It’s David! We’re not going to allow this to happen because they can become great,” and they didn’t want that to happen, so they went up to fight. They went to search them out to kill, to destroy.

Then the Philistines came up and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. So, David inquired of the Eternal. Here we go again, putting God Almighty first. That was the mind of David.

Anything big in our lives, that’s the way it should automatically be. So often it isn’t, let alone in sharing in the smaller things. I hope you never feel that you don’t want to bother God with something that’s so small. God wants to share with us, small things and the big things. He really does. That’s what it’s about. He is a Father on a level and on a plane that’s hard for us sometimes to grasp. Well, we haven’t. We haven’t had anything like that kind of a Father. No human being has until God begins to call us. You can’t compare the two - not in the slightest.

He asked, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Same manner. You know that the priests were there. You know how He worked. He did it before, he’s doing it again. It doesn’t have to go into every part of the story.

It’s like by the time you get to the New Testament some people say, “See, the law was done away with. They don’t talk about the 10 Commandments anymore. It’s not listed in there!” You moron. You idiot! I’m sorry. Even today you’re not supposed to use certain words. It’s about how we think, it’s the stupidity of ourselves. Maybe that’s a better way of putting it.

So, David inquired of the Eternal asking, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand? Then the Eternal said to David, Go up, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.

So, David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, The Eternal has broken through my enemies before me, like a bursting flood of water. Therefore, he called the name of the place Baal Perazim, meaning “Baal is broken,” because they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away. Awesome here! A defeat. Bringing a religion into it, false beliefs into it, to destroy them with the people. David was given the victory.

Verse 22—Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Therefore, David inquired of the Eternal... So, battle after battle and David always looked to God. So, it’s repeating it again. That’s just the way he was. That’s the way we should be battle after battle. We need to recognize the battles. If we don’t recognize the battles we will be defeated.

Some are going to be defeated through all this because they pulled away from the battle, because they didn’t even recognize there was a battle. What we see here on a physical plane is something that we need to learn deeply on a spiritual plane, that we have battles. Over and

over again in our lives, perhaps week by week by week if we can really see them. They're there.

And He said, You shall not go up; but circle around behind them... So, don't go the same way you did before. He's not telling them not to go at all, but saying, **Now, circle around them and come up upon them in front of the mulberry trees. So, it shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees...** So here is the sound they were going to hear.

Now, whether it was that army or whatever or God did something else, because there were times that God allowed people to hear, to see various things on a physical plane that was in a spiritual realm. But anyway, whatever was happening.

Something we need to grasp as well, God has given an angelic realm to help us. He has! Because they get to share in things as well. God doesn't just do everything. He didn't do all the creation of things in the universe by Himself. The angelic realm had a part in it all. We don't know what that was, to what extent and how, but they did. God gave the power and ability, whatever it was that was needed. And so, they've been sharing.

That haven't just been sitting back and kind of like in a theatre and eating their popcorn, "What's God doing now?" No, they get to share in it. Just like the Church, we get to share in things that God is doing on a spiritual plane, have had for whatever period of time we have been called over the last 2,000 years, as far as the Church is concerned.

He said this is how you're to do it. It says here, **For the Eternal will go out before you to strike down the camp of the Philistines.** He said, "This is already taken care of. I'll take care of it and they'll be stricken. They'll be struck down."

...And he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer. So again, these battles that God gave him victory in.

I'm going to stop there. We'll continue on from there next week. This is a good spot to end because of some of the stuff we're going to go through next. But what an incredible story here, story flow of things that we are to focus upon and how God works with us.

I hope some of us have taken time to consider, to think about this flow that we've had from January, February, and now full circle back to something where God has been building and that's something we always need to recognize, that God does the construction, the constructing. He oversees all these things in our lives. He's working with us to give us opportunity to grow more, to have more molded and fashioned within us.

That's why we should take to heart even more deeply, to understand battles that happen there on a physical plane that are right now happening to us on a spiritual one. That there is a being out there who would love to see you get caught up in this swirl, like a toilet, and get caught in that and pulled way from God's truth and God's Church.

Because I'm telling you, there will be those who are caught in it who will not escape. Choices. Don't let it happen to you. That's your choice.