

This is a series entitled *God Establishes Israel*, with this being *Part 3*.

We ended *Part 1* in 2 Samuel 5 and the account of two battles where David led the Israelites against the Philistines who had come up against them and now we're going to back up just a little in the story because this is part of the story flow. In Chronicles sometimes it has a better flow of the actual timing, but in this area here it kind of goes back and forth at times. It's the way it's written.

I thought it'd be good to go back and look at a particular section here that fits into an area that is, I think, inspiring to look at, to recognize what God was doing at that particular time in establishing Israel. Because that's what it's about, a physical Israel that God was establishing.

The kind of scale, what we're going to be looking at is the kind of scale which God gave power and strength in order to accomplish this and it teaches a lot, really. There are so many lessons here of things we can learn from, but we'll just point out a few as we go through this.

But let's look over at 1 Chronicles 12 and back up just a little bit in the timing of this to a point in time when Israel was coming together at Hebron. We've already gone through part of the story where they went up against the Jebusites to take the area that we know as the area of Jerusalem that was called the City of David for a time, and now backing up just a little bit to this portion of the story.

1 Chronicles 12:23—Now these were the numbers of the companies armed for war, that came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him. So again, there was this transition, this changing in alliances and so forth, because that kingdom had been breaking up. They saw the writing on the wall, in a sense, and we know the story leading up to this point in time here.

But they came together. It was God's purpose that they would come together. Again, understanding all of this, how God worked these things out, is an awesome thing because you can only see this in portion in a small way as to what happened to them. But we're to learn as well in a big way of how God is working to establish Israel, has been for 6,000 years when you talk about spiritual Israel and that first great resurrection, the 144,000 who are going to come with Joshua the Christ.

God was involved in things in the world through time, but especially now at this time because it involves the entire world. Up to this point in time it never has involved all nations of the world. This time it is. And so, there are things being prepared, being made ready, and God is in over all this as to what and how and the timing of when these things all come together. It's quite incredible.

We're going to be learning from this for a long time to come, to see the things that God has done, the power and the might of God that so often, again, for human beings, is so very hard to grasp and comprehend.

Even for us within the Church, it's very hard for us to grasp and comprehend that kind of might and that kind of power. When I speak of something like this I think of David when, Psalms 8 and other places where it talks about how he looked into the skies and heavens and saw the stars and marveled that God is concerned with us on this little planet. Of course, he didn't know it was a little planet and all the things that we have in this particular part of the solar system and so forth, that through time we've come to understand in greater ways, the magnitude of God's creation. It's quite overwhelming.

So anyway, **1 Chronicles 12:23—These are the numbers of the companies of armed men, talking about those who came up, according to the word of the Eternal.** So again here, the kingdom being established under David now according to God's word and what He's doing. So, this process that's taken a long time to come to this point is unique.

Now, we're going to go through this and read the numbers, because, again, it's quite a story. **Of the sons of Judah bearing shield and spear, there were six thousand eight hundred... So, we're starting out a little lower here in the sense of the numbers and so forth. ...armed for war.**

Now, even in this it's quite a story because David was given incredible favor with Judah and those who were armed for him at that particular time, being as small as they were and to have the kind of power that God gave to them. Just as David went up with such small numbers against the Philistines and others even during the time of Saul being over the military or army at that time.

It says here, **verse 25—Of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor fit for warfare there were seven thousand one hundred; of the sons of Levi four thousand six hundred; Jehoiada, the leader of the sons of Aaron, and with him three thousand seven hundred.**

There are some within these families still, even of Judah that we're going to be looking at, Zadok, Levites, and so forth, that had individuals who had talent and abilities and strength of leadership. This is why some of this is broken out in the manner that it is.

It says, **Jehoiada, the leader of the sons of Aaron, and with him three thousand seven hundred.** They still had divisions even within all of this, as it talks about here.

Verse 28—Zadok, a young man, a valiant warrior, and from his house twenty-two captains. So again, breaking it out in part here, different leaders even under some of these different tribes. Zadok here, in this particular case, was a high priest in the reign of David and Solomon as you go through and look at the story. So, it breaks some of these things out.

Of the sons of Benjamin, relatives of Saul, there were three thousand. So, we see a lesser figure here, in that sense, of a tribe (**for at that time the greatest part of them continued to give their allegiance to the house of Saul**). So, there was still those feelings of alliance, of an alliance that they had or allegiance that they had, and so again, going along with the other tribes and so forth they still began to make that change. But understandably so, it was difficult. It was difficult for them to do.

Of the sons of Ephraim there were twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, famous men throughout their father's house. Of the half-tribe of Manasseh... So, you remember the story, half on one side and half on the other side here, so they break it out. **Of the half-tribe of Manasseh, eighteen thousand who were designated by name to come and make David king.**

Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their leaders were two hundred... Very small number in that particular case. ...**and all their brethren, okay, all their brethren who were at their command.** So again here, some numbers here not fully established here and given but showing that they had specific numbers of leaders.

Then of Zebulun, it says, there were fifty thousand who were set for warfare, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks. So again, certain things that they were noted for, and certainly that's an important thing, to keep rank when you're in a battle, when you're in a fight. And if something like this stands out, it's going to stand out in a big way because sometimes there are those situations where others have not been able to hold rank. So, to be able to do that, to have that kind of a mind to know how to fight in such a battle was no small feat.

Of Naphtali, one thousand captains, and with them thirty-seven thousand with shield and spear. You go through this and you think, okay, this is God giving Israel strength and power to establish a kingdom. This had to be done in this manner in a physical scale because, sadly, in a physical world that's the only way you can deal with other nations because of the carnality, the nature of mankind.

Sadly, even to this day that's the only way that nations can understand. That's why there is this understanding of some that you have to have a lot of power as a deterrent to others. Sadly, today it's nuclear weapons. One day we understand what's going to happen because of that, because this is different in war than it has been in times past in the sense of the scale and the magnitude of it.

But still, there is that understanding between nations that to be powerful, to have a say, you have to be very powerful yourself. Otherwise, what happens? Well, nations will take advantage of you and conquer you and whatever. That's just the history of the world for 6,000 years.

God worked with a nation in a physical world and sometimes people in the Church have had trouble with this, dealing with the fact that there was a military that God worked with and gave blessings to. Sometimes within the Church then people have had difficulty in their thinking.

Because the two are not the same. That which is spiritual is a Church and that which is physical as a people was totally different. There are many things that God did within that first 4,000 years with different ones He called out, a few here and there, and had to work in a physical carnal world to establish, in this case, a physical nation, and had to give them this kind of power and that kind of favor in battle and war and gave command at different times to go in and destroy everyone - man, woman, and child.

Some people have had difficulty with this because it's like, how can you do that? God is merciful. They don't comprehend, first of all, the last resurrection, the great resurrection, the Last Great Day. They don't comprehend that to grow up in this world as a human being is not easy and not necessarily, in that respect, if we understand it, good, when it's said and done.

A child who is resurrected at one year old in that hundred years is going to have much less to conquer and overcome in the mind, has greater opportunity of the mind being worked with than minds that get to a point because of all that they have experienced, that as they grow up can't be worked with. There is much in that that I don't have time to go through right now and explain. Hopefully, we grasp that.

It's like in the days of Noah. Mankind came to a point in time where their minds were so entrenched in evil. I like to compare that with what we have today as far as technology because we're able to do today in a short period of time as far as the destruction and the experience of evil of what took them hundreds of years. They lived long periods of time, but they learned, and their minds became such that God couldn't work with them. That was coming to that point in time where the mind was so far gone, they were set in evil. That can happen to a human mind by the choices we make.

We live in that age today where, candidly, it's getting that bad, to where because of technology people have so polluted their minds and their thinking that when they're offered God's way of life, they're not going to choose it. They've already chosen something else. They want something else. They will not want this.

That's why I marvel at what God is showing us in regard to the Millennium and even the Great White Throne. Because there has been this concept, thought, idea that everything that happens, especially during the Great White Throne, is like a utopia. And it isn't. Human nature is human nature.

People that are resurrected from those periods of time, it's going to take a lot to work with them. And candidly, it's going to take the God Family in strength to control various things. It truly is. The justice is swift, that certain things are going to happen that have to be there.

Otherwise, it would be like today when you get this crazy thinking of defunding the police, and no, you think, in a carnal world, you have to have it, or you don't have safety. It's just the way it is. The same thing with militaries. Today you have to have it. You have to have strong militaries and the world has to have, in that respect, this nation or other nations if they want to survive against other nations who have great military powers and have a desire to conquer you. It's just the way it is in a carnal, physical world.

They're not dealing in a spiritual world. They're not dealing in a relationship with God. Only those that God calls out, whom God calls out are able to change and grow and be dealt with on a spiritual plane. That's totally different. We ought to by this time be able to make a distinction in these things in our thinking because the Church hasn't always been able to do that because of where we were and that's understandable.

So, to read through something like this and read the numbers, we should be moved by understanding what God gave to them so that they were powerful. They were powerful by this kind of strength and might that God was inspiring to come out of the different tribes to say, in essence, in unity and oneness, we're going to establish a strong military that can stand up against anyone that's out there.

That's exactly what God was doing. That's what He was giving to David to establish his kingdom. Saul didn't have this. Saul didn't follow God. He didn't obey God and so God didn't bless him in those kinds of things, even though God was going to establish a kingdom. Saul's kingdom was not very well established at all. It really wasn't. This one is becoming established now. This is when God is establishing Israel, very powerfully so.

Of Naphtali, one thousand captains; with them thirty-seven thousand with shield and spear. Of the Danites who could keep battle formation, again, they were known for this, twenty-eight thousand six hundred; of Asher, those who could go out to war, who were able to keep battle formation, forty thousand. So again, over and over again.

Of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe, the other half-tribe now of Manasseh, from the other side of the Jordan. All these were located on the other side of the Jordan. If you remember when they came into the promised land there were some of those on the other side of the Jordan that still had land divided up to them, to the areas northward where they came in.

Again, God gave them those areas as well as on the other side of Jordan and down to the Israelites. So, it's lumping them altogether here, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the other half-tribe, if you will, then of Manasseh, as it says here, **from the other side of the Jordan; one hundred and twenty thousand armed for warfare with every kind of weapon of war.**

All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart. Incredible, what God gave to them. They were blessed. You know, God can work with human beings in a very unique manner, and this was one of those occasions where God was working with these

people in a very unique manner to give them a certain desire, a certain thinking in their mind, in their heart, something that they just wanted to have and they wanted to give this loyalty. They saw the other tribes willing to do this now and so it was an easier thing to do in a unified manner because they wanted what they were being shown.

As it says here, **they came to Hebron with a loyal heart to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king.** So, as a whole, not speaking of some of the battles in thinking that Benjamin still had, the Benjamites, though they still showed an allegiance there, a beginning of a process here. There was this incredible oneness, this incredible unity to accomplish this.

I think of Herbert Armstrong standing up at a Feast of Tabernacles, over and over again talking about those things about the importance of unity, the importance of harmony of God's people, to be of one mind, to be seeking one mind, to live together in peace and unity, and even talking about Aaron, this quoting the scriptures about the oil that went down over his beard and so forth, how sweet and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. That was one of his favorite scriptures, to talk about that, in that respect and it is a beautiful thing.

Now, we don't fully grasp and understand that same thing with the oil because it looks like a mess. But that was seen as something that was beautiful, in that respect, and that's what he's comparing it to here when it talks about, when you talk about the same thing here, to be of one mind.

I think about the Church. To be of one mind has been one of the greatest of blessings when people have had it. Those who have had it have been richly blessed, those who experience that, to be of unity and oneness. Because the Church hasn't always had that. We've had battle after battle.

I love the way it talks about it in Matthew 24 when it talks about – it says earthquakes but it's shakings. We have come to understand what that means. It's about shakings within the Church and the things that have shaken the Church at different times and how those things begin to grow in scale over time.

I think back to '72 and the first time when some began, things began to happen within the Church and those began to speak out, different ministers and so forth, as Mr. Armstrong began to talk about there's a spirit essence in man and different ones began to talk in terms that were accusative toward him, that he's preaching something wrong. On and on it goes.

Then we had the Pentecost thing in '74 and a huge shaking at that particular time because now we had different ministers, leaders, regional pastors who left, who were going off and starting their own thing. Then in the late '70's on and on it goes. The shaking just got bigger and bigger in God's Church because there wasn't one mind. To see what happened that led up to the Apostasy, less unity, more division.

We've experienced a lot of things. But to have one mind? That's why I love what I see now within the Church. God has given more truths to the Church than any other time and with what remains has to fight for those truths, to hold on to what God has given to us. That evidence is in people's lives. It's in the evidence of what we have, though very small.

We see what God is doing, and God has to do these kinds of things to bring a people to one mind, as it says here, to make David king. So, the military had this, the people had this. They saw themselves now, what an incredible thing, to become a great nation, very organized nation. Nations weren't that organized, and they didn't have a leadership like what David was known for, so they grabbed a hold of what they saw.

Verse 39—So, they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover... Can you imagine that many people, different ones coming together? It's so massive! Incredible! And the encouragement that must have given to a people to see. They witnessed that power right in front of them, to know that they had that kind of strength all of a sudden amongst themselves.

Moreover, those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen—with provisions of flour, cakes of figs, cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for there was joy in Israel.

Awesome! Only liken this in a manner on a spiritual plane that we know it's going to happen when 144,000 are established to begin to establish in a greater way God's Kingdom. After 6,000 years, to recognize what's going to take place in an incredible resurrection, the kind of power that God's going to let people see.

He let them see incredible power there at Hebron, and that spread to the entire kingdom and there was excitement to recognize that they had that kind of military and that kind of power that could go out and deal with any kind of threat that would come up against them, and so much more that we see the king of Tyre do what he did, that he was moved by what he saw a nation doing and accomplishing. He was moved by that and gave them favor, wanted to be as close to them as he could be, in that respect, in the sense of an alliance and working together and giving favor to David even more so.

Others, not so, because they realize what that meant, the Philistines and others. They learned very quickly as they tried to come up against them that David had great power now, because they were defeated in every case.

Anyway, let's turn over to 2 Peter.

So not only is God getting ready to manifest great power, He's established the beginning of Israel, spiritual Israel, and to be an incredible boost and an encouragement to people who respond to that, because there are going to be many who don't, and we know what happens to them.

God makes it very clear He's going to destroy all those who are destroying the earth. Those who can't be worked with and don't have that kind of a mind, they're not going to have part in it. They're just not going to have a part in it. Because the Kingdom, in the sense, is going to be established to reign, and that kingdom is going to begin to work toward peace.

There will be some who still have a resistance for a time who aren't going to like what's being taught in time. God is going to clean that up as well over time. It's going to take time. But those who are adamant, in that respect, and hate and loath and seek to continue to kill, God's going to destroy. It can't be done any other way to establish it. Awesome that we understand those things.

We look at what God has given to us and I think if this is just one thing that the Church could have recognized more through time, especially during the time of Herbert Armstrong, that we wouldn't have had an Apostasy if everyone, if every minister had held these things dear to their heart and been loyal and faithful to what God gives as the strength and power that's made available to spiritual Israel.

What is that? His word. The truth. The truth. It wasn't a small thing, the truths that God began to give through Herbert Armstrong to establish the Church. Then to come up to a period of time after the Apostasy, to recognize what's been happening in our lives and what God has blessed us to work to establish and to recognize what our strength is.

That's why in so many sermons that have been given in times past, striving to tell people our strength is in the truth. I'll tell you, I believe we see that in a greater way than we ever have, but it's something that we need to cling to with all of our being, to recognize what God has given us when it comes to the truth.

We can tend to, if we're not careful, begin to take certain things for granted. To understand how much we've been given, we can begin to take for granted. But this is incredible for us, and God giving it at a time when this transition is getting ready to take place on the earth. He's establishing it because this is what's going to be there when Christ returns.

All the truths that He's given - His name is Joshua, it's not Jesus. People are going to begin to learn very quickly that this "Jesus" that they've been told about, nothing is true in it except some of the stories, if they stick to the story. But they pollute the stories! I don't care what it is - when he was born, when he died, the resurrection, all the different things associated with it, it's riddled with lies and fabrications and people don't realize how horrible that is.

I think of some of the responses to some of the YouTube videos we've had out there and it's like, well, who cares how he died, whether it was like 'this' with hands raised together up above his head or 'this' with hands out to the sides. Well, it just shows you people don't care. "He's our savior, so what does it matter?" "What does it matter what his name was?" It matters. The truth matters. Incredible!

Because if we don't receive that into our lives and aren't willing to get rid of that which is false...? And people don't, can't grasp that until God calls them and gives them His spirit, begins to draw them to help them to realize how much is wrong, where it came from, the history behind it, and what a being has done to deceive human beings, and why all of that has to be erased and gotten rid of.

And what remains? The truth. The word of God. Because the word of God is about what is true. It's what comes from God. When you talk about logos, when you talk about the Word of God made flesh, and then in the Church we're able to begin to have that word dwell in us, it's the mind that begins to dwell in us. That's what we begin to receive - His ways of doing things, His way of judging.

That's why we have to correct and look at our own lives and see where we don't judge properly, where we don't think properly. God gives us opportunity to change this, to begin to have the mind transformed in how we think about these things. We recognize the fault in us and a willingness then to repent. Not only a willingness but a desire, deep desire to get rid of all that garbage.

Because it's a hard journey getting rid of human nature and receiving the mind of God. You've got to want it with all of your being, because if you don't, you're not willing to fight for it. We have to sacrifice for it. Because if we're not willing to do it then we're not committed like we should be.

God must be first. God will know that in our lives before certain things are given to us. He must be first. His way must be first. His truth must be first. His judgment must be first in the way we think about things. Because if it's not there and we're not changing as we should we can't be there, we can't be with that family, that spiritual Israel and the power and the strength that God desires to have in His family for all time.

So, we go through a lot, don't we? And it's a beautiful process. It's a beautiful process that God has made us carnal with selfish human nature, and if we don't understand that and grasp what God is doing and the marvel of that we're missing so much. Because there is no other way to create His family. We have to have minds that have been able to experience that which a spirit world has experienced; perhaps for millions and millions of years they've seen the evidence of minds that choose something different from God, that chooses the way of selfishness, the way of pride, the way of haughtiness, the way of lusts, the way of greed.

We in human form are born with it, from get go. It's amazing to watch a child develop. It's human nature! We should be able to see ourselves very powerfully so, even more so as we realize this is the nature we have. It's about self! It's about pampering and caring for and taking care of—above everything else—this! I'm first! That's a hard thing to deal with and to admit and to acknowledge and to choose to fight against.

But what a beautiful thing that God has given, for us to see that process and to see the marvel of it, that we can change. This mind can change!

So, strength of God comes through His word, which is in the form of the truth He blesses us to see, where you come to a point where you know it's true. You can't give it to anybody else. You can't go and put it down before someone else and convince them of scriptures and things that you see are true.

That's why I used to, still do, get a little perturbed at this concept "prove all things." We had many in the Church, sadly—not a few—many in God's Church who began to "prove" things to themselves, of things they came to find out. "Well, Herbert Armstrong is wrong about this because this is what I see. And you need to see it too." They'd begin to teach this crap, 14/15th Passover. Lies! And not be united and of one mind and then hurt others in the Body, and then hurt young people in college.

As they grew their minds were polluted and they accepted this stuff because they looked up to and respected various evangelists at that particular time, and what happened? They went out, some, many of them became ministers, and began teaching this same garbage. That's why we had an Apostasy.

We need to understand our history. We need to understand how these things happened because in a new age we need to be able to see these things. To help others so they don't go down that same road or begin down that same road, there is knowledge and understanding, warning, encouragement you can give, that we will give, that people will give to others of our history. Don't repeat it.

That's why just last Sabbath we brought up a part of one, how easy it is to begin to be lukewarm, if we're not careful, let that creep up again, this attitude and spirit that's in the world around us right now. Because it's in the world because of this COVID thing and how people are responding to it and not thinking realistically, not able to deal with things. Because they don't understand. They don't understand what's happening and what's going on.

We need to see them on a spiritual plane, what strength and power that God has given to us. I'm just going to read one scripture here because it's about the power that God gives to His holy spirit.

What power is that? What's the purpose of God's holy spirit? To give you His word, His mind, His thinking. That's what it's about. It's the mind, the thinking that has to be transformed. "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Joshua." "Let this mind be transformed," in essence, "because it has to change in it's thinking to think like, to be more in unity and oneness with God's thinking." We have that blessing through the power of the holy spirit.

The angelic realm was never given the holy spirit. They don't have access to the holy spirit. They have access to truth and knowledge they have had that God has given through time to those who determined to continue to be faithful to God, to serve God. Many that didn't.

Incredible, the holy spirit is what gives you the truth. Without it you're on your own.
Incredible!

That's why I like scriptures like this one here that we have come to understand in a greater way: **2 Peter 1:12—Therefore, I will not neglect to always put you in remembrance of these things, although you know them, and to be established in the present truth.**

I marvel at that because I look at that first 4,000 years and there wasn't a lot there. And yet with those with whom God worked He gave them enough to work with in judgment in the molding and fashioning of their minds and their response to Him and what was given.

Then Christ was born, began a ministry in time, the very mind, the Word of God made flesh. Dumbfounding people, teaching others. Incredible, the process of things that were never taught before now were being taught, of things out of the Psalms, and things out of other scriptures and the prophets, and him referring to those things and teaching other lessons about them, what it was all about, God's purpose, God's intent, God's spirit to work in our lives. All about the truth more and more as we draw closer and closer through time to God's kingdom being established.

So, they go together. We have to be established in the truth, whatever truth we have at any moment in time. There have been many people, many people who aren't right here with us today, who over the past few years have not been able to be established in the truth because something has gotten in the way to where they don't hold on to it anymore, and if you don't hold on to it with all of your being other ideas can begin to come into your mind, other ideas.

You can go back to what you'd been doing somewhere else before when you had actually come to a point in time where you knew that they were wrong. But now you don't know that anymore because you've lost that strength and that power in your life. The power of what? The power of the holy spirit. Because if God's holy spirit isn't there you can't see the truth! You can't know what the word of God is anymore.

That's an awesome thing to understand! That's an awesome thing to experience. To talk with a minister one day and him then call headquarters, and the next day you talk to him and you don't know him anymore—You don't know him anymore! It's an incredible thing to experience! All because God's spirit was taken away from him in one fell swoop because he gave into and decided to choose what was being fed to him. This happened over and over and over again with hundreds of ministers, thousands and tens of thousands of brethren in God's Church.

Incredible, what we've lived through to learn a great lesson if you don't hold on to what you've been given, if you don't hold on to the truth with all of your being and seek to be in unity and harmony with what God has revealed to your mind, if you don't love it and cherish it with all of your being and you begin to devalue the sacrifice of Christ because of choices then.

Because generally what happens then is people are doing or want something else and what they know is wrong. Sadly, so often, it begins with money. Everything belongs to God. But to

understand God says a certain amount is to be given to Him for a purpose and to not be able to do the simplest, the most basic? Because even Sardis had that, still at a point in time.

But something so basic people can lose. Then some of the greatest of things that affect human beings is what we see today in the world, what you see in movies, what you see it comes down to... I was going to say opposite sex, but today it's not always opposite when it comes to sex. But sadly, because of the minds of human beings that's a very powerful thing and it has to be conquered.

If somebody can't conquer smoking? I'm not talking about the one where you have to squeeze it and get it down... because that really makes you go fast. But the others, whereas, you know. If you can't get into the battle enough to fight that, to conquer and overcome something as puny as that, how on earth are you going to conquer something that has a far greater pull and power over the minds of human beings?

God made us that way to learn lessons, likes and dislikes. With human beings, with men and women, there are likes that are a matter of that which is in the body, which is in the mind, which is in the hormones of the body and the mind that affect the mind. But God lets us know we're to control that. We're to make choices to control those things and to ask for help to control those things.

Because if we're not willing to fight that battle and control those things you know what happens? People don't do it and they leave because of choices. Something else becomes more important to them. You think, okay. The truth or self, what I want, self-gratification? And you get what you want, and you find after a time it takes work. You don't want to work at it so go find somebody else. Sick world.

Oversimplified some of that, but I think you get the point of what our nature is like and the choices we have to make. If you want the truth you have to fight for the truth. It's not just a certain amount of truths, it's all of them, of how we're to live our lives in obedience to the Great God of the universe because we want that mind, we want that thinking, we want the kind of peace and harmony that God is offering, not the kind of screwed up, messed up minds today that have all the drama in it and all the divisiveness of human life.

The world for 6,000 years has been filled with nothing but divisiveness, unhappiness. I think of scriptures back at the very beginning that talk about mother's sorrow, that sorrow being multiplied in life. I understand it today in ways that I couldn't in times past, where you think, "Well, no, you think that's the way it's going to be..." Yeah. Because there's a lot of sorrow in human life, truly is, in the world.

In the Church we're blessed to begin that process of coming out of that and have lives that are richly blessed. But in the world, and sadly, sometimes because we live in the world, we still experience different things at different times. There is a great deal of sorrow because of choices that people make.

Your own children. You can't make anyone do anything. Everyone has their own choices to make and then that which happens in the world, that people get caught in various things, whether it be on the job or because of their own nature, and you watch those things. That's where the drama comes from. You see problems that people have, problems with drugs, problems with alcohol, problems with marriage, problems with children, problems with parents, problems with neighbor, problems, problems, problems, problems, problems, problems! It's sorrowful, sad.

How are we going to get out of this quagmire? God's way of life. It's the only way that brings happiness and ability to really rejoice because of the things that are right and good. Not to rejoice in evil. Selfishly, as human beings we rejoice in evil. Whatever that is, people tend to rejoice.

They want something. Maybe it's a different person, maybe it's this lust, and then they have that, and they think they're happy. They've satisfied a portion of lust and somehow that's exhilarating.

Put something in a needle and you get this euphoria. And it's like "Ah, yeah, that's lovely." You think, you don't know what you're doing to your mind. You don't know what you're doing to your body. You don't know what you're doing... Anyway.

We have the blessing of God's word, of God's truth given to us through the power of the holy spirit. That's the only way you know and see what you do. The point of all this is the strength and the power that's in it because that's how God establishes His Kingdom. He did a physical kingdom in a very powerful way, to establish it. But what He's doing to establish His Kingdom, spiritual Israel, is so far beyond that.

The point of it being, do we see the power and the strength of God's word and God's truth through the power of His holy spirit to help a carnal mind, a selfishly motivated mind begin to be transformed to something that's beautiful?

Romans 15. So, we know, and God has been for a long time preparing, establishing a spiritual Israel. 6,000 years of work. It has given far greater strength and power to those whom He has called to accomplish what He's doing than what He did back then. That was all physical. What God is doing can last forever depending on our choices. So, a lot more power, a lot more strength than what He did to establish a physical, carnal people.

Romans 15:1—We then who are strong... Well, how can we know? Where does strength come from? It's about God's word. It's about the truth. **...ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.** So, that means a lot. There's a lot in this. It means if you are strong in the sense of yielding to God's spirit in your life, the truth that God is giving, things that are written in scripture over and over again of what we can experience in our life, it gets down to relationships, it gets down to people's lives and how we're judging things, how we're dealing with one another in relationships.

We can be strong if we're applying the things that God is showing us and teaching us, just as an example, in relationships where people aren't harsh in judging one another anymore, where people are caring toward one another, where people have a desire to see each other succeed and conquer this nature in this life and to strive to be there to be encouraging to people when they're going through different hardships and trials in their life, just to be there for them.

We then who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. There are times when every one of us in life are struck by something that hurts, that has pain in it. ...**not to please ourselves.** In other words, we shouldn't be just selfishly motivated and getting our own way in whatever it might be, especially when it comes to the truth and God's Church and God's way of life and our relationship with one another.

That's why I've been talking more and more about this matter of realizing that we have to be so careful in our relationships with one another. We have to recognize that every person who has been called by God, we need to be very careful how we think toward them and how we treat them. To learn to love and ask God to help us to love with the kind of love that He has, which is a sacrificing kind of love. We have to do that as human beings.

Let every one of us please his neighbor for good, to edification. The point being is here, who is our neighbor? Well, the closest that you have, the one sitting closest to you right now, it's the Church. When we're talking about the Church. You can talk about physical things in the world and relationships in the world, but this is about the Church and how we do, first of all, how we think toward one another first and foremost.

Many decisions can be made about what "I" want, how "I" want it, and so forth, and so often we have to turn that around to something else. What can help someone else? What can "I" do?

For even Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. This is quoting the Old Testament now and showing something here of how we need to think, to realize that to walk in this way of life is not easy and it's not going to be received well by the rest of the world around us. We're all in this together and we all have these things happen to us at some point in time.

We'll come back to this in a moment, but this is from, quoted from **Psalm 69:7**. It says, **Because for your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brethren, and a foreigner to my mother's children.** So, this reflects something in our journey. We can learn about this about what was written concerning Christ and the way of life he chose to live, obviously, and we need to learn from that the way of life we choose and what it's going to be like. Because it wasn't meant to be easy.

Because once we start walking in this way you know what happens? It affects all other relationships around us, very powerfully so. People are going to look at us in a different way. Now, we all have to go through this whether it be on your job or with relatives, close family

members, whatever it might be. There are going to be those who are going to look down upon you and be ashamed of you.

This is what he's talking about. "You're an embarrassment to me." Somebody on the job, whatever it might be, someone in a family, whatever it might be. There are things that happen oftentimes in life and this is what we have to understand and address.

I have become a stranger to my brethren. That happens, usually, very quickly when we're called, doesn't it? They don't know us anymore. "You have really gone over the deep end." They won't be honest with you about certain things. Some might be a little too honest in what they have to say. So, you have to be determined. If you walk in this way of life, you desire the kind of strength and power that God shows that we can have in our lives and our minds and this transformation, to know you're going to fight some incredible battles. Here is one of them. It's how others look at you.

Because a lot of times people make choices and decisions based upon that kind of pressure. I think of when the Church had the Apostasy, and then all these different groups began to pop up in different areas and people began to make choices about where they were going to go. It was based, first and foremost, on relationships, not on the truth. Sad. Sad.

I have become a stranger to my brethren, and a foreigner to my mother's children. One's own family. **For the zeal of your house has eaten me up.** What happens? Well, we have to make choices with this, don't we? So, this is showing from the time we're called to the time this battle ends, and to realize what goes along with it. This is a part of what's being discussed here.

So, our desire, if we want that, if we desire God's way of life, we're going to want that zeal. "And the zeal for Your house, the zeal for Your Kingdom has eaten me up. It's my life and others around me must know that! It must be reflected in my thinking. It's going to be reflected in my thinking or else it's not true. In the things I say and the things I do, it's going to be clear, though they don't like it." That can be a tough thing in life and yet every one of us has to go down that path, make those choices. This is one of the primary ways in which we're tried sometimes in the sense of what we're going to do.

So, indeed that's a beautiful thing if "the zeal of Your house has eaten me up, it consumes my life. It's first. God is first." And you know what? When people make those decisions, your boss doesn't always like that, does he, you know, when you go in and tell him you want this time off for the Feast. "Well, what do you want off?" "Well, I want it off for some Holy Days." "What are these? I haven't heard of these?" "It's the Feast of Tabernacles." "What's the Feast of Tabernacles?" They might ask you some more questions, acting like they're sincere and wanting to know something, but they really deep down inside think you're nuttier than a fruitcake, as a whole.

For the zeal of Your house has eaten me up; and the reproach... Like the first time you go in and tell about the Sabbath. “Can’t work on seventh day of the week anymore.” “Okay. Just stay longer Friday nights.” “Oh, I forgot to tell you, at sunset I have to leave, too. I have to be gone before sunset because that’s when the Sabbath starts. Because it’s from sundown to sundown.”

So, you’re giving this information that they really don’t care about and they don’t really admire you for. They just look upon you, think, “That poor soul. Foolish. You’re in a cult because you’re so small.” It’s baggage that goes with it. Then what a wonderful thing when there are cults and they’re so far out and people compare us to them. “Well, yeah, you’re like one of them.” Now, that really feels good, doesn’t it? We carry it.

...the reproaches of those who reproached you have fallen upon me. It goes back to God and people’s attitude toward God. The reality is people don’t really want what is true. They don’t want to know that Christ died with his hands together over his head, and not like the lie that so many wear around their neck in pride and haughtiness so often, not always in a good way. That he didn’t die that way at all. They love hearing about that. Isn’t that amazing?

So, it’s about God. It’s about the truth of God. Because when it comes right down to it people really don’t want the truth. They don’t want to know about Passover. They don’t want to know about Unleavened Bread. They don’t want to know that there is no such thing as Christmas and that he wasn’t born at that time.

They don’t want to know where Easter came from. They don’t want to know that it was condemned in the Old Testament a long, long, long time ago and that there are these goddesses and stuff that people worshipped, and all this thing of rabbits running around proliferating, and it comes down to fertility, and it comes down to all these eggs.

They don’t recognize they don’t know anything about the history of it. They really don’t want to know but they want their kids to be able to go out and pick-up eggs because that’s what they’ve been taught. We understand that. But they really hate the truth when it comes down to the truth.

So, the reproach, as it says, in essence how God has been dealt with and treated through time, we experience. We experience things that Christ went through. Why? Because it’s about God. It’s about the truth. It’s about a way of life that the world can’t see and can’t grasp and can’t comprehend until God begins to draw them with His holy spirit. We look forward to those times when everyone is going to have, as a whole, those opportunities.

...and the reproaches of those who reproached you have fallen on me. When I wept in my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. So, there is that which we look at in our own lives and realize the bottom line is self has to change, and it’s the only thing I have control over. I have not been brought on this earth to control others. I have not been brought on this earth to

judge others. That's God and for God to do. And if we're brought into that process, He will show us how that is to be done His way and we learn from that, and so on and on it goes.

Self and self is the big job. Self is the greatest task in front of me! Self and conquering this! Conquering this mind, desiring indeed to have a heart like David, one who put God first all the time without exception, as a whole. When it came to those decisions in life, major and minor, God was first. He knew how he was given favor in just herding sheep and the dangers that were there. He knew where his help came from and favor that came to him in doing a job like that.

Sometimes we think, "Well, what do I have? Why has God called me? What am I doing that God can use?" Don't underestimate the power of Almighty God to mold and fashion you wherever you are, because He will do it exactly where you are and in what you're doing, and He'll do things in your life that you don't even recognize and understand that have to do with the mind and how you're learning to deal with certain things in life that you might think are minor and small that aren't when it's said and done. Because it's about the little things of life and how we deal with them that become exceedingly important. How we deal with those things on a spiritual plane that become awesomely important. Incredible!

Again here, things that we learn through learning to chasten self, learning to fight against self.

Verse 11 then, **I have also made sackcloth my garment; and I became a proverb to them.** So again here, we live a certain way of life, to even fasting to have it. Because fasting is not a fun thing to do for the human mind. Instead, we'd not only like to eat, sometimes as we eat, we like to cheat! In other words, if you're trying to maintain a healthy life there are certain things you have to do.

We fight these battles, and we don't call it, necessarily, cheating, unless we're really on a really strong type of diet, but the reality is that kind of thinking is in your mind where you have this little bit of a battle whether to open that bag of whatever it is... Chips or Fritos or whatever, or to get in the freezer and to grab that ice cream. And you know what it's going to do. We're just talking about little physical things.

So, to fast is not natural. It's not something you want to do. It's not something you want to do to go without water for a day, to go without any kind of drink for a day, to go without any kind of food for a day, because it goes against the grain of how we think. But we learn great lessons from this process and we're constantly reminded of what's involved spiritually in our lives because of something so physical, and what we might think is small, but isn't small to God.

Some of the things that happen in your life that might seem to be small, if you're making and as you seek to make right choices in putting God first in choices and decisions you make, in how you deal with people, how you work with people, talking about the world, how you treat people in the world, you're being judged and worked with by God Almighty to be molded and fashioned in ways that God will use.

Going back to **Romans 15:4—For whatever things were written in times before were written**, in other words, in earlier times, **for our learning**. Isn't that amazing? We're going through stories here about David. We're going through here, stories, physical, and we're seeing in a very powerful way, in that regard, how God has used different stories through time that are able to be used now, that are timely now in our lives. Awesome!

...and we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures that we might have hope. What a beautiful thing, to know what we're going through, what we're living through, and to realize what it takes. A lot of patience. A lot of patience. That's a battle in itself.

Now, the God of patience and encouragement... So, our little wait of time, whatever that might be, is really small. I think of when I was called in 1969. It hasn't been that long ago. Think...? Yeah. In the scheme of things, in life, it's a blip. It goes by so quickly in life. What we experience, the choices we make along the way, what happens to us in life, all a part of a process, especially once we've been called, of self being molded and fashioned, trained. Awesome! That one day it comes to the point where God will give a spirit body to that life, to that mind that will be always filled with God's holy spirit, will always dwell in God's way of life and God in them.

"Now the God of patience..." And you think about patience, how long has He waited? We have our eyes focused on something that doesn't happen at a certain time and it's like, okay, and we wait and we wait on God. We learn to wait faithfully upon God knowing that as we go through various things God always shows us the purpose, when it's all said and done, of what we've experienced and what we've gone through and why we've gone through it. God will always show us those things. Maybe in some cases not until the Millennium, but He will show us all these things.

Now, the God of patience and encouragement... So, how does God encourage us? Through His word, through His truth, through things that happen in our lives as we experience this life, as we live this life, and we see the evidence of God working in our lives.

Just to know the truth, if we really see it, is incredibly encouraging. Who else has it?

Now the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be like-minded (What is it worth?) toward one another, according to Christ Joshua. What does that mean, "likeminded toward one another?" Well, it goes back to being in unity and harmony with God, as it says here, "according to Christ Joshua." How was he? What was his mind? Well, we want the same mind.

We talk about a heart like David's. A heart like Christ's is so far beyond that. But he was the Word of God made flesh.

...that you may with one mind... It's a beautiful, beautiful thing, to be of one mind, to be in agreement. And candidly, that which comes through all this will be of one mind.

...that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God. What does it mean “one mouth?” Speak the same thing because we’re in agreement. We don’t speak something different. We don’t speak something contrary to what is being taught to God’s Church. We speak the truth. We speak what’s in agreement with what we’ve been taught, and if we speak something different, somebody, hopefully, will catch us and say something to correct it, whatever it might be, just to state something that’s true and correct. Hopefully we receive it. See, that’s how life works. That’s how this way of life works.

And yet we have experienced, and everyone here has experienced different times when someone hasn’t agreed and wants us to believe something different than what has been taught. How we respond to that, well, means a lot.

But our desire is to be of that same mind, of one mind and in one mouth. In other words, to speak the same thing. ...glorify God. What a beautiful thing that would have been if that would have happened with the ministry. After they’d gone through Ambassador College, been trained, had the blessing, the training, the atmosphere, the environment? Just the environment alone, I think back at that at different times. I think back at those experiences that I was blessed to experience, to have certain things molded within me that God has blessed me with. And not to be faithful to that? What a horrible, horrible thing!

But then I think of how different ones crept in, and they were young and didn’t know what was happening to them in so many cases, that something false was being planted in their minds for later on, that a being used, and God allowed. God revealing and showing with human beings you can’t govern. Even in the Church of God you can’t govern successfully large masses of people. It doesn’t work. It fails. Why? Because we are selfish human beings.

And with ministers, in time some will go astray, some will make wrong choices, some will sin and go in a different direction, do different things that they’re not supposed to do, and when they do that, they begin to teach false things. Then that affects other people in their minds and their thinking, and it spreads. Only the Kingdom of God can reign faithfully, of one mind with God Almighty.

That’s how meaningful, how important it is that we have this one mind with God and fight for it while we’re in this physical form in the Body of Christ, in embryo before we’re even born. Because that’s the only way to be born. Otherwise, we will not be born, we will be a miscarriage.

There are going to be millions and millions, multiple millions of miscarriages of life because of choices. Because while we’re in embryo, we have the opportunity for choice. Or even before the embryo, choice of the human mind. God will not let it come to full term.

There are many people in time, even in times past, there are those whose minds are set, just as there were during the time of the Apostasy. There are those who have gone too far, committed the unpardonable sin because they don’t want to repent. They won’t repent.

They're set in their way. What happens? Well, they won't come to full term. Though God's spirit was given and granted doesn't mean that God owes them birth. So, we can learn things from that in life, how God works, how God works in our lives.

So again, **that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Joshua the Christ. Therefore, receive one another.** So, it's about the Church. **As Christ also received us, to the glory of God.** So, we've been received. We've been called. We've had the blessing of being forgiven of sin through his sacrifice. We're able to have this unity and oneness with God, with Christ and with God the Father because of what he did in our stead. We're blessed then that their lives can live and dwell within us.

...as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now, I say that Joshua the Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. The Word of God made flesh so that we can have the truth of God, the circumcision of the mind, of what can take place in the mind, not of the flesh but of the heart, to have a heart like David and beyond that. To have the kind of heart and mind that Joshua our High Priest had before he was murdered. That's what we're striving for, to be of that kind of mind in how we think toward one another. It comes through in the power and strength in our lives.

Though Israel was established by a great army because of the battles they fought, our battles are spiritual. Our battles are different. And with God Almighty in our lives and in our minds, we have the ability of making choices that have incredible power and impact on it that will last for all time. Things that are hard for us to comprehend, what it will be like, what it means to be in the God Family, to live for all time.

We only have lived a short time. Just like I had a conversation with someone this morning on the phone, letting them know that yeah, we're getting down to the end. We weren't talking about the end as far as this age is concerned, but we are winding down. Our clocks aren't winding up. Well, anyway, you learn that in a very profound way at different times, especially when you've gone through some things, when they crack your chest open and play around inside there. Well, they don't play around, thankfully.

But, what an incredible thing. You realize it's a process of life. What an incredible thing to realize even those kinds of things help us to come to grasp the importance of the Millennium even that much more, of why there must be death during the Millennium. That man has to learn, mankind has to learn through this process we are temporary beings. God does not owe us life. He has blessed us with life. What we do with it is our choice. When He gives us His truth, that's our choice. Do we want it, and do we want far more? That's our choice. Are we willing to fight for it with all of our being? Is God first? Only self can answer that. Awesome!

So, a beautiful scripture. **Now I say that Joshua the Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,** for that purpose, that it could be in our minds, **to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.** What promises? Not a physical nation, a spiritual one, a spiritual family with the King of kings leading and guiding and directing the way.

Verse 9—and that the gentiles might glorify God. So, it's not about a physical carnal people alone, physical Israel. It's about anyone in the world and everyone in the world in time as far as God's plan is concerned. Some individual, just because of their lineage is not better than someone else, because of who they are. I'm grateful for that. I may have a smattering of some Israelite in there, but I'm not. My wife knows what I am. Assyrian. German. With that mind.

...and that the gentiles might glorify God, for His mercy, as it is written: For this cause, I will praise, in essence, as to give thanks to You among the gentiles, and sing unto Your name. So again here, what an incredible thing that God has given to us of that which we have been blessed to have. Not because of a physical lineage, but because of God's purpose for all of mankind.

And again, he said, Rejoice, gentiles, with His people! God just driving the point home it's for all of us.

And again, he said, Rejoice, gentiles, with His people! God just driving the point home. It's for all of us.

Because I remember a time in the Church that it was a matter of pride when individuals knew, "Well, I am from Judah." That was really the icing on the cake because Christ was of Judah. And maybe to be related? Hmm, even more so, see. Or "I know that I am of Ephraim," or "I'm of Manasseh," or whomever. "But an Israelite? Absolutely! Because we came through that part of the world and we're here now."

I'm sorry, but the carnal mind, the human mind sometimes is an amazing thing. But we have to go through that physical process.

That's why it was such a hard thing, the 144,000. Twelve thousand from each tribe and it could only be seen as physical. 12,000 of Judah, 12,000 of Manasseh, 12,000 of Ephraim, on and on it goes. It was like this has to be from those tribes. What we've learned in time is no, it wasn't. It's not about something physical at all. It's something spiritual in what they mean, what God means and how He's divided and how He's established His Kingdom.

So again, physical/spiritual, night and day difference. But driving the point home here.

And again, he said, Rejoice, gentiles, with His people! "With His people." We're all together as one people. We're brought together to be one family. We need to see each other within the Church. What a wonderful thing if we'd had that greater ability spiritual, in a spiritual plane all through Philadelphia and all through Laodicea. But we didn't have it.

Some got to the point where they thought, well, Philadelphia is more important because it's Philadelphia! "Philadelphia" says it all! So, some wanted to call themselves that. Think, oh, okay. You want a brotherly love? A fraternal love? What about agape? What about God's love?

And again, he said, Rejoice, gentiles, with His people! And again, Praise the Eternal, all you gentiles! And praise Him, all people! We are all to become one family. Male and female to

become one family who are not male and female because there is no sex, gender, as it were, in the Family of God. All those things that human beings can raise up with such importance of one is better than the others. They're just full of "you know what" and need a good enema, spiritually!

Verse 12—Again, Isaiah said: There shall be a root of Jesse; and he shall rise to reign over the gentiles. In him shall the gentiles rest. All people. So, we have to be ever so careful then. It comes down to judging, how people judge. Because we tend to judge carnally, physically, and God doesn't want that in our lives. He wants us to be of the same mind with Him, to learn His judgment, His way of thinking and why.

Verse 13—Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. It says a lot here that is hard to digest spiritually. They're not just words because of this hope that we have, of the truth we have, what we seek because of what God's placed into our mind and we've made the choices. Then to learn, to know, and to have the hope as well that that's where the joy and the real peace is. You can't give that to anybody.

We experience that. I think of the Feast of Tabernacles where we tend to experience that on a higher plane so often, hopefully. Because sometimes human nature gets in the way even there. But as a whole we experience it more there than any other time of the year in God's Church, and learn to value people more at that time, as it were, in our thinking and the joy that goes with that and the happiness that goes with that. And yet that's something we're to grab a hold of in our minds and our beings, to have all the time in our heart and our mind toward one another.

Now, the God of hope fill you will all joy and peace in believing— Believing what? The truth. The word of God. —**that you may abound in hope.** So that, the more we believe and the stronger that belief, the stronger that conviction is in what God has given us, the stronger that hope will be because it's so strong in your mind. The less sin we have in our life, the greater our unity and oneness and dedication is that God is first, it's something that God gives in the power of His spirit in the mind to where the other interferences aren't there in the same level. You can't give that to anyone. It's something that you have in your relationship toward God and God alone, as it were.

"That you may abound in hope," that that hope actually becomes stronger. It's like knowing the truth, knowing something when you're first called and holding on to it with all your being and making the choice that that's what you live by and you live by it and you don't let other things get in the way. You become stronger and stronger in what you believe and where you're going and what God is doing in your life. And who is going to separate you from that?

That's why I love those verses in Romans where it talks about that. Who is going to separate you from the love of God? What? Who? Anything? Do we have that kind of conviction, that kind of determination? Because we should.

...through the power of the holy spirit. That's why it's so dangerous to begin to squeeze off that umbilical cord of that power coming into our life, or to be cut off from that power in our life. Because when that happens or as it happens, we get cut off from the very thing we need above all things in order to continue to grow and conquer and overcome.

Anyway, I hope we see that kind of power and that kind of strength that God gives to us that makes that power that was given to the Israelites back then to establish a physical nation, it was puny compared to what God gives and offers to each one of you on a spiritual plane. For very few in life have ever experienced it to this point in time. Awesome, how blessed we are.

Let's go back to **2 Samuel 6:1—Again David gathered all the choice of Israel**, speaking of his soldiers, that which we just read about in Chronicles. In this case, **thirty thousand**. So, the choice out of that powerful force and army, brought together thirty thousand.

David rose up and went with all the people, in other words, those soldiers, that particular army, **who were with him from Baale Judah**, most generally referred to as Kirjath-Jearim in scripture, **to bring up from there the ark of God**. So, this is where the ark of God was and we know this story. It wasn't so long ago we went through a part of the story.

...whose name is called by the name, the Eternal of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. Again, this was so meaningful to them, to have the ark, to be able to have it in their midst once again and that connection that was there. But again, to understand that this wasn't spiritual. It was still very, very physical because that isn't where God is. We know that. He's not between those two cherubim. It was that which leads the mind to being able to grasp and understand greater things about God, which David learned through time and grew in in time and wrote many Psalms about.

But here is a very early stage, in that regard, of God working with him. But again, a very physical carnal world and it meant so much, and understandably so.

So, they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; so Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. So again here, prepared everything, wanted this to be done in style, if you were, in the best of what they had, and to be able to load it on there as they were doing.

And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. So again, it's showing here a part of what was done here as they led this and began this procession.

David and all the house of Israel played before the Eternal on all kinds of fir wood, so it was about music and what they were doing, **harps, stringed instruments, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.** Then when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, **Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, because the oxen had stumbled.**

We learn an important lesson here of something that they didn't grasp and didn't comprehend at this particular time because of what had been lost as far as understanding. A part of establishing Israel was to begin to establish truth once again on a plane that they were able to deal with because it would be physical, as a whole, and not spiritual to them.

And I think about us. I think about the Church over the past 2,000 years and how much God has given when you think about things of this nature and then you compare it with what it is all about, that which is so much more and so far beyond this that sometimes we don't grasp what we've been given. We don't grasp the depth and the might of what we've been given. Which is a horrible thing because then it takes away the kind of gratitude and response in thinking that we really should have more toward God. The more we have that in our thinking the easier it is to place God first.

Then the anger of the Eternal was aroused against Uzzah. Well, again here, I've explained these things about anger so often, the difference between God and the difference of man. It's not a loss of control as human beings have or that which is so emotional that they're not in control or they begin to lose that and begin to think wrong. God never does. His judgment is always just, and it's more about judgment and righteous judgment and a need to administer judgment so that people can learn. Because that's love and mercy.

And so, in this particular case I just want to add here what it says in **1 Chronicles 13:10** that goes along with this. It says, **Because he put out his hands on the ark.** That's the rest of the story. He put his hands on the ark, and that was the problem. Not supposed to touch it. Human hands are not supposed to touch it.

2 Samuel 6:7—and God struck him there for his error. Think, well, he's innocent. He didn't know. **...and he died there by the ark of God.** We see things, we go through things sometimes in life and we come to times where we have to make judgments and decisions about things.

Many through time in God's Church have had to struggle with some of these things at times. What one will learn depends upon their spirit and their attitude. Because some of those kinds of things determine whether you're going to find fault against God and accuse God, or to learn and understand that "I have something to learn. Something is wrong with me, not with God."

Anyone that ever points a finger at God, I don't want to be in those shoes. But those things have happened in time and God's been merciful so often to people in the Church when that has happened, to bring them through, to teach them if they'll learn from what He's showing them.

So again here **...and God struck him there for the error.** Was it his? Yes. But it was the error of what had happened and why it happened. **...and he died there by the ark of God.** So again, a loss of life. God's judgment - just, righteous.

Then David became angry. Now, a different word is used here about this anger. This is that which is being kindled like a fire inside. He became angry with God because of what God had done with the situation, because he so desired the ark, desired to bring it there, desired and in

his heart and mind it was toward God and wanting to honor God. But he had to learn, begin to learn some things here. He did through this process.

That was the heart of David. He went through this, had to fight against himself, had to learn through this process here of something that was hard to take in that regard, but began to turn it to a point where he wanted to find out or wanted to know why and was willing to look at himself. Because that's what transpired. Willing to change. Whatever was required in order to have the mind think right because he loved God.

It says here, **because of the Eternal's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah**, which means "Outburst against Uzzah," to this day. So, that's what the place was called for all that time, even to the point of this writing.

2 Samuel 6:9—David was afraid of the Eternal that day; and he said, How can the ark of the Eternal come to me? So, there was this fear because he had to have seen something within himself, of what was stirred up inside of him toward God that he didn't like. That's the way everyone who is ever called by God has to deal with various things that ever happened in their life, to realize how dangerous such a thing can be.

No matter what we might experience, no matter how hard it might be for us to go through something, no matter what is taken from us in life that we hold perhaps the dearest, of whatever that might be. No matter what it might be in life, to find fault with God should be something where we're able to see the brakes or we have a desire to put the brakes on immediately and realize there is something I'm missing here. It's me. It cannot be God.

Then with that kind of a spirit and that kind of a mind a person can begin to learn because God will begin to show, can begin to show an individual what it is that they don't see yet that they need to come to see. But what is the more important thing in all that? The experience of what they went through in realizing how dangerous the human mind can be toward God. Truly.

So, David would not move the ark of the Eternal with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. And it says, And the ark of the Eternal remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the Eternal blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

So, here now because it was there, God began to bless the house, the people in everything that was taking place as far as whether it be, well, whatever was taking place in their lives, whatever goes on in an agrarian society, the things that affect them with animals and so forth.

Verse 12—Now it was told king David, saying, The Eternal has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him. So, in other words, there's a matter of possessions, there's a matter of wealth, and he's been blessed more now because of what's taken place. It was very evident something was happening in their lives, in other words, that was evident for others to see the blessings that they were receiving, were so great in that regard. It was something that was not hidden, in other words, that this is from God, that this isn't normal.

It says, **because of the ark of God.** Because it was there. **So, David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness.**

What an incredible thing to go through here in all this, to experience this, to be learning through this process. We go through a lot of things in our lives as God molds and fashions us and they're not meant to be easy. There are things that force us to look into the way we think. Those are important times in life. The choices we make at those moments determine where we're going to go. They truly do. Whether we can continue on in the path or not, whether we're pliable or not, whether we're of a humble spirit or not.

Those moments are important because they're not known until they happen. So many are just not known, what people are going to choose, until those moments happen in life. Then God blesses us that they be manifested.

Verse 13—So it was, when those bearing the ark of the Eternal had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. I get a charge out of this a little bit because “They went six paces. This is good.” This is not very far, but this is a start, and they were excited, and they rejoiced over it. Awesome! And you can understand much of that emotion that might be there in a case like this.

Then David danced before the Eternal with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod, a kind of apron of linen. **So, David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Eternal with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.** They were excited by what was happening. They were moved by what was happening and this desire that was on a physical plane had incredible meaning to them, to have the ark and to be able to bring it. Because this had incredible history with it from the time that they were in the wilderness, and it had gone with them all this time.

David had this burning desire because God did bless that physical use of that particular item, if you will, in the things that took place with Israel and that was understood. Though David grew in time to understand the greater importance of all that being that which is spiritual in a relationship with God, but again, very important here for the rest of Israel and the desires that David had for that.

I want to read how this is stated referring to some of this in **1 Chronicles 15:1-2.** I'll just read the two verses here and come right back. **And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. Then David said, No one should carry the ark of God but the Levites.** The order, that which had been given to Israel before that they had lost sight of.

And so, there are things we can suffer through in life sometimes that God lets us to experience so that we can come to understand the importance of truth, especially when it's restored to us, when it's given to us, of how precious, of how important it really is and what it really means. We embrace it that much more.

David, obviously, embracing this and growing that much more then in his relationship toward God, and a desire to honor God and do things God's way. That must override everything else in one's life when they're being worked with by God.

It says, **Because the Eternal chose them to carry the ark of God. Awesome! ...and to minister unto Him forever.**

I'm going to stop there today. We'll stop there. We'll go back and continue in 2 Samuel 6 there next week.

But again, what an incredible story here of things that are done physically that we can learn from; things that God did in establishing a physical people and how He's established us and what we learn through that. The power that's there, the strength that's there is on a spiritual plane and not a physical one. But that which is by the word of God, the truth of God that's so easy for us, if we're not careful, not to recognize what we have been given and how important it is that we grasp that with all of our being, the truth of God that you're blessed to see and to know that others can't see and know. You only do that because of God's holy spirit.

That should be incredibly encouraging, because that's evidence. That's what has been given to you as evidence that I see and I know because of God's spirit, and that God's working with you in a very powerful way. Awesome!