

Epics and Icons

1. **Abraham: The Promise Keepers**
Themes: Faith, Promises, and Trust (Genesis 22:1-18, Hebrews 11:8-19, Matthew 19:29)
January – 6th, 13th
2. **Joseph: Dreams, Schemes, and Destinations**
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3. **Moses: The Red Sea Zumba**
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Intro...

Growing up in Cleveland, Ohio I was an avid sports fan. I loved baseball and football, and could tell you just about any statistic or detail of most of the teams and players that I followed. There were always great stories to tell about great teams. And there were always those great players who made great plays in those great games. Back then, those stories and those players were just about all I could think about, and I knew them all by heart. In those days I also had the privilege of being raised in a home and church where the bible was a pretty big deal! It was part of my growing up to be taught about the great stories and the great characters of the bible. My teachers were my family and church leaders, all of who truly loved God, and made the stories exciting and alive for me. The result was that I could tell you just about anything that had to do with those great bible stories, and the great characters that made them. And I never forgot about them. That is why I told my children those same stories, and I hope and believe that they will tell their children as well. As a pastor, I see that for the most part,

Christians today do not do not tell their kids those great stories. And unfortunately I believe it is because they do not really know the bible stories or the characters that made them. Or if they do – they do not know them well enough to make a difference in their life. The truth is, that most Christians today just do not know their bible very well – period. It's easier to say the bible is not relevant than it is to learn the truth, and then pass it on to your children. I strongly believe it is important that we help those families who do not feel that they know enough about those bible stories, and amazing characters, that we all need to know. And so, to start 2013 in the right direction, we are going to tell those epic bible stories of our Christian faith, and bring to life the iconic characters that have paved the way for our own journey with God. At Reunion we have a rich and long tradition of opening the bible every week and teaching God's truth... Epics and Icons is part of that tradition.

pastor steve

Epics and Icons

Part 1) Abraham - The Promise Keepers

Themes: *Faith, Promises, and Trust*

(Genesis 22:1-18, Hebrews 11:8-19, Matthew 19:29)

Abraham: The Stats

- *Born under the name Abram (exalted father) nearly 4,000 years ago in the city of Ur in Chaldea. (estimated anywhere from 1900 to 2150 years before Christ)*
- *Father – Terah, Brothers – Nahor and Heran*
- *At nearly 60 he moves 300 miles to Haran.*
- *Not long after God speaks to Abram and asks him to move once more (Genesis 12:1-2). This time to a land that he does not know. It is the beginning of a growing and developing covenant and promise relationship between God and Abram that will last forever. And so God's first promise*

to Abram is that he will make from him a great nation.

- Abram ends up in the land known as Canaan, in Sichem at the oak grove called Moreh. This is the land that God will eventually promise to Abram as an everlasting possession.*
- Still unable to have children with his wife Sarai, Abram settles in Hebron in the oak grove called Mamre. It is there he sets his tent under the famous “Oak of Mamre” wondering when and how God will keep His promise to him. Sarai (75 years old), in her impatience for the promises of God, asks Abram to take her Egyptian maid Hagar (no relation to Sammy) as a wife and have a son. Abram does this reluctantly and is rewarded with a son named Ishmael. They all believe that Ishmael is to be the heir of promise.*
- At 90, Abram hears again from God. God asks Abram to “walk before Him blameless.” If he does God promises Abram again that He will multiply him greatly! Abram falls on his face in humility before God, and it is there that God changes his name to Abraham (father of multitudes). As an*

outward symbol of this promise between Abraham and God, all males of the Abraham's seed and household are to be circumcised on the eighth day of birth from that day forward. The circumcision starts that day with Abraham and his son Ishmael.

- God also instructs, Abraham to change Sarai's name to Sarah – He goes on to tell Abraham that she will finally have also have a son and that he would be called Isaac. God said that from her would come Kings and nations.*
- However, while sitting under the great oak, Abraham, receives his second promise from God. Abraham is visited by three heavenly messengers, one of them tells Abraham that God will now keep His promise to give him and Sarah their son Isaac. Sarah overheard the conversation and she laughed, she was now almost 90.*
- As famine hits Hebron, Abraham travels to Bethel where he builds an altar to "Jehovah" to affirm his promise of faithfulness and to trust God. The famine worsens and Abram moves to temporarily to Egypt; where he for the first time struggles with his faithfulness*

to God by lying to the Pharaoh Abimelech about his wife Sarah. Abraham fearing that the Pharaoh will kill Sarah he tells him that she is his sister. When confronted Abram does the honorable thing – he confesses to the truth. Sarah is restored to Abraham. Abraham prays for Abimelech and he is healed. Abimelech and Abraham become friends making a promise between them at the place called Ber-sheeba, where Abraham and his household live for the next 20 years.

- Sarah who is now 90, is moved upon by God and gives birth to Isaac. Hagar and Ishmael are sent away, but not before God promises Abraham to make them a nation as well. Isaac now becomes the son of promise – and God kept His promise.*
- God visits Abraham again. This time he asks Abraham to do the unthinkable. He asks him to take Isaac his son of promise and sacrifice him as an offering. Abraham does not question God, but goes to the place God has asked and begins the process of offering young Isaac as a sacrifice. God interrupts Abraham and says to him, “you*

have kept your promises to me and not held anything back – not even the one son that I promised you. Now be confident that I will keep all my promises to you.” This is the third and everlasting promise of God to Abraham 1) Will bless you among all men 2) Multiply your offspring as many as the stars of heaven 3) Your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies 4) From your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed

- Abraham returns to Mamre/Hebron in Canaan. Abraham sends to his original homeland for a wife for Isaac. Her name is Rebekah. Sarah dies there at 127. She is buried in the cave Machpelah.*
- Abraham dies at 175 years old. Isaac and Ishmael bury him in the cave of Machpelah with Sarah.*

Abraham: The Story

- By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he*

lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

- By faith Abraham, even though he was past age - and Sarah herself was barren was enabled to become a father because he considered Him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand of the seashore...*
- By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*

Part 2) Abraham: The Promise Keepers
Themes: *Faith, Promises, and Trust*

(Genesis 22:1-18, Hebrews 11:8-19, Matthew 19:29)

Abraham: About Us

Faith Allowed Abraham to become a promise keeper and to become the heir of God's covenant promise. Faith also allowed Abraham to live with certainty that God would keep His promises, and fulfill their covenant through him.

Faith Allows Us to rightfully become co-inheritors and benefactors of Abraham's covenant promise with God. However, this time, God's covenant promise has been kept through the sacrifice, resurrection, and redemption of Jesus Christ – living in us.

Faith Enabled Abraham to take a risky and uncertain journey, not knowing where he was going - only that God had bidden him. The promise of God sustained Abraham for years at a time without movement or reassurance.

Faith Enables Us to understand that often times the life of faith is a life of risk, and requires us to step out into the unknown with nothing more solid in front of us than God's suggestion and the simple leading of Holy

Spirit. Faith can enable you and I to take *faith risks* as well. Living by faith we can even live through long periods of uncertainty (not doubt), because our trust in God assures us that what He wants, and what He does, rests on His eternal purposes.

Faith Allowed Sarah an opportunity to recover, when at first she had doubted. When she first heard the promise, she doubted the words, and laughed at the thought. But she recovered her faith in God, and her first doubts were overcome, and her laughter turned to joy. Faith renewed for her the promise, and brought life and hope to her barren and lifeless womb.

Faith Allows Us to the opportunity to overcome our first doubts. Parts of our personalities seem cynical, negative, and damaged. But faith can restore even the most hopeless doubter and cynic. "Second-chance" and recovered faith can enable us to experience new life in areas of our lives we have watch die right before our very eyes.

Faith Enables Us All to find a much-needed relevance point of identifying with the *epic stories* of our faith, and *iconic men and women* like Abraham and Sarah. It is so very encouraging and helpful to know that *many*

many men and women looked ahead by trusting in God. They lived and died secure, in that the promises of God (in His time) would be theirs. Faith enables unknown people as well. Faith enables each of us to count on God's promises – but it is trust in God, that allows us to confidently wait on Him. Epics and Icons remind us once again that God is totally trustworthy, and even the most difficult steps of faith and obedience are made possible by trusting Him.

Abraham: For Us

Trust that God is at Work

- He is at work with me – As Guide, Counselor, Confidant
- He is at work within me – As Gatekeeper, Conscience, Revealer of Truth
- He is at work without me – As Creator, Sovereign, Promise Keeper, Heavenly Father

We Trust God Even When We Do Not Know...

- *How He will*
- *When He will*
- *Why He Will*

And, although Solomon would not utter or write the following scripture for nearly 1,000 years, he surely had to have said or written it with the epical story of his iconic ancestor Abraham in mind...

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.
Proverbs 3:5-6*

Epics and Icons

Part 1) Joseph: Dreams, Schemes, and Destinations

Themes: Reclamation Repentance and Restoration (Genesis 37-45, John 20, Luke 22)
January 20th

Introduction

The epic story of the iconic character Joseph is among the most adventurous and colorful (no pun intended) in the entire bible. Joseph's story is truly one of dreams, schemes, and divine destinations. To tell this epic story, I want to go about it a little differently than we did with *Abraham the Promise Keeper*. It is important to know who Joseph was before we know what he did, and it is important to know who God was to Joseph in order to understand why he did what he did... all those things that made this bizarre and epic story. So first I want to share an informative summary of who Joseph was, and

then we can move on to the “*dreams – schemes*

- *destinations*” aspect of Joseph’s undeniable

impact on history.

Joseph Summary: The time of Joseph was around 1950 B.C. to 1850 B.C. Non-biblical resources describe this as the period known in Egyptian history as the 12th Dynasty, in the time of what historians call – The Middle Kingdom.

- Jacob (*Israel*) the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, had 12 sons. As the offspring of Jacob, they would eventually become known as original patriarchs of “*the twelve tribes of Israel*” – *each tribe named after one of Israel’s (Jacob) sons*. Ten of Jacob’s sons were from his wife Leah, and two of his sons were from his beloved wife Rachel (*Leah’s sister – another story, another time*). One of the two sons Rachel gave Jacob was the iconic character of our story - **Joseph**. The Genesis account is very clear on how Jacob felt about his son Joseph: “*Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than any other*

of his sons, because he was a child of his old age.” (Genesis 37: 3).

- Joseph's brothers became jealous of him because it was painfully obvious to them that Joseph was their father's favorite. As a young man (*17 years old*) Joseph was trusted by Jacob to keep him well informed on how his brothers took care of his land, herds, and possessions. Joseph was faithful to his father trust in that role - even when it meant that his reports did not look favorably on his brothers. The breaking point of that tension came one day when Joseph accompanied two of his older brothers as they tended one of their father's flocks.

When Joseph returned home he gave his father an honest but bad report about the brothers. This incident only deepens the hostility between Joseph and his brothers.

- The point of no return comes when Jacob makes a beautiful coat for Joseph. When his brothers see Joseph in the coat "*they hate him for it.*" (Gen.37: 4) It is also true that during this time Joseph did not do much to help ease the tension between them.

- Joseph has two separate dreams. Joseph's interpretation of the dreams angers his father Jacob, and pretty much alienates Joseph from his brothers for good. His interpretation went like this... ***First dream:*** Joseph and his brothers were binding sheaves of wheat, and Joseph's sheaf stands tall among them, the brothers' sheaves lay on the ground as if to bow down to Joseph's. ***Second dream:*** Joseph said, *"the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me"* (Gen.37: 9) Joseph's suggested meaning - even his father and mother would come to bow down to him. The entire family is insulted, Jacob rebukes Joseph, and his brothers just want a *"Joseph beat-down."* These dreams were of course true and prophetic - but at the time, who knew!
- Soon after, all of the brothers except Joseph are 60 miles away in Shechem tending the flocks. Jacob although angry, still trusts and loves Joseph – for him, its back to business as usual. So he sends

Joseph out to find his brothers and report back how they are doing. Joseph's eleven brothers see him coming from a distance and begin to design a scheme on how to get rid of him – they are beyond hate now, and want blood. Their plan was to kill him and throw him into a pit and blame it on wild animals. They got as far as throwing him in the pit. Ironically, Reuben the firstborn convinces his brothers not to kill Joseph. So brother Judah comes up with an alternate plan to sell Joseph to an *Ishmaelite* caravan that is close by. Reuben now is remorseful and plans to sneak back to the pit and let Joseph go. But before he does, Joseph is removed from the pit by his other brothers and sold. Reuben is completely terrified that he will now have to explain this all to his father. His brothers talk him of the ledge and they decide to return home with

“Joseph was killed by wild animals.”

- The brothers keep Joseph's coat of many colors, kill a goat, and dip the coat in the goat's blood. They then explain to Jacob how they found the bloodied and torn coat and ask him if he recognizes it. Of course,

he does, leaving Jacob broken-hearted believing his beloved son Joseph is dead. In the mean time, the Ishmaelite's with Joseph, travel on to Egypt and sell him there as a house slave to Potiphar - Pharaoh's chief captain of the palace guard. A little known fact is that Potiphar is a eunuch. God gives Joseph favor in Potiphar's house and trust with Potiphar.

Joseph is quickly put charge of Potiphar's entire household, overseeing his entire estate.

- Potiphar had a wife. Why would a woman marry a eunuch? In this case it is obvious; power – position – prestige. Unfortunately Joseph finds favor with Potiphar's wife as well. Seeking to have her sexual needs met, she decides she wants Joseph oversee her as well. But Joseph is trustworthy and is honorable – he will not be disloyal to Potiphar. Desperate, Potiphar's wife tries one last time to get with Joseph. He sees it is a setup but before he can get away she grabs his cloak and he runs away from her

in only his under armor. Angry and filled with her own sexual tension, she takes Joseph's cloak and falsely claims that he tried to sexually assault her. Joseph is thrown in prison. But even in prison *"The Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in everything."* (Gen.39: 23) Joseph soon becomes a supervisor of other prisoners.

- While Joseph was in the prison, the pharaoh's butler and baker broke his trust and were imprisoned as well. Joseph was responsible for them and when they both had dreams they came to Joseph for advice. The agreement was that if they got out they would put in a good word for Joseph to Pharaoh. Joseph accurately interpreted their dreams – unfortunately the baker was hanged, but the butler got his job back. However, the butler forgot all about Joseph for two full years.
- Pharaoh then had two dreams and no one in his service or command could interpret the dreams. Then the butler remembered Joseph's interpretations in prison and went to Pharaoh with the suggestion of Joseph.

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream as a vision of the future where there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Joseph recommended that Pharaoh put someone in charge of food management. Joseph got the job. Joseph became second in command only to Pharaoh. He began immediately to store and stockpile crops and resources for the coming famine.

- When the famine came *"the whole world came to Egypt to buy corn and wheat from Joseph"*(Gen.41: 57) Eventually Joseph's brothers come from Canaan to Egypt to buy corn as well. As they bow down before Joseph they clearly do not recognize him, but he certainly recognizes them. He does not reveal his identity but instead sends them back to Canaan (knowing they will have to return) with just enough resources to last for a season. When they return he intends to break them by demanding that in order to help them they must go back again to their father and bring to Joseph their youngest brother Benjamin. Benjamin the

youngest of all Jacob's sons had been Joseph's closest brother, also born of their mother Rachel. Judah steps up to beg Joseph to not require this of them because of what it will do to their aging father whom they love. There is a half-confession of how one of their brothers had been killed years before. This breaks Joseph and his need for revenge. His emotions flood the meeting and Joseph reveals his true identity and there is finally reclamation, repentance, restoration, and forgiveness among the sons of Jacob.

- Now the brothers of Joseph return to Israel to get their father Jacob with the news of Joseph and provision. After their return to Egypt, Jacob meets Pharaoh, and to honor Joseph, he give his family the entire land in the area of Ramses. Joseph continued to oversee and monitor the food during the duration of the famine. After the famine *"the twelve tribes of Israel had settled in Egypt, in Goshen; there they acquired land, and were fruitful and increased greatly."* (Gen.47: 27) This was how the Jews came to be in Egypt

until Moses would finally lead them out over four hundred of years later

The Dreams – These dreams represent God using the faithfulness of Joseph to accomplish His purposes and keep His covenant with His people. Joseph's dreams came in two's (his dreams, the prison dreams, and Pharaoh's dreams), and the outcomes quickly followed.

- **Sheaves of Wheat – (Joseph's brothers will one day bow to him)**
- **Sun, Moon, and Stars – (Joseph's entire family will one day bow to him)**
- **Three Vines and Ripened Grapes – (In three days Pharaoh's butler will be restored to favor and service)**
- **Three Baskets and Birds Eating Bread – (In three days Pharaoh's baker will be judged and hung and eaten by birds)**

- **Seven Ugly Cows and Seven Fat Cows – (Seven years of abundance and plenty followed by seven years of famine and extreme shortage)**
- **Seven Ripe Ears of Grain and Seven Rotted Ears of Grain – (Seven years of abundance and great quantity followed by seven years of famine and extreme shortage)**

The Schemes – The schemes of these men

represent the *good news – bad news* cycle of Joseph, his family, and his life. It is amazing to see how the wisdom of thinking of man is confounded by the even the foolishness and thoughts of God.

- ***Jacob* – to choose a younger son above the older as his inheritor**
- ***Joseph's Brothers* – to repay Joseph for what they believed as unfairness, to**

deceive their father in the cover up of Joseph

- ***Potiphar's Wife*** – to have Joseph as her lover, and then to destroy Joseph because he would not be her lover
- ***Pharaoh's Butler and Baker*** – to exchange Joseph's interpretations for their favorable recommendations
- ***Joseph*** – to repay his brothers for their treachery against him and their father

The Destinations – These lands and locations

represent places of God's promises and

purposes. These lands are where history cries

out to our present day... *"Don't forget that we*

were here." It is where the breath and the life of

God battled the curse and the death of sin.

- ***The Valley of Hebron*** – Home to the covenant fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

- ***Shechem Valley*** – The place of paradox: it is both a place of deception and redemption.
- ***Egypt*** – The land of provision, favor, and blessing – and eventually the land of curse, bondage, and oppression.
- ***Canaan*** – The land of covenant, promise and freedom.

Part 2) Joseph: Dreams, Schemes, and Destinations

Themes: Reclamation Repentance and Restoration (Genesis 37-45, John 20, Luke 22)

January 27th 2013

Joseph: Putting in Place the Pieces to the Coat of Many Colors

*“Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of **many** colors.”*

In the earlier translations of the Bible the word “*many*” is in italics. In biblical translation this is always an indicator that the word was not in the original language or text. Also the word

translated “**colors**” is listed in the margin as

“*pieces.*” So what does that mean?

Well, because the words are interpreted that way, many general bible commentaries actually describe Joseph’s coat from his father as “a *garment of many pieces with long sleeves.*”

When I read this I thought, “*Ok, what is so special about a garment of many pieces with long sleeves, and why would grown working men like Joseph’s brothers be jealous of something like that?*” There had to be more to the coat than just that. And if so, what? Here are the pieces I have been able to put in place...

One - Based on research that the coat had to be something beyond the *ordinary fashion* or *shepherd-wear* of the day.

Two – The garment/coat had to be something that his brothers themselves did not have, or for some reason could not have.

Three - The garment/coat had to have more meaning to it than simply, *“Hey, did you guys see the new coat that dad made for Joseph?”*

The coat had to be something that they would have wanted for themselves. I did not find bright colored garments historically listed anywhere as essential clothing for sheep, cattle, camel and goat herders. Traffic cops, crosswalk guards, clowns, and night jogger’s maybe, but not shepherds. *Again, how does this coat make other grown men jealous?* The only logical and

credible answer would be that this story really had nothing to do with the coat, but everything to do with to whom the coat was given, why it was given, and what the coat represented. The gift from Jacob to Joseph was all about favor and blessing. And that in and of itself answers all the previous questions I posed. Men and women have forever cheated, stolen, schemed, lied, and killed and covered up for favor and blessing. Lets look at a very different, but very strong probability to this “*coat of many colors*” scenario.

Many objective and serious translators and theologians say that the “**coat of many colors,**” was ordinarily a plain long white (*without alternate color*) shirt or tunic, called the ***Kameez***. Ancient ***Bedouin*** and ***Jewish*** herders and rangers wore the *Kameez*, as an undergarment in the desert or mountainous regions.

Bedouin: *A nomadic Arab of the desert. Bedouin pastoralists are found throughout the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. They keep animals such as camels, cattle, sheep and goats, moving from pasture to pasture or from water source to water source.*

In nearly all of those type garments worn by herders of that period (approx. 1800 B.C.) the sleeves were of moderate size and short length (*hidden by an outer garment*). The modern Bedouin say that in the ancient tradition there were two people of each tribe or family who were allowed the privilege of wearing a *kameez/tunic* with extremely long, very visible, and pointed sleeves. These two were; the head or patriarch of the tribe/family, and a younger man whom he had chosen from among them as his heir or inheritor. The only one who could give the younger man the *Kameez* was the head of

the family – and he did so as a gift. The entire tribe or family saw the *Kameez/Tunic* as the ultimate sign of favor, blessing, authority, and honor given personally by the patriarch to his preferred choice. Now, the ancient tradition also was that the firstborn son was usually preferred and would receive that gift. However, the patriarch could if he so chose, to overlook the firstborn, and give the *Kameez* to the one he preferred instead of the firstborn. It was never good when this happened, and most often it deeply divided the tribe/family causing a permanent breach and separation within the patriarchal lineage.

Having this piece of ancient historical tradition to filter the story of Joseph through, now makes Jacob's gift to his younger son much more real

and understandable. This wasn't really about the coat or its colors (*although many storylines have been loosely constructed around it*) - it was about the choice of Joseph, and the favor, blessing, authority, and honor given to him as the result of his father's preference.

From what I can learn about Jacob, he was not a trusting man. There are too many examples in his life to deny it. But he trusted God, and he trusted Joseph. I read an interesting interpretation (*verse 3, of chapter 37*) by a respected theologian that gave me a little insight into why Jacob trusted Joseph and not his brothers. *"Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than any of his sons because he was the son of his old age."* He interpreted the line not

as Jacob loved Joseph because he had him when he was an old man, but rather Jacob loved Joseph because he had (*to use a familiar phrase*) ***“an old head on young shoulders.”*** It

is clear that Jacob trusted his son Joseph and what he saw in him that he did not see in any of his other sons. And why? Is it just because Joseph was trustworthy, or is it because of the potential and assurance that can be had in placing one's favor and blessing upon the one who is trust-worthy. Joseph was his father's preferred choice for the favor, blessing and authority that came with being the heir to his father's name. *“The coat of many colors”* as we like to call it represented all of that favor, blessing, authority and honor.

“And Jacob made him a coat with long sleeves of many colors.”

Joseph: The Final Piece in that Final Place

So, Joseph was the chosen, blessed, and favored one. His is the epic story of the golden-boy, turned message boy, turned family black-sheep, turned slave, turned Head of Admin, turned sex object, turned victim of woman scorned, turned prisoner, turned cell-block liaison, turned resident dream reader, turned forgotten and rotten, turned head of homeland affairs, turned family and national hero, turned Secretary of State, turned Director of Foreign Affairs as allocator of all food for a starving world.

The final piece to be set into place in this epic story of this iconic character is this... What have we learned if anything from Joseph's dreams, schemes, and destinations? What of Joseph's life have we allowed to penetrate our own pre-supposed notions and expectations of God? Is this a teachable moment for us, or is it just another example of the biblical disconnect we and many others like us experience week after week? Are we too often like the brothers of Joseph - feeling bitter, passed over, where is my favor, where is my blessing, where is my coat of many colors? What is that one thing that we can take to heart from Joseph's rollercoaster of "good news – bad news – good news"

circumstances that he faithfully endured in order to be trusted with God's plan for his life?

I know these are hard and direct questions –

they are for me as well. As I continually look at my own life to seek the will of God, and His plans for me, I too need the favor, blessing, authority, and honor that come with being the preferred choice of the Father. I can also see that He has given me a robe of righteousness in Christ Jesus that covers my sin and indiscretion with grace and mercy as I stand before my Father. But I would be lying to you today if I did not tell you all that I want to be more than a recipient I want to donor. I want thoughts and expectations other than entitlement and privilege. I want to be trusted by God because I am trust-worthy.

I want to trust and live like Joseph in that the favor, blessing, authority, and honor given to me by God is not merely validated or invalidated by the favorable or unfavorable circumstances of my life – but by the fact He has said it, and I trust it.

And on the days that I am not the golden-boy, or the family hero I want to faithfully continue to trust God in all that I think, say or do so that the people I love can be strengthened by my faith, and not weakened in my faithlessness. And on those days when I am message boy, or head of homeland affairs, I do not want arrogantly ruin God's trust in me with my pride and greed. I

want to faithfully lead those around me as a man whose trusts God above all things, over all things, and before all things. I want to hear the truth, receive the truth, faithfully walk in the truth,

and clearly and lovingly speak the truth. This is my teachable moment... I am going to put the final piece in place.

Epics and Icons

Part 1) Moses: The Red Sea Zumba

***Themes: Courage Faith, Hope and Trust
(Exodus 14:5-18, 1 Timothy 1:12-14)***

When word reached the king of Egypt that the Israelites had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds. "What have we done, letting

all those Israelite slaves get away?" they asked. So Pharaoh harnessed his chariot and called up his troops. He took with him 600 of Egypt's best chariots, along with the rest of the chariots of Egypt, each with its commander. The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, so he chased after the people of Israel, who had left with fists raised in defiance. The Egyptians chased after them with all the forces in Pharaoh's army-all his horses and chariots, his charioteers, and his troops. The Egyptians caught up with the people of Israel as they were camped beside the shore near Pi-hahiroth, across from Baal-zephon.

As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up and panicked when they saw the Egyptians overtaking them. They cried out to the LORD, and they said to Moses, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? Why did you make us leave Egypt?"

Didn't we tell you this would happen while we were still in Egypt? We said, 'Leave us alone! Let us be slaves to the Egyptians. It's better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness!'"

But Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they will charge in after the Israelites. My great glory will be displayed through Pharaoh and his troops, his chariots, and his charioteers. When my glory is displayed through them, all Egypt will see my glory and know that I am the LORD!"

Intro...

Pharaoh Apopis continued to show gratitude and favor to Joseph and his family. With this favor, the Israelites began to "*multiply exceedingly*", and pushing to the west and south from the land of Goshen. When *Joseph and Apopis* die (*apporox. 1800 B.C.*) there is a struggle for control of Egypt resulting in a change of bloodline as Pharaoh/King. The new Pharaoh of Egypt is now fully Egyptian and not Hyksos. This change would signal the subtle beginnings to the end of Israel's favor in Egypt. For a time the descendants of Jacob were allowed to retain their possession of Goshen undisturbed, but after the death of Joseph their position and security changed progressively.

The Egyptians despised the Israelites, and a period of "affliction and suffering" began for them and they were greatly oppressed and persecuted. However, the Israelites continued, to increase in numbers and population, and as Exodus 1:7 says... *"the land was filled with them."* The native Egyptians saw the rapid growth of the Israelite population in their land and judged them to be a threat to their own security and well-being. The Egyptians began to devise an enslavement plan for the Israelites. As time progressed another new Pharaoh (true Egyptian) ***Thutmose I*** is placed in power and he is completely removed from any knowledge or care about *Joseph*, the Israelites, or the favor they had been given by his predecessors. His first strategy was to demoralize the Israelites by

seizing their valued possessions; so he took all land ownership, livestock, and trade capability from them. His next move was far more hostile but less effective. He intended to reduce the Israelite population by killing their newborn male children. But his own people were not eager to obey him on that command and the Israelites continued to multiply. The Pharaoh then enslaves the entire Israelite population forcing them to serve in all public and municipal buildings, as physical labor for his national construction projects, and of course as servants in the homes and businesses of all royal and government families. The older men were placed as field and farm hands, and the young strong men were brutally used as shift laborers for the construction of store-cities, temples, palaces and elaborately complicated burial sites. Their hours of service were every day, all

day and all night. The tasks were physically demanding and their food was limited and rationed. As the Israelites became embittered against the Egyptians, the taskmasters and overseers would only become more hostile and cruel. But this treatment did not have the expected result of breaking their spirit or reducing their procreation either. In fact, *"the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew"* (Exodus 1:12).

Pharaoh Thutmose I is angered so greatly by this that he issues among his military a strict and aggressive command to enforce (punishable by death) that all newly born Israelite male babies were to be drowned in the Nile River by the hand of their own families. It is under these conditions and these times that the epic story and iconic

character of Moses begins...

Moses Summary: First 40

- In approximately 1525 B.C. from the tribe of Levi, **Moses** is born to his father *Amram* and his mother *Jochebed*. His older siblings were sister *Miriam*, and brother *Aaron*.

Moses is born nearly 300 years after the death of *Joseph*.

- Because of *Pharaoh Thutmose I* order to drown all male newborns, **Moses's** parents hide him away for three months. When hiding is no longer possible, they take to the Nile and place him in a woven basket of *reeds and rushes* where the *Hatsheput* the daughter of *Thutmose I* would assuredly find him while bathing. And while Miriam the

older sister of **Moses** hides in the bush
Hatsheput found the baby Moses and took
pity on him. *Miriam* comes from her hiding
and then asks if she would like for her to
have the baby nursed in his infancy. The
princess agrees to this and instructs *Miriam*
to return the child to her as a toddler.
Hatsheput then takes **Moses** in as her own
son (his Egyptian name is *Thutmose II*),
keeping *Miriam* the sister of **Moses** on as a
palace servant/nanny.

- *Hatsheput* was the only living child of
Thutmose I and his wife, *Ahmose*, and when
the great Pharaoh *Thutmose* dies,
Hatsheput exerts great authority and power
and seizes control of Egypt from her cousin
Thutmose III. As female Pharaoh over all of

Egypt, she rules very successfully for the next twenty-two years until her death.

- Moses is trained, educated and lives as a Prince might live in Pharaoh's household for the first forty years of his life.
- At 40, **Moses** is now fully aware of who he is, and how his circumstances came to be. **Moses** is grateful for his own situation, but he is sorrowful and troubled for that of his people. One day he is witness to an Egyptian taskmaster mercilessly beating a Hebrew slave. Enraged at what he sees, **Moses** loses his temper and murders the Egyptian.

- By now *Hatsheput* has died, and now her cousin *Thutmose III* is Pharaoh. **Moses** fears what might happen to him for what he has done to the Egyptian, and he flees *Qantir/Ramses* (modern day Cairo) about two hundred and fifty miles southeast to a land known as *Midian* which is on the eastern side of the modern day *Gulf of Aqab* in *Jordan*. (***Please remember this route – Moses did.***)

Second 40

- Arriving in *Midian*, **Moses** sits beside a well to contemplate his future prospects for creating a new identity and life. While at the well the seven daughters of *Jethro* the *Priest of Midian* come to draw water for their father's flocks. While at the well, some local shepherds harass and intimidate the girls,

and of course **Moses** (once again) steps in to defend the weak.

- *Jethro* is grateful to **Moses** and gives him a job as his lead shepherd. **Moses** is very content in his “no stress” occupation, and falls in love with one of the *Jethro*’s daughters named *Zipporah*. They are married and she bare him a son, and he called his name *Gershom*: for he said, “*I have been a stranger in a strange land.*”
- One day while **Moses** is in the desert tending flocks the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the middle of a bush: and he sees the bush burning with fire he is shocked it is not

consumed by the flames. When God sees that **Moses** is staring at the burning bush, He calls out **Moses'** name twice. Apparently **Moses** has a sense of the moment and replies, *Here am I*. God speaks to **Moses** of the suffering of the Israelite people in Egypt and his desire to deliver them from the bondage of the Egyptians. God adds one last caveat to His plan. He wants to use **Moses** to lead the deliverance of His people into freedom.

- **Moses** does not receive this news well. He offers God five reasons why he should not lead the event. **1) I'm Nobody Special 2) I Really Don't Know You That Well 3) The**

Jewish Leaders Will Not Believe Me 4) I

Don't Speak Well Enough 5) There are

People More Qualified Than Me

- *God does not buy into the excuses of Moses. He gives Moses five reasons why he will be able to do what God has asked. 1) You Have My Word - I Will Be With You 2) My Name is "I Am" – Enough Said. 3) I Will Give the Jewish Leaders Three Signs to Convince Them That I Am Is With You 4) Say My Name, and Tell Them I Am That I Am Sent You 5) You Are Being a Big Baby... I'll Let Your Brother Be Your Spokesperson*

- Moses agrees to go back to Egypt, and asks his father-in-law for his blessing to leave on this “mission from God” once in a lifetime adventure. Moses takes his wife Zipporah and his two sons and heads back to Egypt on the same route he came. (*Remember that route, Moses did.*)

Epics and Icons

Part 2) Moses: The Red Sea Zumba

***Themes: Courage Faith, Hope and Trust
(Exodus 14:5-18, 1 Timothy 1:12-14)***

Moses Returns to Egypt - Last 40 (To the Red Sea Zumba)

- **Moses** delivers in person, God's “let My people go, or its gonna’ get ugly up in here” message to Pharaoh *Amenhotep II*. **Moses** and his brother **Aaron** turn his rod into a serpent as a warning sign to Pharaoh of God’s intentions.

- God curses Egypt with ten plagues.
 - ***Blood-water***
 - ***Frogs***
 - ***Lice***
 - ***Flies***
 - ***Cattle Death (Mad Cow)***
 - ***Boils***
 - ***Hail***
 - ***Locusts***
 - ***Darkness***
 - ***Firstborn Death Curse***
- The original Passover took place as the Israelites were instructed to mark each doorpost with the blood of an unblemished lamb so that the death angel would know to pass over their household. Specific instructions (Exodus 12:2-19) were given to **Moses** and **Aaron** for preparations and the last meal before their exodus from Egypt. Each year since then the day of deliverance

for God's people has been known and celebrated as "the Passover." For the Jews the Passover tradition (per God's command) has centered on the weeklong *"Festival of Unleaven Bread"* and a pilgrimage from Jews worldwide to the holy city of Jerusalem. At twilight before the final day of the Passover week each family ate the meal consisting of a slaughtered, roasted and unblemished 1 year old lamb or goat, the unleaven bread, and the bitter greens.

- The death angel visits Egypt, Pharaoh is broken, and **Moses** leads the Israelites from captivity for the first time in four hundred years.

- As the Israelites leave their homes they are instructed to travel the 60 miles from the great city of *Ramses* to the border town of *Succoth* where the Egyptians had a large military fortress. It was there just outside of *Egypt* where Moses re-groups to organize by ranks, collect livestock and supplies, and to divide up the travel responsibilities in preparation for the grueling but glorious exodus. They move out quickly to put distance between themselves and Egypt knowing Pharaoh was not a man of his word. They go away from the *Mediterranean* coastline, the way of the Philistine, and fertile region of the *Nile*. Travelling both day and night with only short periods of rest and replenishment they headed directly

southeast into the desert... the last place anyone would expect 1.8 million people on foot to go.

- After mourning, grieving, and then burying every firstborn male animal and human being in Egypt, Pharaoh becomes now becomes enraged and irrational. Angry, in that he has lost his nations workforce, ruined his economy, and the lost respect of his people – irrational, in that Pharaoh disregards a reality in which it was proven time after time that he is no match for God. In a fit of rage, grief, pride, humiliation, and probably way too much alcohol, he decides to go after **Moses** and his people. For Pharaoh this proves to be a bad life choice,

and a very poor use of his critical thinking skills.

- Pharaoh and his armies finally catch **Moses** nearly 250 miles southeast of *Ramses* where he and his people are apparently trapped between the mountains and 2,000 foot cliffs at *Pi-Hihiroth* (*mouth of the canyon*) on the beach at the real *Migdol* and the edges of the actual *Red Sea* (Gulf of Aqaba).

- **Moses** listens to the fear and faithlessness of his people and then he tells them...

"Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay

calm." Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the LORD opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind. The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land. So the people of Israel walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side”!

Moism's For Us

Mo-ism; a spiritual lesson to be learned from the epic story of the iconic life of Moses

- ***Use God Given Opportunities in God Forsaken Circumstances***
- ***Face Your Limitations - But Dream Your Dreams Without Them***

- ***Accept Discipline – `Anticipate***

***Disappointment – Participate in the
Process***

- ***Do What God Wants You to Do – But***

Don't Think You Can Do It Alone

***Zumba – Everybody is moving, but not everyone
is going somewhere; everybody is making noise,
but not everyone is saying anything, and
finally... everybody can hear the leader, but not
everyone is listening***

Epics and Icons

Part 1) Samson and Delilah: The Last Tango in Gaza

Themes: *Temptation, Weakness, and*

Consequences (Judges 16:4-31, James 1:14-15, Galatians 6:7, Hebrew 11:32)

Introduction...

From the time we left **Moses** and his million and a half followers walking through the *Red Sea* on dry land in the middle of the night into the land of *Midian*, to the time of **Samson** it will have been very close to 400 years. Israel has long since settled into Canaan and there has had ongoing conflict and war during that time. Their enemies were not large powers but rather surrounding neighbors who wanted what Israel had. Israel battled the *Mesopotamians, the Moabites, the Canaanites, the Midianites, the Ammonites* and

finally the *Philistines*. After *Joshua*, Israel is led by a series of twelve judges of which the most recognizable would be *Gideon*, *Deborah*, *Jepthah*, and our boy **Samson**.

Samson Bio:

Samson was the twelfth and final judge of Israel. He was famous for his super hero strength, combat skills, fiery temper, love for the ladies, and the final redemption of his tragic life. He was born in and around 1100 B.C. under the promise and premise of greatness, just after the time of Eli the High Priest, and the capture of the sacred ***“Ark of the Covenant”*** from Israel during the time of Philistine oppression and occupation.

Samson’s miraculous birth and impressive *life-plan instructions* were foretold to his parents by an angel of God. As they were told, **Samson’s**

parents raised him under the strict guidelines of what was intended to be a unique lifetime

“Nazarite Vow.” A vow which required **Samson**

never drink any alcoholic beverages, and never to have his haircut, and never to tell the secret of his great strength – ever. At nearly 20 years old

Samson and his *superhero strength* became judge of Israel, and he judged for twenty years.

Samson was considered the last theocratic leader Israel would ever have. Leading up to the time of **Samson** the Philistine occupation and oppression had been used by God against Israel because of their sin against Him (*Judges 13:1*).

Samson’s role as judge was to bring *Israel* back to God, and God would then deliver them again from their enemies. During the time of his leadership, **Samson** would have three

significant affairs/relationships with women (*that we know of*) that would both breach and violate not only his Nazarite vow, but also his covenant with God as an Israelite.

- ***The Philistine Woman*** (whom he married)
- Judges 14:8-18
- ***The Prostitute of Gaza*** (whom he frequently visited) - Judges 16:1-3
- ***Delilah of Sorek Valley*** (whom he fell in love with) - Judges 16:4

It was Delilah who finally was able to discover that ***Samson's*** uncut hair was the symbol of

God's glory over him, and the secret of his superhero strength. A clean-cut ***Samson*** was bound and blinded, and then sent to work like a beast of burden grinding corn for the Philistines (*Judges 16:21, 1 Samuel 11:2, 2 Kings 25:7*).

The Philistines were not mindful enough to give **Samson** regular visits to *Supercuts*, and his hair grew long, his heart grew humble, and his love for God and his people finally became

Samson's greatest desire. This gives **Samson**

the strength and opportunity to bring down the temple of Dagon, killing himself and a massive number of the Philistine leaders and people.

This creates enough weakness in the Philistine stronghold for Israel to move against the occupation and oppression of the Philistines.

Samson was buried in his father's tomb between Zorah and Eshtaol, having judged Israel as I said earlier for 20 years (Judges 16:31).

The Samson Tragedy - "A Nine Point Eval"

1) Samson was slated by God to be dedicated as a Nazarite from birth and to be cultivated for

greatness as a Judge of God's people (Judges 13:5).

2) The Nazarite was not allowed to:

- Eat or drink of the fruit of the vine (Judges 13:4,7).
- Be contaminated by any unclean or dead thing (Judges 13:4,7).
- Cut his hair (Judges 13:5,7).

3) The first two items of the Nazarite vow were also to apply to **Samson's** mother (Judges 13:14).

3) From the time of his earliest days **Samson** had been versed and rehearsed in all of the protocols and expectations of each and every one of his Nazarite vows (*Numbers 6:2-21*).

4) On his third visit to see his prospective wife at Timnah, **Samson** stops to eat from the honeycomb inside the dead and decayed carcass of the lion who had previously killed with

his bare hands (*Judges 14:5-9*). This was a direct breach to his commitment to “*avoid all contamination*” in his Nazarite vow as described in *Numbers 6:6*.

5) On **Samson's** fourth visit to Timnah (*Judges 14:10-20*), he hosts an “all-night rager” (drunk and debaucherous) breaching just about all vows of both Judge and Nazarite.

6) Through the weakness of **Samson**, and the persuasive seduction of *Delilah*, the secret of his strength being was discovered. While **Samson** slept *Delilah* called for a man to cut his hair (*Judges 16:19*), completing the final act of disobedience and breaking of his Nazarite vows.

7) Angry, humiliated, disobedient, helpless, weak, and blind... **Samson** became a slave to the Philistines (Judges 16:21).

8) **Samson's** strength was truly *superhero* amazing.

- He killed a lion with his bare hands (Judges 14:6)
- He killed several hundred Philistines after the burning of his wife (Judges 15:8).
- He killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:15,16).
- He escaped from Gaza after a massive street-brawl carrying the city gates to the city (*the symbol of civic pride – estimated at 9' X 12'*) almost to Hebron, some 60 kilometers (*35 miles*) away (Judges 16:3).

- He snapped seven fresh bowstrings and fresh ropes (Judges 16:6-12).
- He yanked his hair free from the shuttles of a weaving loom (*estimated weight up to 150 lbs.*) (Judges 16:13,14).
- He demolished the entire temple of Dagon by pushing down its central support pillars – killings thousands of Philistines (Judges 16:29,30).

9) In a humbled, contrite, and spiritually broken state of being, **Samson** finally does what God had wanted him to do all along. He uses his spiritual and physical gifts to impose the will and the judgment of God upon the enemies of Israel.

Samson At The Core

Promise Keeping and Our Word – Extremely important value to God. Historically God has

gone to extremes to keep His promises and His word. It comes with difficult consequences and added responsibility (*Ecclesiastes 5:4-6*, *Hebrews 10:23*).

Humility and Moral Behavior – Under both covenants God values a humble and right heart that produces faithful and just living. A proud heart supported by unfaithful behavior will weaken our spirituality and damage our favor with God (*1 Kings 1 1:1-6*).

Wisdom and Accountability – God values both moral and ethical relationships. Good sense and godly wisdom should determine who we trust and how associate with anyone (*Psalms 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33*).

Strong Character – God delights in the character of a righteous man or woman.

Questionable and weak character will always create difficult and damaging circumstances for not only ourselves, but for our families as well (*Joel 3:10*).

Redemption and Forgiveness – God values the process of contrition and repentance. Even under the inclusion, comprehensiveness, and completed generosity of grace God still loves to be worshipped, wanted, and wooed by us. For that “tiny offering” He redeems the unredeemable, loves the unlovable, and forgives the unforgivable. (*1 John 1:9*).

Epics and Icons

Part 2) Samson and Delilah: The Last Tango in Gaza

Themes: *Temptation, Weakness, and*

Consequences (Judges 16:4-31, James 1:14-15, Galatians 6:7, Hebrew 11:32)

Samson Becoming Human – Emotive Profile

- ***Isolation*** – under his Nazarite vow Samson from the time of his infancy was separated and kept apart from the common interest, behaviors, attractions, and opportunities of everyone else his age.
- ***Expectation*** – Samson was told from the time he was a small boy that he alone was being groomed for greatness and to lead his people.
- ***Power*** – Under the strictest guidelines of his vows Samson was filled with the anointing, supernatural strength and the power of God to lead the people of God.

Samson at His Worst...

Self-Loathing □ Self-Destructive □ Self-Indulgent

Samson at His Best...

Self-Disciplined □ Self-Sacrificing □ Self-Fulfilled

The epical story and iconic characters of Samson and Delilah, has remained throughout all of history as tragic yet a compelling and captivating story. It was painfully obvious, that Samson as a leader of God's people (*up until the end of his life*) was ***a boy in man's body***.

Samson was a glaring contrast to our next iconic character, David; who proved himself as a young man and leader to be ***a man in a boy's body***.

Epics and Icons

(Part 1) David and Goliath: The Art of Getting A-Head

***Themes: Obstacles, Opportunities, Tragedies
and Triumphs (1 Samuel 17:1-57)***

Introduction

Last week we said that as a leader Samson was a boy in a man's body. We stated that who he was, and how he led was a distinct contrast to our iconic character – David. We can clearly trace the greatness of David from his early boyhood, and then forward into his manhood. As a leader it is easy to see David as a man in a boy's body! But before we move on with the epic story of David and Goliath, it is important to remember that David was not raised with the same expectations and isolation as Samson. Nonetheless, the epic story of the iconic characters *“David and Goliath”*, can give us

incredible insights into the heart of man, and the heart of God. After David's unlikely selection by God (*from among what appeared to the High Priest Samuel more appropriate candidates*) to replace the Great King Saul there are growth points leading up to the showdown between David and Goliath. These growth points provide clear signs and situations that reveal God's designs and desire for David to move forward step by step, and to "get ahead" with his career. David would eventually become the most notable, dynamic, and charismatic leader that Israel would ever know. At each place in his life, whether it be – as shepherd – as musician – or as warrior, David was becoming the man God wanted him to be - ***a man after his own heart.***

Now the LORD said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."

So Samuel did as the LORD instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Do you come in peace?" "Yes," Samuel replied. "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too. When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!"

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives." So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, "This is the one; anoint him." So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took

the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

David as Shepherd – The opportunity to learn the invaluable life lessons from David the shepherd, as he was entrusted with the oversight, care, and responsibility of the flocks of his father Jesse. As shepherd David put his life at risk many times defending the safety and well-being of the sheep from predators. He had to make sound and wise decisions based on knowledge, instinct, and wisdom. And as shepherd David often did what was best for the flock and not for himself - learning to have peace and to prosper whether there was sunshine or rain, darkness or light. As shepherd David

learned to not only hear, but to listen to the voice of God – and to speak to his flocks in a way that only they could understand. As shepherd David learned to serve so that in the end he could lead.

David as Musician/Worshipper – Be filled with the spirit of God as the passion, poetry, and music of David still to this day inspires, comforts, encourages and teaches millions of people of the heart, the nature and the unmatched character of God. David the musician proves to the world that God is not only relevant, but righteous and just.

David as Warrior - Gain inspiration from the courageous and heroic David. David always fought as the servant of His God Jehovah;

declaring to his people *“the battle belongs to the Lord.”* There was never a leader of God’s people quite like the *warrior David* who faithfully ***before, during, and after*** battle would give honor, glory, and worship to God. And that is why David did not lose his battles.

David versus Goliath – The Showdown

- ***Philistines***
- ***King Saul***
- ***David’s Brothers***
- ***Goliath***

Epics and Icons

(Part 2) David and Goliath: The Art of Getting A-Head *Themes: Obstacles, Opportunities, Tragedies and Triumphs (1 Samuel 17:1-57)*

Introduction

From the very beginning of the epical story of David and Goliath, it was obvious that there was nothing about David that was conventional or stereotypical. He did not pass the eye test of Samuel, or fit in Saul's armor made for a king - in fact he would never fit in that kind of armor. Yet, just as David was a shepherd, a

worshipper, and a warrior, he would also become king. It is also now clear for those who want to see - that David, Goliath, and all of the characters in this story are part of a bigger and even more profound story that God Himself was writing for not only Israel, but for His people from every time and from every place. And that would include us. That we are somehow connected to this epic story and its iconic characters is an amazing idea to think about, but is that really true? And if it is true, then how does that really work? Well... how that works is once again something that is unique only to who God is - and how He, and He alone, goes about connecting time and people together. In Himself, He (God), uniquely connects past, present, and future by unmistakably and undeniably weaving together the planned creation, the earthly

purpose and the eternal destiny's of all His people, from all of those times, and from all of those places. Now that is a very big thought, and more than a lot to process. *So let's use David as king as an example of how God does what I just described.*

David's Family (Matthew 1:2-16) – *David is a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his son Judah. For the Israelite, a review of the family genealogies was a review of sacred history itself. There were so many epical memories, captured there by familiar and iconic names. The review of history was also a reminder to the Israelite of his heritage – who he or she was. As a descendant of Abraham, they believed themselves to be special people*

chosen to be a focus of God's working in the world.

David as King (1 Samuel 16:1-13) – God (not man) chooses David as the one who will be the unexpected and unlikely King of Israel and His people. As the choice of God, David and his passionate heart and love for God would become the great king and savior of the people. David the King would build and establish the kingdom that God had promised to His people through His covenant with Abraham.

David a Foreshadow of Christ

God also gave promise to David...

“Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me, your throne shall be

established for ever.” (2 Samuel 7:16). “Why would God want to establish the throne of David for ever?” The answer to that is this... God has planned that only one person would reign forever - Jesus. One psalmist wrote, “The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: ‘One of your own descendants I will place on your throne.’” (Psalm 132:11). The man Jesus, was a direct descendant of David.

There is a more than just coincidence between David the King and Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to David that he would put one of his descendants upon the throne.

Luke spoke about David, in the book of Acts, “But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.” (Acts 2:30). Deeper into Scripture, we can see that the human life of the descendant (Jesus), has very distinct and undeniable similarities to the life of King David himself. They are more than just

interesting they are imposing. They connect us to God's plan and purpose in this world and they affirm our need to understand Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenant promise to David.

- ***King David was born in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:18) - Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7)***
- ***David was appointed king by God, not man (1 Sam. 16:1) - Jesus; born king, was sent by God, not man (Matt. 2:2, Acts 2:34-36)***
- ***David was rejected by his own brothers (1 Sam. 16:11) - Jesus was rejected by his own people (John 1:11, Isaiah 53:3)***
- ***David was a shepherd and became king (1 Sam. 16:11) - Jesus came as both King and Shepherd (John 10:11)***
- ***David starts overthrow of enemy by defeating the chief of the enemy forces; Goliath (1 Sam. 17:37, 51) - Jesus at the***

beginning of His public ministry, starts overthrow of the kingdom of darkness by doing spiritual battle with the chief of the enemy forces; Satan (Matthew 4:1). King Saul seeks to kill David (1 Sam. 19:1-2) - The Scribes and the Pharisees seek to kill Jesus (John 11:53)

- ***David refuses to be made king before God's time (1 Sam. 24:4-7, 18, 26:8-9) - Jesus refuses to reign as king before God's time (John 6:15)***
- ***David is victorious over all of his enemies (2 Sam. 8:6, 14). Jesus is victorious over all of his enemies, sin, Satan and death (Eph. 1:19-23).***
- ***David and his army lost their families and possessions to the enemy, but David fought and brought everything back. Nothing was lost (1 Samuel 30: 1-19). Jesus rescues all that the Father gives to him, not one is lost (John 6:37-39)***

- ***David brought peace and security to physical Israel (2 Sam. 8:6, 14, 1 Chron. 8:6). Jesus brought peace and security to spiritual Israel (Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:14-15)***
- ***David is a king with whom God is well pleased (1 Sam. 13:14). Jesus is the king with whom God is well pleased (Matt. 13:17)***
David gathered the low and despised into his kingdom (1 Sam. 22:1-2). Jesus gathers the low and despised into his kingdom (1 Cor. 1:27-28)
- ***David's own son Absalom rebels against David, Absalom flees and is hanged in a tree (2 Sam. 18:9). A familiar friend of Jesus, Judas; betrays Jesus, and later hangs himself (Matt. 26:48-50).***
- ***When the enemy pursues David, few of his people follow him (2 Sam. 15:14) -***

When Jesus is taken by his enemies, his friends scatter (Matt. 26:56)

- ***David had to bear the cursings of Shimei. He forbids his followers to take revenge (2 Sam. 16:5-10) - Jesus taught his followers not to take revenge. (Matt. 26:50-52)***
- ***David is 30 years old when he became king (2 Sam. 5:4) - Jesus began his public ministry at 30 years of age (Luke 2:23)***
- ***David reigned from Jerusalem over all Israel for 33 years (2 Sam. 5:5) - Jesus was king from birth (Matt. 2:2), and lived for 33 years***
- ***David overthrew the impostor to his throne and all rebellion (2 Sam. 18:7, 14-15, 20:1-3, 22) - Jesus will overthrow the anti-Christ and all who rebel against him (2 Thess. 2:8, Rev. 17:14, 19:11-16)***

There are even further foreshadows that can easily be drawn between the battle of David and Goliath and the Battle of Armageddon. In both battles the enemies of God appear invincible, and they stand in public defiance and irreverence to openly mock God and the people who believe in Him. The target for hatred and destruction is Israel. And here is something really interesting...

The 666 Connection - Revelation says that the number 666 is the number of the Antichrist. Numbers are clearly symbolic in the Bible, and many believe that Goliath bears the number of the Antichrist as well. Notice that his height is 6 cubits. The description of his weapons and armor show 6 items. And his spears head weight "600 shekels of iron" give a clear connection to 666. Also interesting is that Goliath was a

Nephillim hybrid. He was a descendant of the **Nephilim** of Genesis 6. They were the direct offspring of evil angels who took human women as wives and had children with them. After the flood, giants continued to have giant children. This is confirmed again in 2 Samuel 21 where Goliath's brothers who all have 6 fingers and 6 toes on their hands and feet, are killed. **It is pretty hard to deny that the number 6 has a direct connection to Goliath.**

In these similarities and parallels I see four things that stand out legitimate foreshadows of the person and work of Jesus. **David as Shepherd – David as Worshipper – David as Warrior – David as King.** You can decide at what point you see yourself as a part of this

story and its deeper purpose and meaning. We all relate at some point to the caring shepherd, the creative inspiration of the poet/musician, the wild and courageous warrior, and of course the dynamic leadership of a just and wise man or woman.

Sunday, March 17th 2013

Epics and Icons

Daniel: The Original Lion King – Part I

Daniel 6:1-24

Themes: *Courage, Conviction, Commitment*

Timeline Notes – Split Kingdom to Daniel

930

Kingdom divided into Judah and Israel.

After Solomon's death (930 BCE), open insurrection led to the breaking away of the ten northern tribes and division of the country into a northern kingdom, Israel, and a southern kingdom, Judah, on the territory of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The Kingdom of Israel, with its capital Samaria, lasted more than 200 years under 19 kings, while the Kingdom of Judah was ruled from Jerusalem for 350 years by an equal number of kings of the lineage of David. The expansion of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires brought first Israel and later Judah under foreign control.

722 - 720

Israel crushed by Assyrians; 10 tribes exiled (Ten Lost Tribes).

586

Judah conquered by Babylonia; Jerusalem and First Temple destroyed; most Jews exiled to Babylonia.

The Babylonian conquest brought an end to the First Jewish Commonwealth (First Temple period) but did not sever the Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel. The exile to Babylonia, which followed the destruction of the First Temple (586 BCE), marked the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora. There, Judaism began to develop a religious framework and way of life outside the Land, ultimately ensuring the people's national survival and spiritual identity and imbuing it with sufficient vitality to safeguard its future as a nation.

DAVID TO DANIEL

1024 BC

David Kills Goliath

1 Samuel 17

970 BC

David's last days

1 Chronicles 28, 29, | 1 Kings 1, 2

931 BC

The Kingdom is Divided

1 Kings 12, 13

620-623 BC

Daniels birth

DANIEL TIMELINE

605 BC

Daniel brought to Babylon

604 BC

Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar Dream

Daniel 2

585 BC

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

Daniel 3

582 BC

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 4

582 BC

Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 4:19

539 BC

Daniel Interprets Handwriting on the Wall

Daniel 5

539 BC

Daniel Survives the Lions' Den

Daniel 6

ASK YOURSELF

During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. -

Daniel 1:1

CAN YOU NAME A TIME IN YOUR LIFE THAT EPIC CHANGE OCCURRED?

The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. – Daniel 1:2

HAS ANYTHING EVER BEEN TAKEN FROM YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

“Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men,” he said. “Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon.” - Daniel 1:4

HAS LIFE EVER CALLED YOU OUT?

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names:

Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.

Mishael was called Meshach.

Azariah was called Abednego. – Daniel 1:6-7

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

DANIEL = “GOD IS MY JUDGE”

BELTESHAZZAR

bel-te-shaz'-ar (belTsha'ttsar Babylonian BalaT-sharucur "protect his life"; Daniel 4:8):

Belteshazzar, the name given by the prince of the eunuchs to Daniel, would have appeared, from the obvious analogy of Belshazzar, to be a contracted form of Bilita-sar-uzur, and

therefore to signify "Beltis protects the king." But it is an objection to this that Nebuchadnezzar connects the name with that of "his god," who must (it would seem) be Bel, and not Beltis. If then we are obliged to seek another derivation, we may perhaps find it in Bel, the god, tisha (Heb. טִישָׁא), "a secret," and uzur, from nazar, "to guard, protect." Belteshazzar would then mean "Bel is the keeper of secrets," an appropriate sense, since "secrets" were what Daniel was considered especially to know. (The Five Great Monarches of the Ancient Eastern World, Rawlinson, 1880)

God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. – Daniel 1:17

WHAT HAS GOD GIFTED YOU WITH?

One night during the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had such disturbing dreams that he couldn't sleep. He called in his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers, and he demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed. As they stood before the king, he said, "I have had a dream that deeply troubles me, and I must know what it means." – Daniel 2:1-3

WHO DO YOU SEEK COUNSEL FROM? WHERE DO YOU TURN TO WITH QUESTIONS?

Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of

*Babylon. That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision.
Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. He said,
“Praise the name of God forever and ever,
for he has all wisdom and power.
He controls the course of world events;
he removes kings and sets up other kings.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the scholars.
He reveals deep and mysterious things
and knows what lies hidden in darkness,
though he is surrounded by light.
I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors,
for you have given me wisdom and strength.
You have told me what we asked of you
and revealed to us what the king demanded.”
– Daniel 2:17-23*

WHAT IS GOD TRULY CAPABLE OF?

And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart. - Daniel 2:30

WHO RECEIVES CREDIT FOR YOUR SUCCESSES, FOR YOUR FAILURES?

THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL

YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED.

**YOU HAVE BEEN WEIGHED, YOU HAVE BEEN MEASURED, AND
YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND WANTING.**

“This is the message that was written: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. This is what these words mean:

Mene means ‘numbered’—God has numbered the days of your reign and has brought it to an end.

Tekel means ‘weighed’—you have been weighed on the balances and have not measured up.

Parsin means ‘divided’—your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was dressed in purple robes, a gold chain was hung around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

That very night Belshazzar, the Babylonian king, was killed.

- Daniel 5:25-30

Although usually left untranslated in English translations of Daniel, these words are known *Aramaic* names of measures of currency: *MENE*, a *mina* (from the root meaning "to count"), *TEKEL*, a spelling of *shekel* (from the root meaning "to weigh"), *PERES*, half a mina (from the root meaning "to divide", but additionally resembling the word for "Persia").^[2] The last word (*prs*) he read as *peres* not *parsin*. His free choice of interpretation and decoding revealed the menacing subtext: "Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting." The divine menace against the dissolute Belshazzar, whose kingdom was to be divided between the Medes and Persians, was swiftly

realized. That very night King Belshazzar is slain, and *Darius the Mede* becomes King.

Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion." – Daniel 6:4-5

What is the only way to attack the truly righteous?

By the rules of their religion.

By seeking to accuse Daniel through the “rules of his religion”, the administrators and high officers would ultimately be made aware that Daniel is not a man bound by the “rules of his religion”.

Daniel has an unwavering faith.

He does not doubt God, and because of this, Daniel is not bound by rules, but is obedient in his pursuit of guidance from his god.

2 Timothy 3

The Dangers of the Last Days

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God,

disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

Death Comes to All

1This, too, I carefully explored: Even though the actions of godly and wise people are in God's hands, no one knows whether God will show them favor. 2The same destiny ultimately awaits everyone, whether righteous or wicked, good or bad, ceremonially clean or unclean, religious or irreligious. Good people receive the same treatment as sinners, and people who make promises to God are treated like people who don't. 3It seems so tragic that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. That is why people are not more careful to be good. Instead, they choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway. 4There is hope

only for the living. As they say, “It’s better to be a live dog than a dead lion!”

5The living at least know they will die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. 6Whatever they did in their lifetime—loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth. 7So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this! 8Wear fine clothes, with a splash of cologne!

9Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your earthly toil. 10Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom.

11I have observed something else under the sun. The fastest runner doesn’t always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn’t always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don’t always lead successful lives. It is all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time.

12People can never predict when hard times might come. Like fish in a net or birds in a trap, people are caught by sudden tragedy.

*You have been weighed
You have been measured
And You have been found wanting
God has called on You. To be brutally honest, God has called on
every soul to have ever taken breath...
Breath, our life, our source... It is Spirit. The wind comes from
where, we do not know. But the answer my friend, is blowin' in
the wind.
My decisions are made in an instant, from a source, a
knowledge, a knowing.
And my decisions are with me still today, a source, a knowledge,
eternally showing.
I have been weighed
I have been measured
And I have definitely been found wanting
My days are numbered,
The writing is on the wall
A true American haunting
My proliferation of the fall...
You have been weighed
You have been measured
And You have been found wanting.*

Epics and Icons

(Part 2) Daniel: The Real Lion King

***Themes: Courage, Conviction, and
Commitment***

(Daniel 6:1-28)

Introduction

Lets look in on iconic Daniel as an old man, and his epical night spent in the pit of starving (*carnivorous not vegan*) lions. Daniel the man who in spite of difficult life circumstances from his youth continued throughout his life to find favor with men of power because of his unwavering love and faith in God, his unquestionable character and integrity, insightful wisdom, and his unselfish obedience. *Daniel* found favor because *Daniel* favored God. From the great *Nebuchadnezzar* to *Belshazzar*, to the very night *Daniel* told *Beshazzar* that his dream

meant that God would destroy him and his Babylonian kingdom. *Cyrus King of Persia* overthrows Babylon (which is in modern day Iraq), and immediately installs *Darius of Mede* as ruler. *Darius* quickly sees the character qualities, the insightful wisdom, and the exceptional spirit in *Daniel*, and of course, gives him favor.

Even though **Daniel** is an older man by now he appoints him to be one of three key administrators over the kingdom. These three, were to manage the affairs of the one hundred twenty leaders who ruled over the Persian ruled Babylonian provinces and to report directly back to *Darius*. **Daniel** proved to be far superior to the other two administrators; to the point that *Darius* planned to make **Daniel** the chief administrator over the entire kingdom. It does

not take a “*brain surgeon*” to figure out that this does *go well* with all the other leaders (a mix of both Persian and Babylonian). And this is where we will join the iconic character Daniel, in the epical story of “Daniel in the lions den.”

The Lions Den

So the 122 leaders devised a plot against Daniel. They suggested to King **Darius** that he, **the king**, be made the sole object of worship for **30 days**. All prayer was to be addressed to the king in recognition of his power in the religious realm. The penalty for rebelling against his religious authority was to be death by being **thrown into a den** of lions. Darius, no doubt flattered by the adulation he would receive, consented to the plan and signed it into law, which according to Medo-Persian custom was

irrevocable. **The decree** signed into law by Darius became public knowledge. But **Daniel**, knowing full well the implications of the decree for himself personally, has no intentions of missing his time with God. He proceeds ahead **(just as he had always done) three times each day... to his upstairs room... open the windows... kneels facing Jerusalem... worships and prays to** God. Daniel's first prayer was always a prayer of thanksgiving as he acknowledged God's goodness to him. His prayer was also a prayer for guidance and help and wisdom. Daniel was more than 80 years old at this time, so I am confident in saying today that it never one time crossed his mind that he wouldn't pray any day - and he would make no attempt to hide his devotion to or his dependence on God, even though it now meant

civil disobedience. Daniel would not ask Darius for help or the guidance and strength he knew God alone could supply. Apparently Daniel's opponents knew where and when he prayed, so they **went** to his room at the time and, as expected, found him **praying**. The accusation against Daniel was quickly made before Darius who had issued the **decree**. Darius found himself bound by his own law; he said the only thing he could say, **the decree stands**.

Remorsefully Darius had Daniel lowered into the den. So that Daniel could not escape, a **stone** was... **placed over the opening of the den**, which was then **sealed** with a royal seal. The seal, an impression made in clay by an image on a ring, would inform others that the stone was not to be tampered with in an effort to free Daniel.

Darius was angry and disturbed that he had

been set-up by his administrators and advisors, and that he had been backed into a corner with his own law spends a sleepless **night hoping that Daniel's God is who he says he is.** At **dawn Darius, rushes to the lions' den.** He calls out for Daniel... Daniel replies from the pit that his God had indeed delivered him and that he is unharmed. Overwhelmed with relief and joy, Darius has Daniel removed from the pit. Daniel told Darius, God's angel, had kept the lions' **mouths** shut. For Darius, this experience was a first hand illustration of God's power and favor and the validation of Daniel's faith in God as well as His power to control circumstances and deliver those who trust in Him. For 30 days Darius had been prayed to and called "a god" by

the people under his rule, but Daniel served the true God, who did what Darius could never do: shut the mouths of lions to protect one who depended on Him. In response, Darius orders that Daniel's accusers and their families be **thrown into the same den that Daniel had been in.** They tragically are ferociously mauled before they hit the floor of the pit. And then, Darius decrees the following...

I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God, and he will endure forever.

His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end. He rescues and saves his people;

he performs miraculous signs and wonders in

the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. (Daniel 6:26-28)

Three Teachable Contrasts

- **Relationship and Rules** – Rules, in the context of religion: direct, govern, limit, instruct and guide – sometimes good and most often bad. Relationships in the same context: connect, bond, open, inspire, reveal, affirm and converse most often good and sometimes bad. Daniel is not bound to, or by, the “rules of his religion”, but rather by his faith and relationship with God, and his calling to faithful and obedient service. The truth is that Daniel did not open his window

and pray three times each day because it was a rule or requirement of his religion – he opened his window and prayed three times each day because he loved God and did not want to miss his time in God’s presence. In other words... he did not have to – he wanted to. In those times with God Daniel would worship, meditate, listen, and express his deep love to God. In turn, God would speak to Daniel and give him the foreknowledge of hundreds of years, and divine prophetic insights into secrets known only to God. Daniel trusted God – God trusted Daniel

- ***David and Daniel:*** Both David and Daniel were called into God’s service and purposes

as young men – they each possessed a unique and intimate relationship with God and had unwavering sense of destiny for God's people. David was a great King and a great leader – a high profile personality servant of God. He was God's choice and not man's. Daniel was not a king or a leader – a low profile personality servant of God.

Both David and Daniel had very intense and close relationships with God. Both loved God and people with their whole heart.

David's life would become emotionally erratic and undisciplined at times; causing him to sin against God and his people.

Daniel's life was steady, resolved, and

disciplined; allowing him to live a life before God and witnesses that could not be questioned or challenged. David was called “a man after God’s own heart” and he built Jerusalem, “the Holy City.” Daniel was called “protector of secrets” and he opened the door for God’s people to return to the “Holy City.”

- ***Babylon and Jerusalem:*** Babylon (the rebel city), was founded by Nimrod, who rebelled against God (Genesis 10). Jerusalem (the holy city), was founded by King David, glorified God. The world renowned Babylon of Daniel’s day (536 BC) was located in the Tigris/Euphrates Valley on the west banks of the Euphrates fifty

miles south of what we know today as –
Baghdad, Iraq. It is also what many bible
scholars believe to be the Garden of Eden
(place of the fall), and why history often
refers to ancient Babylon as “the fallen city.”

Jerusalem of 536 BC was in ruins without
King or countryman. Both cities directly and
indirectly connect to Daniel’s prophetic
insights of “past – present – future.” But one
represents the rise of the glory and triumph
God’s kingdom, and the other comes to
symbolize the shame and tragedy of sin and
rebellion, and the fall of the kingdom of man.
Jerusalem the “Holy City, the “city on a hill.”

Babylon the “fallen city“, city of rebellion” the
city of the valley.”