

Audio Transcript of Sermon
December 27, 2025
Country

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Two weeks ago we began a study on the phrase "Duty, Honor, Country," and in the past two weeks looked at duty and honor. Country is the third part of that phrase. For the cadets at West Point, duty and honor are linked to their country, The United States of America. For Christians having considered duty and honor, the country we spiritually link to is the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught this is a kingdom not of this world like other nations we could travel to today. Like Abraham when he was known as Abram, it is like we are traveling from a country we know to a land that God will show us. Most people travel during the course of their lifetime, even if the place they are travelling to is a nearby city or town. Imagine being told to leave behind the area you knew to travel to an undisclosed place, to a place you would be shown as you got closer to it.

Traveling to a mysterious destination has the makings of a book or movie, especially if there are twists and turns along the way. Add any villains or elements of horror and the plot becomes more intense. Reality television shows have been created that lead contestants to the finish line, but when the contestants start the show, at best they know where they are headed to next. Where they will finish remains a mystery. For some, the allure of another country is so enticing they will move there as soon as they can, and some will do so without regard for the immigration laws of the country they would like to live in. When most of us think of travel, we have a good understanding of where we are traveling from and where we are traveling to. We also tend to have a good idea of a preferable and affordable method to get there. We will also prepare for what things will be like once we get there. For many trips that might be a short stay in a hotel and determining what local activities and places we will engage with. Taking trips without knowing anything about the destination or doing any planning for the trip is not something that is commonly done.

But going back to Abraham when he was known as Abram, that was something that he needed to do. He was told to leave the country that he

knew to travel to a land he did not know, and it would be there through his descendants a great nation would arise, the historical nation of Israel. God explained that through Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed, and as Christians we understand that Jesus Christ was being alluded to. When Abram left his country, he was at an age when most today would be retired. Few of us will travel to an unknown place when we are in the prime of our life and as we become senior citizens, that number is going to drop. At age seventy-five Abram left Haran and traveled to the location God showed him, and then he built an altar to worship God. Genesis twelve verse one.

Genesis 12:1-8

1. Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.

When Solomon had built a temple for God, God reminded Solomon of a connection between the people and God, and the land they lived on. That

connection began with Abraham, and it was on the occasion of the temple's completion that God told Solomon that the people needed to humble themselves, pray, seek God, and stop doing what was evil. If the people did that, God would heal the land and the prayers of the people offered in the temple would be listened to by God. Solomon was told that in order for the throne of his kingdom to be established, he and the people needed to do what God expected. If he and the people turned from God, God would cause the people to be removed from their land, and the temple of God would no longer be the magnificent building it once was. With Israel, Solomon was being reminded that country included a connection to God, to doing what God expected of him and the people. Second Chronicles seven verse twelve.

2 Chronicles 7:12-22

12. And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

13. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

15. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

16. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

17. And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments;

18. Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

19. But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;

20. Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I

cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.

21. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to everyone that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house?

22. And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

The idea of being blessed for doing what God expected and being cursed for not doing what God expected wasn't something new for Solomon or the people. Blessings and curses were explained to the people by Moses. First, a review was given of what would happen for doing what God expected. A much longer review followed explaining what they could expect if they didn't do what God expected. It was made clear that if they did what was expected of them that blessings would overtake the people and the nation. It would make no difference if a person lived in one part of the country or another, or if they lived in the city or the country. If the nation did what God expected of them, the nation would be blessed. Even when enemies came to fight Israel, the nation would be blessed as military opponents would cower in fear and run away from the battle. Harvests would be bountiful because there would be the right amount of rain. Whatever the nation did would succeed, and Israel would be so prosperous that it would have the capacity to help other nations and never need help itself. It would also be seen as a powerful nation with other nations looking to Israel for guidance and leadership. All they had to do was do what was expected of them. Deuteronomy twenty-eight verse one.

Deuteronomy 28:1-68

1. And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

2. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

3. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

- 4. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.**
- 5. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.**
- 6. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.**
- 7. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.**
- 8. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.**
- 9. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.**
- 10. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.**
- 11. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.**
- 12. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.**
- 13. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:**
- 14. And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.**

Moses also told the people that there would be curses for not doing what was expected. Should the nation not do what God expected, the nation would collectively be cursed. It would make no difference where in the nation a person might be, the effects of being cursed would be felt, and the curses would begin to impact the food supply. In the modern world when food supply is impacted, food prices rise. Verse fifteen.

15. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

16. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

17. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

18. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

19. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

Beyond the curses impacting food supply, the people were told God would curse all that was done. Multiple, widespread diseases would happen. Climate change would occur with temperatures soaring and farmlands suffering drought. When the hope of rain came, it would be so little that the rain would vaporize before it hit the ground. Living in the arid desert southwest of the United States, that is something I routinely see during the summer, but imagine what it would be like for that to be seen in all parts of the country, including the parts of the country that typically have fewer extreme temperatures. Verse twenty.

20. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

21. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

22. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

23. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

24. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

Military setbacks and defeats were also given as signs of not doing what God expected. Instead of scattering enemies, the enemies would scatter Israel. Every bad thing that could be imagined as a punishment for an enemy would come to Israel, including diseases typically seen only in other countries. Depression would increase among the people as evidenced by people still trying to kick start their day when it is noon. The people would become less and less prosperous, and whatever plans were developed would go to waste. People would lose what they had including their family, and eventually would even lose their country, all for not doing what God expected. Verse twenty-five.

25. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

26. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.

27. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

28. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

29. And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

30. Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

31. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.

32. Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand.

33. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:

34. So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

35. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

36. The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

37. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.

Not doing what was expected would lead to crop failure caused by agricultural pests and plant diseases. Even children would be taken into captivity. In the nation that is not doing what God expects of them, immigrants gain power and financial control over the people. Verse thirty-eight.

38. Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it.

39. Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.

40. Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.

41. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.

42. All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.

43. The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

44. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

45. Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:

46. And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever.

These problems begin when the people change and stop doing what God expects of them, and what that means is at the very beginning when this change occurs, the people are still reaping all the blessings from God. Having been spectacularly blessed by God, the people decide they are going to discount the connection between the blessings they have and doing what God expects of them, and instead do whatever they want to do. They no longer are happy because God has blessed them, because they no longer see God connected to the blessings in their life. They don't understand that the abundance of what they have is an abundance. They take it for granted. In choosing to reject God Who protects His people, God will allow His people to be subservient to other nations and will even bring nations from great distances who will appropriate for their nation the majority of the agricultural harvest leaving little for the people. Verse forty-seven.

47. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

48. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

49. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

50. A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

51. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

The goal of these enemies is the destruction of the nation and the death of the people. The curses will intensify where people will turn on people even resorting to cannibalism, and all because people have rejected God not doing what God expected. Verse fifty-two

52. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he

shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

53. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

54. So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

55. So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

56. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,

57. And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

58. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE Lord THY GOD;

Disease epidemics will occur and increase in severity, and long-duration varieties of these epidemics will be seen, including diseases and epidemics brought from other countries. Life will become so challenging that all that people can hope for is sleep. At night people will be so paranoid they will hope for morning because they fear the evil of night, and eventually without change Israel would once again be enslaved. Verse fifty-nine.

59. Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

60. Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

61. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

62. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.

63. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

64. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.

65. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

66. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

67. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

68. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

In a way, we all seek a nation. Do we seek a nation that is filled with blessings that benefit the people or do we seek a nation burdened with curses that brings fear to the people? In the Psalms we are told to rejoice in God and praise Him knowing that God loves righteousness and judgment. It is also made very clear that the nation who worships God and the people chosen by God are blessed. That is the nation we should seek. Psalm thirty-three verse one.

Psalm 33:1-12

1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

2. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

3. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

- 4. For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.**
- 5. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**
- 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.**
- 7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.**
- 8. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.**
- 9. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.**
- 10. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.**
- 11. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.**
- 12. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.**

When we think of country, we think of the people and the government. In Romans we are told that God allows governments to have power, and if God allows that power, that we need to yield to government authority. There is no place for us to subvert government authority. Romans thirteen verse one.

Romans 13:1-7

- 1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.**
- 2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.**
- 3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:**
- 4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.**
- 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.**
- 6. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.**

7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Paul told Timothy that we should be thankful to those who are in authority and pray for them so that as Christians we can have a quiet and peaceable life doing what we need to do as Christians. Though we are like Abraham seeking a spiritual country, we still live on earth within whatever country is our home and we must respect our government. First Timothy two verse one.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

- 1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;**
- 2. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.**
- 3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;**
- 4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**

The disciples didn't fully understand the great commission when it was given to them. The command to go and teach all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit included an understanding that salvation would be open to all people, not just the scattered remnant of Israel. As Christians while we will likely have a special affinity for Israel, we must have respect for our own country and any country that we might find ourselves in. Matthew twenty-eight verse sixteen.

Matthew 28:16-20

- 16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.**
- 17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.**
- 18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**
- 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**
- 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.**

Having heard the great commission to teach all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit doesn't seem like it immediately registered with Peter. The Holy Spirit intervened and led Peter to meet with Cornelius, a Roman centurion. When Peter denied Jesus three times, he would have seen Him in the company of Romans, and it was the Romans who crucified Jesus. Yet it was through a Roman that the Holy Spirit led Peter to understand that salvation would be opened to all, not to just the children of Israel.

Think of the learning curve that had to come to Peter who from childhood had been taught that Israel held a special place among nations in the heart of God only to understand through the Holy Spirit that salvation would be available to all, not just Israel. When the disciples were given the great commission to preach the gospel in all nations and baptize people, that was before they were given the Holy Spirit. Even with the Holy Spirit, it took intervention by the Holy Spirit for Peter to understand that salvation would now be open to all. He was led to understand that God is not a respecter of persons just because of their lineage but gives salvation to all who fear Him and work righteousness.

While we seek a country, a kingdom to come, that Jesus describes as not being of this world, within every country on earth today are people who if they fear God and do what God expects of them that God will lead them to salvation according to the plan He has for all people. The message of salvation that was first introduced in Judea in and around Jerusalem was now a message that could benefit any person without regard to who their ancestors were or where they lived, that all who believe can through Jesus have their sins forgiven. Acts ten verse thirty-four.

Acts 10:34-48

34. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: he is Lord of all:

37. That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter was speaking the Holy Spirit was given to Cornelius and others within his house, and that amazed those who were Jews with Peter because they would never have thought that salvation could be given to a person whose ancestors were not of the house of Israel. They saw the immediate impact of the Holy Spirit with gentiles speaking in tongues and magnifying God just like they had on that day of Pentecost. With that visible sign, Peter confirmed there was no reason why these gentiles could not be baptized. Verse forty-four.

44. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Peter was of the house of Israel as were all those of the circumcision who were astonished that Cornelius and those of his house, gentiles, could be given the Holy Spirit and have access to eternal life. Cornelius was a Roman,

and the Romans were the very people who recently crucified Jesus Christ. They came from different countries and yet through the Holy Spirit, they sought the same country, the same country that Jesus Christ was crucified for. When pressed by Pilate, Jesus explained that the Kingdom of God was not a kingdom of this world. Even though He was known as the King of the Jews and asked about it by Pilate, Jesus clearly showed His kingdom was not of this world, because if His kingdom were of this world, the disciples would have fought to free Him. Having explained that His kingdom was not of this world, Jesus did not deny he was born to be a king. Peter was of the House of Israel, Cornelius was Roman, and individually we are a citizen of our country. Like Peter and Cornelius, we also seek a kingdom that is not of this world. John eighteen verse thirty-three.

John 18:33-37

33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

34. Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Like the faithful of the Bible who all died not having received the promises, but only saw them like these were afar off, we also must embrace what might seem distant in the future. As Christians who live by faith, we live knowing our time on earth is temporary as we live for eternal life to come, and it is when we will have eternal life that the Kingdom of God will be established. That is the kingdom we seek. That is the country we seek. Like the faithful, we also seek a better country, a heavenly country. Hebrews eleven verse thirteen.

Hebrews 11:13-16

13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

We seek that heavenly country, that better country that will come when Jesus Christ returns to earth. While we await the arrival of that country, we spiritually live giving honor to God the Father and Jesus Christ, and by fulfilling our duty to fear God and keep his commandments, knowing we want to be counted among the righteous. As we spiritually live today, all of us live in a country on earth, and we obey the laws of our country, giving honor to those who are in authority.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.