

Feast of Tabernacles—Day 1

God Dwells with His People

Fred R. Coulter—October 13, 2011

Greetings, brethren, and welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles, day 1, 2011. Time keeps marching on and we keep the Feast every year. And every year we learn more, and every year we see how much more this world needs the Kingdom of God. Every year we see that God takes some and puts them in the *place of safety*, in their resting place, taking them away from the things that are going to happen in the future. Every year we see prophecies fulfilled in the world step-by-step-by-step. Now, we're verging closer and closer to some very calamitous times and very difficult to live in, indeed!

However, what we need to do, as Jesus said, 'Look up! For your salvation is near.' That has to be the same way with the world. The salvation for the world is near and it's coming with the return of Jesus Christ.

The apostles wanted to know when this was going to be. Jesus never told them that it's going to be a couple of thousand years plus down the road before 'I return.' So, He told them, 'You go preach and teach and go the ends of the earth.' Little did they know that that would actually happen with their writings and the publication of the Bible, and also the teaching and preaching of the Gospel.

Look at the things that we have now. Look at the technology that we have now. Look at how much could be done and God has opened the door to do many, many things, brethren, for our part, and we hope and pray for all the Churches of God that they also do their part. That God will bless them and help them and lead them and guide them, because we're all headed toward the Kingdom of God. The Feast of Tabernacles is a great and fantastic time because this pictures the 'restoration of all things.'

Peter and John had healed the man who had been laying at the Gate Beautiful for years and years—he couldn't walk—they carried him there and put him down there. He was begging alms. Peter and John looked at him and said, 'Silver and gold we don't have, but as much as we have we give to you. Arise and walk in the name of Jesus Christ'—and he was healed immediately! All the people around saw this and that was quite a thing. Right at the temple everyone knew this had to be from God. People gathered around. They wondered what it was.

Peter preached to them and said, Acts 3:15: "And you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead, whereof we are witnesses. And

through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness to him in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I realize that you acted in ignorance, as *did* your rulers also" (vs 15-17).

Peter told them that 'we know that you did this *in ignorance*, in killing the Christ.' However, that gave him an opportunity to preach. It talks about the restoration of all things.

Verse 18: "But what God had before announced by *the* mouth of all His prophets, *that* Christ should suffer, He has accordingly fulfilled. Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out, so that *the times of refreshing* may come from *the* presence of the Lord" (vs 18-19). The *times of refreshing* comes to each one individually when they repent and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. *The times of refreshing* is going to come to the whole world when Jesus returns.

"...*the times of refreshing* may come from *the* presence of the Lord, and *that* He may send Him Who was before proclaimed to you Jesus Christ Whom *the* heaven must indeed receive **until the times of restoration of all things**, of which God has spoken by *the* mouth of all His Holy prophets since the world began" (vs 19-21)—beginning with Adam and Eve.

Then Peter talks about what Moses said, prophesying about Jesus, v 22: "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'A Prophet shall *the* Lord your God raise up to you from among your brethren, like me; Him shall you hear in all things that He shall say to you. And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.'" (vs 22-23). Then he talks about how God having raised Him [Jesus] from the dead so that He can bless you in turning each one from their sins. Of course, this is what we're going to do when the Kingdom of God is set up.

This is a special time of the year. This is the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. God created the heavens and the earth, the moon, the sun and the stars and all of that so that there would be the proper time and the proper seasons according to the calculated Hebrew calendar. That's why if you observed the moon last night, it was a full moon. The fifteenth day of the first month and the fifteenth day of the seventh

month are to be full moons. We find that Paul instructed Timothy and told him that he was to ‘preach the Word’; that he was to be ‘instant in season and out of season.’ Now is *the season and the time* for the Feast of Tabernacles. Now is the time that we preach the things concerning what is going to happen when the Kingdom of God is on the earth.

Let’s go back to Leviticus 23, which we know all of the Holy Days are listed according to the days of the calculated Hebrew calendar. Leviticus 23:23^[transcriber’s correction]: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel saying...’” (vs 23-24). You go through all of the first five books of the Bible where it involves God giving any instructions to Moses, that’s what Moses gave to the people. Even though this is called ‘the Law of Moses’ it is really *the Law of the Lord*. Here’s what He expects us to do at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles—this time right now.

Verse 34: “‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying, “The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day *shall be* a Holy convocation.... [that’s today] ...You shall do no servile work *therein*. Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day shall be a Holy convocation to you....’” (vs 34-36). The eighth day— isn’t it interesting?—when we come to the Last Great Day, which is the eighth day, we find that it is the least mentioned in the Bible, but has a great and fantastic meaning. We’ll save that for the Last Great Day.

Notice, they were to offer offerings all during the Feast, because there were the offerings for the sacrifices that they were to make. Those are all listed in Num. 29. A very interesting example, if you go through and read about all the sacrifices that were to be given, you will see that the Feast of Tabernacles was to be

- a time of plenty
- a time of great offerings
- a time of goodness
- a time of rejoicing
- a time of peace

—and all the things that people really want to have.

Keeping the Feast of Tabernacles is what God wants us to do so we can learn. We have a tremendous opportunity, as we saw with the opening message, that God has called us to rule with Christ as spirit beings. There can be no greater calling than that, brethren. The Feast of Tabernacles shows us the time that we will be doing this.

Verse 36: “‘...On the eighth day shall be a Holy convocation to you. And you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a solemn

assembly. And you shall do no servile work *therein*. These *are* the Feasts of the LORD... [everything in Lev. 23] ...which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything on its day... [this was a time of great offerings to God] ...besides the Sabbaths of the LORD... [because every Holy Day and Feast is a Sabbath to God] ...and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD” (vs 36-38).

Then it again reiterates concerning the fifteenth day of the seventh month for the Feast of Tabernacles. Likewise, we find in Deuteronomy 16 that we’re to bring an offering. You all know this by heart, but we’ll read it into the record, because we’re going to take up an offering here, as we always do on all of the Holy Days.

Deuteronomy 16:16: “Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose: in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before the LORD empty.”

There were many sacrifices that they could offer. But today we don’t offer animal sacrifices, so we offer from our monetary system that we have now. This is why we deal in taking up offerings and we use it, brethren:

- to preach the Gospel
- to serve the brethren
- to produce the Bibles
- to produce the books
- to do all that we can to preach the Gospel to the world

That’s why we have Church at Home. Brethren, we’re not going to coerce you to give an offering. ***Everyone is to give according to the blessing of the Lord your God that He has given to you.*** You have to gauge your blessing yourself. This is something that God has given to each one of us to do, so that when we come before God we can bring a bountiful offering; we can bring an offering in thanksgiving; we can bring all of these things because of the blessings that God has given. Now is the time to do so at the Feast of Tabernacles.

(short pause take up offering)

After God had created Adam and Eve and placed them into the Garden of Eden, God was also dwelling in the Garden of Eden with them. The whole purpose that God shows—beginning to ending—through the Bible is that ***God wants to dwell with His people.***

But just like Adam and Eve, too many didn't want to do it. Adam and Eve chose their own way. God has set before us *life and death, blessing and cursing*, and we all have to choose.

- Will we obey God?
- Will we listen to Him?
- Will we keep His commandments?
- Will we love Him?
- Will we be dedicated to Him?
- Will we serve Him?

This is the whole of human existence, to understand what we will do.

In the beginning God wanted to live with Adam and Eve, and I'm sure that He appeared to them much like a man. Of course, He couldn't appear in His glorified form to them, because they would not be able to live in God's glorified presence. When they sinned, God had to remove them from dwelling with Him. Of course, that's been the history of mankind ever since.

We know the curses that were given. We know what happened. We also realize that Abel brought an offering to God; he pleased God because he did what was right in the eyes of God, according to the commands of God. We can learn a great deal of lessons from this. Let's come all the way to the New Testament; let's come to Hebrews, the eleventh chapter. Let's understand a paramount thing that's important in serving and loving God.

We are told that 'the just shall live by faith.' Heb. 11 is also called *the faith chapter*, because this tells us many, many things about those in the past, and how God 'walked with them.'

- God walked with Noah.
- God walked with Enoch.
- God walked with Abraham.

Let's see that ***all of that was by faith!*** We have to *live by faith!* That's the only way we can live by every Word of God. Let's talk about faith, because faith is what is going to ensure that we get into the Kingdom of God, as well as believing in the hope of God, loving God—all of those things combined. The Apostle Paul showed that we have *faith, love and hope*. We always have to remember that we have to

- ***live by faith***—which means *walk in faith*
- ***believe in hope***

Jesus also told us we have to

- ***live in love***

So, we combine all three of these things together. All of these now are the gifts of the Holy Spirit of God.

Let's come to Hebrews 11, and let's just take the little survey that we have here concerning the

saints of the past and how God dwelt with them. Then we will see how God wanted to live with the children of Israel in the tabernacle, and later the temple that He allowed Solomon to build.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now **faith** is *the* substance of **things hoped** for... [faith and hope go hand-in-hand] ...*and the* conviction of things not seen.... [There are a lot of promises of God that have yet to be fulfilled, and we haven't seen them. A lot of promises of God given in the past have been fulfilled, and we've seen the fulfilling of those.] ...For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report" (vs 1-2). Then Paul lists all the elders, as we will see in a bit here.

Verse 3: "By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God, so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible." That is true today to the very smallest particle, which men can identify, and they still don't know what is behind it. The Bible tells us that what is behind it is the Spirit of God. He spoke and they were created. Man on the other hand is a *special creation*, fashioned by God—man and woman—for a special purpose. ***The ultimate of that is to be dwelling with God!*** That's why Jesus said, to open the book of Revelation, 'I am the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending.'

Verse 4 goes right back to the beginning. Let's see how this carries through, and we will see the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles and what it means for us. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..."—because he did it God's way with a willing attitude and a pure heart and clean hands. Cain wanted to come along and give what *he wanted*, to God—what he wanted to give to Him—not as God said. You know Cain got all angry because God didn't accept it. That's called the *way of Cain*, and that's the way most of the world lives today, and most of the Christianity of this world is that way.

"...by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking" (v 4). Why? ***Because that's the very first lesson of the Bible—is it not? Yes, indeed!***

Now we come down to the time of Enoch and he was preaching the Gospel and there were those who were ready to kill him, so God *took him*. But it says, 'Enoch walked with God.' Verse 5: "By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death..." That was at that time, because later in v 13 it says, 'and they all died in faith.' So, that means that Enoch died. He was not transported to heaven. He was carried away to another place to escape those who were ready to kill him, much like

Stephen was taken by an angel and then taken to the place where the eunuch from Ethiopia was.

“...and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that **he pleased God**” (v 5). Let’s focus in on that, because that becomes a very important thing for us to realize—*he pleased God!*

We are also told that Jesus always did the things that pleased God, and we are also told that if we love God, love the brethren, keep His commandments and do those things that *please Him* He hears our prayers. We can do that, too—right? He *pleased* God! How did He please God? Let’s see the definition of faith so that we understand know how it applies to us.

Verse 6: “Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*.... [That’s why God never answers the atheists.] ...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to **believe that He exists**...” That means that *everything that God is*—not only that He exists—but

- everything about His person
- everything about His character
- everything about His love
- everything about His purpose and plan

—we are to have faith in that and **believe** God!

Notice something else that is important: “...and that **He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him**” (v 6). That’s our example. That’s what we are to do. In everything that we do we have

- *fellowship* with God
- *prayer* to God
- *fellowship* with each other
- *prayers* together
- *servicing* and loving God
- praying for the Kingdom of God to come
- *praying* for the will of God to be done in our lives

All of that is *pleasing* to God!

Just like we’re living in the days of Noah, notice how Noah *pleased God*, v 7: “By faith Noah, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see...” ‘What do you mean a flood, Lord.’ No! He didn’t say that, because he *walked with God* was righteous in his generations and he *pleased* God!

Notice what it takes. These are the things that it takes to be able to come to a situation to *dwell with God*. “...was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark for *the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is **by faith**” (v 7). Because you

act upon what God has said *before* you see the final result. After he got into the ark—he and his family, all the animals with them—they were in there seven days before the flood started. I imagine that they were out there jeering Noah: ‘Where’s the rain, Noah?’ Then it started to rain on the seventh day. **By faith we believe and know that the things will happen!** That’s for us, also.

Let’s look at the lesson here of Abraham, v 8: “By faith Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place which he would later receive for an inheritance, **obeyed**...” Listen! Every time it talks about faith, *obedience must follow*.

- People say they believe in God, *but do they obey Him?*
- People say, ‘I love the Lord,’ *but do they keep the Sabbath and Holy Days?*
- People say that they have a religion, *but do they love their neighbors?*

All of those things must be accompanied by obedience, otherwise it’s an empty faith.

“...obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going” (v 8). Isn’t that the same way with us? Would we have thought 40 years ago that we would be where we are today, doing what we are doing today, keeping the Feast of Tabernacles where we are keeping it today? *No!* How many times have we had to walk by faith, to believe God and trust God and let Him work it out? *Yes, indeed!* The way we’re going to enter into the Kingdom of God and rule with Christ is by the *love* and *faith* and *hope* of God.

Verse 9: “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles... [temporary dwellings] ...with Isaac and Jacob... [He saw Jacob for two years before he died. That’s quite an amazing thing—isn’t it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...the joint heirs of the same promise... [Notice, this tells us here that Abraham was told a lot of things by God as to what the future would hold, but they’re not written in the Old Testament. We have it here. God inspired this to be written for us.] ...for he was waiting for the city with *the* foundations of which God is *the* Architect and Builder” (vs 9-10).

Remember the Psalm which says, ‘Unless the Lord build the house the weary builders toil in vain.’ That’s true today, yes. This is why today we are to

- *live* by faith
- *walk* by faith
- *believe* in hope
- *live* in love

—not knowing exactly where we’re going. Oh, we can see a little bit clearer down the road that the

world government is coming. We can see a little more clearly that the whole financial system is soon going to collapse and usher in a one-world currency system. Yes, we can see that, but now we're talking about our inheritance with Christ.

Verse 11: "By faith also Sarah herself received power to conceive seed, and gave birth *when she was well* beyond the childbearing age because she esteemed Him faithful Who had personally promised *her a son.*" Isn't that something?

Now it gets down to some very important things here. Let's continue reading and learn the lesson of faith so that we can arrive to the Kingdom of God *through faith* and doing the things that God wants.

Verse 12: "Because of this *faith*, there came into being from one *man*—and moreover, *one* who was *reproductively* dead—*descendants* as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and as countless as the sand on the sea shore. **All these** died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar... [we have the advantage of living closer to them] ...and having been persuaded of *them*... [Today, though we're closer to it, there are a lot of people who are not persuaded of it. Isn't that something? *Yes, indeed!*] ...and having embraced *them*, and having confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. For those who say such things make it manifest that they seek *their* own country, *as promised by God*" (vs 12-14). That is the Kingdom of God, and that's why we keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Let's come back and let's see that that's what God wanted to do with Israel. After bringing them out of the land of Egypt, bringing them to Mt. Sinai, making a covenant with them (Exo. 24)—giving them the Ten Commandments, His statutes, judgments, laws, testimonies, precepts and all of that. This is the important thing: God made the covenant with them and then He wanted to build a place where He would *dwell with them* ; that was in the tabernacle. In parallel with that, God has made a New Covenant with us for eternal life so that we can *dwell with Him* . Ultimately, as we will see, to be in New Jerusalem and live forever! That's quite a thing, brethren.

Back here, Exodus 25, we have a type of it. God, after having sealed the covenant, Moses offering the sacrifice—sprinkling half of it on the people and half of it on the Book of the Law—the covenant was sealed. Then God gave these instructions to Moses. We can see the blessing that this would have brought, even to the children of Israel though they didn't have the Holy Spirit. But

because of the promise given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He was willing to make this covenant with them and to instruct them in His laws and commandments and that they would be His people according to promise given to the fathers.

Exodus 25:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel that they bring Me an offering. You shall take an offering from every man that gives it willingly with his heart'" (vs 1-2). That's what God wants us to do in everything that we do with Him and toward Him, ***willingly from the heart!***

Verse 3: "'And this *is* the offering which you shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and bleached *linen*, and goats' *hair*, and rams' skins dyed red, and tanned leather skins, and acacia wood, oil for lighting, spices for anointing oil and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. And **let them make Me a sanctuary, so that I [God] may dwell among them**" (vs 3-8). Isn't that something? That God would be so near to them. What a great a marvelous thing that would be.

Then He explains all the things that were given there to build the tabernacle. You know the story that happened with them. When we come to the time that they were ready to go into the 'promised land,' Moses again reiterated the Ten Commandments, and he told them that this would really be great, that this would really be good. They were to keep the laws, remember the problems and difficulties that they had, and to seek God.

Let's come to Deuteronomy, chapter four. Here is Moses talking to them about the blessings that they would receive from God, ***IF*** they would do what God has said.

Deuteronomy 4:1: "And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you, in order to do them, so that you may live and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives *to* you. You shall not add to the word which I command you; neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal Peor..." (vs 1-3).

Verse 5: "Behold, I have taught you statutes..." Remember, the tabernacle was there, the Ark was there, the presence of God was there, and after giving all the book of Deuteronomy, Moses put the Law of God in the side of the Ark. It would all be there. Now they were going in with the full blessing of God. These instructions become important. Let's draw a parallel with the full instructions for us from God. We have all the

spiritual things—don't we? We have all of the Epistles of Paul, the General Epistles, the Gospels, the book of Acts, the book of Revelation. We're not to add to, we're not to take away from. We are to yield to God with all our heart, mind, and soul.

Also, we have something far more important which we will cover: Where does God dwell today? We'll cover that tomorrow, but let's continue on here.

Verse 5: "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it. And you shall **keep and do them**, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations..." (vs 5-6). This is important. They were to set the standard for all the nations of the world, and they were to bring the way of God to all the nations of the world. In that they failed because they didn't do what God wanted them to do.

Verse 6: "...which shall hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'".... Have we not had that said of us in the United States of America, as well as the United Kingdom, Northwestern Europe, all the modern descendants of the ten tribes of Israel? *Yes!* The rest of the world wants to be like us. But instead of serving God in love and truth—we have the Word of God, we declare God in our Constitution—and loving Him and keeping His commandments, what have we tried to do? In spite of the blessings that God has given to us, what have we tried to do? *To be like the other nations, rather than teach the other nations to be like us!* We are so deficient in our behavior before God today that we can barely teach them anything because we're so sinful and corrupt—not like it was here.

Verse 7: "For what nation is so great whose God *is* so near to them, as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him? And what great nation has statutes and judgments that *are so* righteous as **all this law which I set before you today**? Only take heed to yourself and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen..." (vs 7-9)

Let's carry this forward and let's what happened here, Joshua 23. The books of Joshua and Judges are very instructive for us. God gave them many chances. God gave them judges over and over and over again. Again, the warning: Don't go mix with the people, don't go after their religion; don't say, 'How do they worship their god' so we will worship God the way they worship their gods.

Joshua 23:11: "Therefore take good heed to yourselves... [Isn't it interesting, God expects all of

us, all the time, to take heed to ourselves, to live God's way, to not go astray, to not be living in sin.] ...to love the LORD your God." That's what it is today: Love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being—correct? That's what it was to be with them—wasn't it? But they didn't do it!

Verse 12: "Otherwise, if you go back in any way, and cleave to those left of these nations that remain among you... [In other words, intermarry and follow their ways] ...and shall marry them and go in to them and they to you, know for a certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and whips in your sides, and thorns in your eyes until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you" (vs 12-13).

Translate that for today. What is happening to us today? Is that not the same thing? *Yes, it is!* Joshua says, because he's getting ready to die, just like Moses told them when he was ready to die: Verse 14: "And behold, today I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass to you. **Not one thing of it has failed.**" Isn't that interesting? Very profound! Likewise, when we project forward getting into the Kingdom of God, *not one thing will fail!*

Then he gives a warning. Likewise, Jesus gave a warning, too—didn't He? How many parables were warnings? *Yes, indeed!* Verse 15: "But just as all the good things concerning you which the LORD your God has spoken to you have been fulfilled, so shall the LORD bring upon you every evil thing until He has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you, when you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them..." (vs 15-16).

Did that happen in the Churches of God, as well, today? *Yes!* What is the warning? *Rev. 2-3!* Have we set our minds in *faith, belief* and *hope*, to always do the things that please God? I'll let you answer that question. I believe that since you're here at the Feast, that's what you want to do. That's the choice that we have to make continually.

You know what happened. Joshua died at 110-years-old. Then the people did exactly what they were told by God NOT to do; that they were told by Moses and Joshua NOT to do. Yes, the people were faithful as long as the elders that succeeded Joshua lives. As soon as they died another

generation arose which didn't know the Lord and they went after Baal and Ashtaroth. So, the cycle of all the judges began and all the things that took place.

Then it comes down to a time—what a time that was—the last faithful judge was Samuel. Let's come to 1-Samuel and let's see what happened. God also judges the people—as He judges the nations, as He judges the Church—on what their hearts are and how they love Him and obey Him. Do they want God to rule over them? *or* Do they want a man to rule over them? Well, they weren't happy. It seems like when the leader gets real old... Of course, I'm heading there, too, myself; 77-years-old and I have to do what I can to take care of myself and keep in health and ask God to bless me. I take all these things—and, brethren, I hope you do—that we learn the lesson. Can we learn the lesson? **Can we by faith believe God?**

You know what happened here. We find in 1-Samuel, the eighth chapter, whenever you want a human being to rule over you, instead of God, you remove yourself from God's blessing. That's why in the Christian Biblical Church of God we don't have a hierarchy. Our relationship—each one of us—is directly with God the Father and Jesus Christ. The role of the elders and those who are teachers are to *teach you to maintain* that relationship with God, to be faithful with God. We don't want to rule over your lives.

Listen, the truth is this, very simple: If Christ can't rule in your life with the Spirit of God, how are you going to enter into the Kingdom of God? Likewise, with me and anyone else! How are we going to enter into the Kingdom of God? *Not going to do it!*

1-Samuel 8:1: “And it came to pass when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel... [v 3]: ...Yet, his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain... [Isn't that what always happens? *Yes!*] ...and took bribes and perverted judgment.” Sounds just like Washington, D.L.C.—District of Liars and Corruption! There are a lot that are obsessed with sex, too, aren't there?

What happened, rather than seeing that they needed righteous judges, they came to Samuel and here's what they said, v 4: “And all the elders of Israel gathered themselves and came to Samuel to Ramah. And *they* said to him, ‘Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations’” (vs 4-5). They failed completely! Israel was to take God's way to all the nations. Just like I said, they all wanted to become like the rest of the nations.

Well, Samuel really got upset with this, v 6: “But the thing was evil in the eyes of Samuel when they said, ‘Give us a king to judge us.’ And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you...’” (vs 6-7). You have to be careful. God is going to take you up on what you want to do, if you really set your heart upon doing it. He will do it. If you reject Him and set your heart upon that, you've got it. If you want someone to rule over you, instead of God the Father and Jesus Christ, you will have someone.

Verse 7: “And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.’” God was dwelling with them right in the tabernacle—was He not? *Yes!*

They wanted another system, so God gave it to them. You know the story of what happened there: Saul the first king was no good, of no account. He lost the kingdom, and God chose David. God reached down and did something here that Saul didn't understand. Saul rejected God. Saul did not obey the voice of God. How many times has God said, ‘Obey My voice!’ Remember what Jesus said about ‘hearing His words and doing them.’ Quite important to understand—right?

He sent Samuel down to the house of Jesse and he made all the sons of Jesse pass by. God said, ‘I reject them all.’ So, Samuel had to say, ‘Jesse, you've got another son?’ *Yeah, I've got a young son out there taking care of the sheep out in the field.* ‘Send for him. That's the one God has chosen.’ Then Samuel_[transcriber's correction] anointed him to be king, and from that time forward, the Spirit of God left Saul and came upon David.

Later, God gave to David all the kingdom. He succeeded. David loved God. David praised God. David was a prophet of God. David had all the things given to him. God wiped away all the enemies. God exalted him above all the people. God brought him so that the house of Israel came to him and said, ‘Let's combine the whole nation of Israel together and you be king.’ They made him king over the house of Israel and the house of Judah. God gave rest to David.

Let's notice what happened here, what David wanted to do. It's was well-intended.

(go to the next track)

Let's see about David and the tabernacle and then the temple. The Ark was at Kirjath Jearim when David began to reign. When the kingdom was solidified to him and God gave them rest all about,

he brought the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath Jearim up to his house; and he had a special tent there where the Ark resided right in David's house. There is where David would go and compose his psalms and praise God. And all of those we have written in the book of the Psalms—don't we? *Yes!*

In 2-Samuel 7 we have a very unusual thing take place, because David was living in the house that he had built for himself, and here was a tabernacle that was in a tent. That's where the presence of God was. David one night was sitting there praying and thinking... Let's see what happened here:

2-Samuel 7:1: "And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house, and when the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwells within curtains.' Then Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you'" (vs 1-3).

Listen, brethren, here's a great lesson for us. When God blesses us, let's not get carried away in lust. After chapter seven, then occurred the account of what? *David and Bathsheba and the killing of her husband, Uriah the Hittite!* Let's remember that. When God blesses us, let's not get carried away in stupidity, vanity, arrogance, lust and greed and be thinking that we are so special that we can do carnal things and live like the world and expect God to bless us. That will never happen! Never has happened! Never will happen! But here was time when David received all the blessings of God. He was well intentioned here—wasn't he? Probably inspired by God to do this.

Verse 4: "And it came to pass that night the Word of the LORD came to Nathan saying, 'Go and tell My servant David, "Thus says the LORD, 'Shall you build Me a house for My dwelling?... [Will you, really?] ...For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children out of Egypt until this day, but have walked in a tent, and in a tabernacle. In all *places* in which I have walked with all the children of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the tribes of Israel, *those* whom I commanded to feed My people Israel, saying, "Why do you not build Me a house of cedars?"'" Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I took you from the shepcote, from following the sheep, to be prince over My people, over Israel'"'" (vs 4-8). *Remember where you have come from!*

All of us need to remember where we have come from. When you get up in the morning and you look in the mirror and look at your face—whatever it may be in the morning—you know in

your heart that we're not anything to get all excited over and exalted about to try and do great carnal things when God has brought us to where we are. Remember from where you have come. Don't ever forget that.

Verse 9: "And I was with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies out of your sight, and have made you a great name like the name of the great ones in the earth.... [Then He gives a prophecy that He is yet going to move Israel.] ...Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them so that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more.... [That's why the ten tribes of Israel did move. We are their descendants today.] ...Neither shall the sons of wickedness afflict them any more, as before. And even from the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people of Israel, so will I cause you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house'" (vs 9-11)—because *no man is going to do a great thing for God.*

- Is not God the One Who is going to give us eternal life?
- Is not God the One Who wants us to dwell with Him?
- Are we going to go to God and say, 'God, dwell with me'?
- *Of course not!*

Verse 12: "And when your days *are* fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you who shall come forth from your loins. And I will make his kingdom sure. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him for a father, and he shall be to Me for a son...." (vs 12-14).

Then He gives a warning. Notice, every time there comes a blessing, there also comes a warning. We are to learn from the things that are in the Bible. Have we been called to rule in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!* Are we going to be kings and priests? *Yes!* But we're not going to be there if we go out and live in sin. Just like he said here:

"...**If**... [There's that big two-letter word] ...he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not leave him, as I took *it* from Saul whom I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before you. Your throne *shall be* established forever' According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David." (vs 14-17).

Notice David's response. It was humble, but David didn't stay that way. He got exalted in his sin. God forgave him his sin, but he had punishment the rest of his life. Where is God going to dwell? David

was not the one who was going to finish it. David was not the one, but notice his initial response:

Verse 18: “Then King David went in and sat before the LORD. And he said...” Right before the tent of the tabernacle; very humbled; probably tears in his eyes; great feeling of love and mercy and humility, because God would do this.

“...And he said, ‘Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? And what *is* my house, that You have brought me here? And this was yet a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD. But You have spoken also of Your servant’s house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of men, O Lord GOD? And what can David say more to You? For You, O Lord GOD, know Your servant. For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things to make Your servant know. Therefore You are great, O LORD God. For there is none like You...’” (vs 18-22). He exalted God.

After he had overcome and re-established himself after the situation with Bathsheba and killing Uriah the Hittite, God forgiving him his sin, God punishing him. His thorn in the flesh: his family was against him and he had trouble in his family, but God didn’t desert him. He chose Solomon his son to build the house.

Let’s see what happened with Solomon. Again, let’s see what God did. Let’s see how David recovered himself from his sin and he was able to instruct Solomon on what he should do and how he should behave. 1-Chronicles 28^[transcriber’s correction]—here was a great gathering of all the dignitaries of the land of Israel; all the princes of the tribes of Israel; all the commanders; all the king’s servants. Here was the instruction now that David was giving to Solomon his son. We know that God was pleased with Solomon because of his attitude. Isn’t it interesting how we all start out with a humble, willing attitude? But, the question is this: How do we maintain that all of our lives? *By yielding to God and loving Him, and taking every day one at a time.*

Let’s see what happened here with David’s instruction and this spectacular assembly that they had. Just kind of envision this if you can. 1-Chronicles 28:1: “And David gathered to Jerusalem all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that ministered to the king by division, and the commanders over the thousands, and commanders over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the property and livestock of the king, and of his sons, with the officers and the mighty ones, with all the valiant men.” All gathered there before the king; what a sight that must have been.

Verse 2: “And David the king stood up on

his feet and said, ‘Hear me, my brethren and my people. I *had* in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations for the building. But God said to me, “You shall not build a house for My name, because you *have been* a man of war and have shed blood.” However, the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be the ruler, and of the house of Judah the house of my father. And among the sons of my father’s house He was pleased to make me king over all Israel” (vs 2-4). Remember, God told him: ‘*I chose you from the sheepcote.*’ Let’s all remember from whence we came.

Verse 5: ““And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. And He said to me, “Solomon your son shall build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father”” (vs 5-6).

I want you to stop and think! Let’s draw a parallel here. We’re not going to build a house for God, but in a sense *we are the house* of God. God has chosen us to rule and reign with Christ, and to rule over the nations of the world, and to bring salvation to the world. We need to think about that. There are many parallels that we can draw here.

Think of what it’s going to be like on the Sea of Glass when we’re resurrected and we’re there with all the saints and we see Jesus Christ and God the Father and all the saints. Christ is going to have a meeting like this to explain to us what we are going to do. Let’s remember from where we came.

Verse 7: “““And I will establish his kingdom forever **if**... [there’s that word again] ...he continues resolute in keeping My commandments and My ordinances, as he is today.” And now in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess this good land and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you forever” (vs 7-8). He was telling all of them out there, ‘Listen, you’ve got to keep God’s commandments, too.

Then he turned to his son and he said, v 9: ““And you, Solomon my son, acknowledge the God of your father and serve Him **with a perfect heart**...” Isn’t that what we need, a perfect heart? How are our hearts made perfect? By repentance and the Spirit of God! By loving God! By having the laws and commandments and the Word of God written in our hearts and in our minds—right?

“...and **with a willing mind**...

[Unfortunately, Solomon forgot that! You see how *big* that little two-letter word *if* is.] ...for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.... [the David summed it up this way]: ...Take heed now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do *it*.” (vs 9-10).

Then David gave him all the plans, gave him everything. He said, ‘God has given me these plans. These are revealed from God Himself.’ After he got done saying that, here’s what he told Solomon; this is what it needs to be for us. This is why we’re here keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. So we can learn to be

- strong in the Lord
- strong in His Spirit
- strong in the love of God
- strong in the faith of God

Verse 20: “And David said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*. Do not fear, nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will be* with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.”

You go to Heb. 13, what did Jesus promise us? ***That He will not ever leave us or forsake us, no, never!*** Be encouraged by that. Be encouraged by what was done.

We know that God appeared to Solomon twice. Gave him wisdom, blessed him. Let’s come to 2-Chronicles, the fifth chapter. All the work was finished. They brought the tabernacle from Gibeon and put it in the archives of the temple. They brought the Ark of the Covenant from David’s house, and the priests put it in the Holy of Holies. There was a great assembly of people. This probably took place on the Feast of Trumpets. The dedication of the temple by Solomon was awesome indeed! All Israel was there. They kept the dedication of the altar and the temple for seven days. Then they had the Day of Atonement in-between. Then for the Feast of Tabernacles they kept for seven days, and at the end of eight days Solomon sent them away everyone to his own house.

God wanted all Israel to know that His presence was in the temple. Everything from Israel from now on would center around the temple. He promised David that He would put His name there forever. Let’s see what happened; quite a demonstration: 2-Chronicles 5:11: “And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the Holy *place* (for all the priests present were sanctified, and did not wait by course).” That means they were all there.

As a matter of fact, throughout all the temple area they set up altars for burnt offerings and sacrifices. It was a spectacular thing. All the people of Israel came. God’s presence was there, and God’s Spirit was there.

Notice what happened, v 12: “And the Levitical singers—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* clothed in white linen, and having cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets.” Yes, the memorial of blowing of trumpets. This was the most exciting and fantastic day—that is until the coming return of Jesus Christ.

Verse 13: “It came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, ‘For He is good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever,’ that the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD... [Everyone could see this] ...so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God!” (vs 13-14).

What a spectacular event that was. Then Solomon gave his prayer. After he was done praying, then fire came down from heaven and devoured all the sacrifices that he had made. Everyone knew that God was there. God was dwelling among His people. God was pleased to be there. The people were pleased that God was there.

The question is, like with us, God is pleased to dwell with us today, but are we going to drive Him away like they did, because of sin? As we will see, this is a type of the Kingdom of God. At that time, Solomon had peace. He was the wisest man in the world, the richest man in the world. All the ships of the shipping lanes would come carrying gold and silver and ivory and precious jewels. They would bring all kinds of things to Solomon.

Solomon made a great mistake. Solomon did not do what God commanded the kings of Israel to do. Let’s read that in Deuteronomy 17. This is why, brethren—very important for us—you’ve heard it said over and over again: prayer and study; *prayer and study*; ***prayer and study!*** That’s how we are going to use and develop the Spirit of God, so that when the resurrection occurs and we enter into the Kingdom of God and *we possess* the Kingdom and *we rule* the world, we will have the character of God as part of our very being and inheritance. But Solomon did not follow the instructions.

Deuteronomy 17:14: “When you come to the

land which the LORD your God gives you, and shall possess it and shall live in it and shall say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that *are* around me.’”

We just saw that that was done. Solomon is the king. David—even though he sinned—followed God’s commandments. Even though he had to repent of what he did, God still blessed him.

- he wrote Psalms
- he wrote songs
- he wrote these things
- he set up the whole organization for the 12 tribes of Israel centered in Jerusalem
- he set up the priesthood
- he set up the courses
- he set up everything

God gave him the plans for the temple. Now God put His presence in there. Solomon was king, Solomon prayed, God answered his prayer, devoured the sacrifices right off the altar. But later, Solomon forgot, because he didn’t do this:

Verse 14: “...‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that *are* around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you, whom the LORD your God shall choose.... [God chose Solomon—correct? *Yes!* God chose David—correct? *Yes!* God chose Saul—correct? *Yes!*] ...You shall set a king over you from among your brethren. You may not set a stranger over you who is not your brother. Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, so as to multiply horses because the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’ Nor shall he multiply wives to himself...” (vs 14-17). Solomon sure broke that—didn’t he? *300 wives! 700 concubines!*

“...so that his heart does not turn away. Nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold to himself.... [God gave him silver and gold beyond belief! And he wasn’t grateful; he wasn’t thankful.] (Here’s what he should have done, which he didn’t do): ...And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book from that which is in the custody of the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life... [make his own personal copy of the laws of God] (notice why): **...so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them** so that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he does not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel” (vs 17-20).

Well, you know what happened. Solomon

turned and worshiped other gods. God divided the kingdom. The children of Israel were sent off into captivity. The children of Israel came back from captivity.

Come down to the time of Christ. Then we have the Church, and we have the Church clear down to our age. Now we are looking forward to the Kingdom of God where we are going to share the rulership of the world. God is doing a spiritual work. We’ll talk more about that in the other days during the Feast of Tabernacles. Let’s look at the tabernacle that God is going to set up when Christ returns. Let’s come to Isaiah, the fourth chapter. It’s not going to be a temple made of stone. No! It’s going to be a tremendous tabernacle, and God is going to dwell there, and we are going to have access to it. Here is the house of God where all nations are going to come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the house of God.’

Isaiah 4:5: “And the LORD will create over every dwelling place of Mount Zion... [Mt. Zion is where God is going to be. That’s where the throne of David will be. That’s where the thrones of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be. That’s where the thrones of the prophets will be.] ...and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day... [Just like when God was with the children of Israel in the wilderness.] ...and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory *shall be* a canopy.” Isn’t that something! Not just a temple made of stone, but one made by the hand of God. That’s going to be the temple during the Millennium.

Verse 6: “And there shall be a tabernacle for shade by day from the heat, and for refuge, and for shelter from storm and rain.” Isn’t that something?

What are the nations going to do? Let’s see what they’re going to do. Isaiah 2:2: “And it shall come to pass, in the last days the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains... [that is the rulership of God over the nations] ...and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (vs 2-3).

There are going to be some cantankerous nations that will not want to submit right away. But they eventually will. Christ is going to persuade them. As we read in Zechariah 14, if they don’t want to keep the Feast of Tabernacles then there are some things going to happen to them so they will be persuaded. *Yes, indeed!* Let’s see what it’s going to be, Isaiah 11—tomorrow we’ll go over some of the

other things concerning the reign of the Lord. Here's a prophecy of it.

Peter wrote about *the confirmed prophetic Word* (2-Pet. 1). What does that mean? *The Word of God in the Old Testament*, with all of the prophecies, all about Christ, all about His ministry, all about His crucifixion and death and resurrection. Then he writes, we have the 'confirmed prophetic Word'—which then is what? *All the writings of the apostles which confirm that these things did happen!* They were the witnesses from Christ. That's why we need to take heed to the 'confirmed prophetic Word'—Old Testament/New Testament; all of the Bible, brethren!

Here's what it's going to be like, Isaiah 11:2: "And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD." That's what He's going to teach the people. We will all worship and serve God the Father.

Verse 3: "And His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. And He shall not judge according to the sight of His eyes, nor after the hearing of His ears. But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked" (vs 3-4). No wickedness is going to continue in the Kingdom of God. And in order for the Kingdom of God to be successful, we see that God has to give all of Israel a heart of flesh.

Verse 5: "And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. Also the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid..." (vs 5-6). All of these things are going to happen. What a world this is going to be! This is our inheritance, brethren. This is what God is calling us to—to bring this to the world. *YOU* are the future elite of this world. *YOU* are the ones that God has chosen. We will be in that assembly when Christ speaks to us and tells us what we are going to do, and then brings us from the Sea of Glass down to the earth. Satan is removed. The Millennium begins. The reign of God is over all the earth!

And here's how it's going to be, v 6: "Also the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the cub lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.... [Not like it is today, wondering where your child is. Has he been kidnapped or killed?] ...And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (vs 6-7).

The next couple of verses are going to be an absolute miracle. This shows you the change of the nature of *all* wildlife, and how this earth is going to be blessed because of the presence of God and the saints with him—the children of God bearing the rule of God, bringing the love of God, bringing the Truth of God.

Verse 8: "And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the viper's den." What a change!

- A change of human nature!
- A change of the world!
- A change of the whole animal kingdom!

Everything, because God rules and the saints rule. Verse 9: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy mountain... [here's what we're going to bring to the world, brethren]: ...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be the Root of Jesse standing as a banner for the people... [Right there at the tabernacle of God.] ...to Him the nations shall seek; and **His rest shall be glorious**" (vs 9-10).

Brethren, that's when God will be dwelling on the earth; we'll be dwelling with Him, with all the people to bring in the glorious reign of Jesus Christ and the Millennium. We will serve as kings and as priests. This is why we're here! This is why we keep the Feast of Tabernacles! So that we can always understand our purpose, where we're going, what we're doing, and how God is going to get us there. We'll see you tomorrow on the next day of the Feast.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 3:15-23
- 2) Leviticus 23:23-24, 34-38
- 3) Deuteronomy 16:16
- 4) Hebrews 11:1-14
- 5) Exodus 25:1-8
- 6) Deuteronomy 4:1-3, 5-9
- 7) Joshua 23:11-16
- 8) 1 Samuel 8:1, 3-7
- 9) 2 Samuel 7:1-22
- 10) 1 Chronicles 28:1-10, 20
- 11) 2 Chronicles 5:11-14
- 12) Deuteronomy 17:14-20
- 13) Isaiah 4:5-6
- 14) Isaiah 2:2-3
- 15) Isaiah 11:2-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 29
- Exodus 24
- Revelation 2; 3
- Hebrews 13
- Zechariah 14

- 2 Peter 1

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