

FEAST OF TABERNACLES – Day 3 – 2004

Fred R. Coulter – October 2, 2004

And greetings, brethren. This is day number three of the Feast of Tabernacles, 2004. And we're certainly moving ahead in time and understanding of God's word. And the Feast of Tabernacles is one of the most important feasts that we can keep, because it pictures the kingdom of God on earth with Jesus Christ as King, and all the saints ruling and reigning with Him. And of course there are things that we need to learn, that we need to understand; not only about ourselves, but also about how things will be in the millennium.

Now in the Bible we have an example, or a type, of the millennium, and that is the rule and reign of Solomon. And it's very interesting how it started out, and everything like that. And then when we understand about that, and we realize that when Ezra canonized the Old Testament, that he gave a three-year reading of the Scriptures from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, including all of the writings. And one of the things that he commanded the children of Israel to do in this triennial reading of the Scriptures was to, during the Feast of Tabernacles, to have the book of Ecclesiastes – which was written by Solomon – to be read. And we will see why that is important, and why that has such an impact for us today. Because there are many parallels that are happening in the world today that happened during the time of Solomon. So let's begin by understanding how this is in relationship to the millennium, and how it is a type of what Christ will do.

Let's first of all begin by coming to Isaiah 11:10, and let's see what it says of Christ, and let's see what it says of His kingdom when it is set up. And it says: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people..." So verse 10 tells us that the "rest" of Jesus Christ will be glorious and all the Gentiles will come to it. Now we're going to see how Solomon's reign was very similar to this. And also we're going to see, as we go down through the Feast of Tabernacles when we come to the end of it, that many of the same things that happened during Solomon's reign are going to be repeated again right at the end of the millennium.

Now let's first of all come back here to I Kings 5, and let's see where the word "rest" is used to depict the reign of Solomon. And it's really a tremendous time, because there were no wars during the whole reign of Solomon. Now, I Kings 5, and let's begin right here in verse 1. Now this is when he was ready to start building the temple. "And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover [or that is, an admirer] of David. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, *so that there is* neither adversary nor evil occurrent. And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I

will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto My name" (I Kings 5:1-5).

Now let's see the charge that David gave to Solomon. Now remember, God gave to David all of the plans. David wrote out and made all of the plans for the temple. And he gave them to Solomon and told Solomon to build it. Now let's come back here to I Chronicles 28, and let's see the command that David gave to Solomon. Now, it's quite an inspiring and uplifting occurrence. Now just think of this: David is ready to pass from the scene. David knows that his son is going to build the temple. David gathered together iron, and gold, and silver, and all the things necessary to build the temple of God. God gave him the plans. And Solomon had been chosen by God, which was really quite an act of grace on God's part, because Solomon was the second child by David from Bathsheba. And of course, as you read the history there, there was some jealousy among the other sons of David because Solomon was chosen to be king.

So let's pick it up here in I Chronicles 28:2. So this is after... Now here, all the important people of the kingdom were gathered together to David. So this was a special meeting and a special affair that David did with God's blessing. "Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: *As for me, I had* in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for My name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for He hath chosen Judah *to be* the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He liked me to make *me* king over all Israel..." (I Chron. 28:2-4).

Now we need to understand this – only two kings reigned over all Israel: number one, David. He ruled over Judah for seven years, and then the ten tribes of Israel came and combined the kingdom together seven years later. So he ruled seven years over Judah, and thirty-three years over the house of Israel. And his son was the only other one to rule over all the tribes of Israel. After Solomon died, then the kingdom split, as we know.

So he says here: "And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons) He hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. And He said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build My house and My courts: for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if..." (verses 5-7). Now we're going to see the qualification here. One of the things we need to understand is this: God has given free-moral agency to every human being on earth. During the millennium God is not going to take away free-moral agency. It is still going to be exercised. And it's going to be the same situation that we're seeing here with the command of Solomon, that's going to be given as a charge to all people.

So David says, repeating what God had said: "...if he be constant to do My commandments and My judgments, as at this day." It's not how you start, but how you finish. And that's what we're going to see as the important thing that God is teaching us through the book of Ecclesiastes and the life of Solomon. "Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God [So here is David's charge to Solomon], keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God [now there's a condition for it]: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever" (verses 7-8). And that has always been the thing that God holds as a condition for living in the land. Now think about it today in relationship to the United States of America and what is happening in this country. Think about it in relationship to the other nations of the world as well.

Now verse 9: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind..." There's the whole key. God wants us to exercise our choice to do good - to love Him, to serve Him; and, as it says here, with a perfect heart and a willing mind. Now notice how he continues. Because when you study about the life of David and how zealous he was for God, and then how finally the sin with Bathsheba caught up with him, and how his whole household was set against him most of the rest of his life because of that. So David knew. David knew what would happen if you turn your back on God. And then God has to deal with you to punish you. And this is of course what we're going to be teaching all the people during the millennium, the same exact thing. Now notice: "...for the LORD searcheth all hearts..." Now doesn't this sound a little bit like Revelation 2? Yes it does. "...And understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts..." So God knows. He can know at any time what we are thinking. But He has given free moral agency to see what we are going to do.

Now he says: "...If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever." Now isn't that the same thing in the New Testament? Doesn't Jesus say, "Seek, and you shall find; ask, and you shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7, paraphrased)? And haven't we seen with the Spirit of God today, with the seven spirits (as depicted by Revelation 4 and 5) that are before the throne of God, they are the eyes of God going through all the earth; that those are sent out to find and seek out those who are seeking God. Now obviously, it has to be in sincerity and in truth. So he says here: "...If thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever." And we'll see that's exactly what happened to Solomon. And we'll see why it happened, and how it happened, and the results of it. "Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do *it*" (verses 9-10).

Now let's come down here to verse 20. He continues this. Now I want you to understand how similar this is to the beginning of the book of Joshua. Whenever there is a new beginning (you go through the Bible and you see) it starts out just like this. When the children of Israel entered into the Promised Land under Joshua, the same thing was said. That was a new beginning. So likewise here with Solomon; in building the temple, and all of Israel together, and finally there is rest from all the enemies round about - this is a new beginning. So likewise the millennium is going to be a new beginning.

Now here's what David said. He said to Solomon: "...Be strong and of good courage..." Now that's what Jesus said: "Be of good courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "...Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*: fear not [that is, other men], nor be dismayed [because you're going to have some difficulties come along as you do it]: for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will be* with thee..." (verse 20). Now it's very interesting. God is with us as long as we are with God. Because the "if" word, the conditional word, is upon us. God is true, God is righteous, God is always there; there's no shadow of turning. God cannot lie, and He deals in truth. So if we're to have a relationship with God it has to be the same way. And as long as we do this, God is with us. Now we can relate that to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. What happened when false doctrine entered into the church? Well, then God had to intervene. Christ said that He would come and judge them, didn't He? And even in one case, it was so bad that He said He would come and fight against His own church. And we've seen how that has happened, haven't we? Yes indeed. So here He is saying the same thing.

"...He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD" (verse 20). Now this sounds an awful lot like New Testament doctrine, doesn't it? That Jesus said: "I will not forsake you, no, never leave you" (Heb. 13:5)? Yes indeed. Again, as long as we have that relationship with God. So then Solomon was made king. All the wealth and everything was given, everything ready to begin building the temple.

Now they also asked the people to give for the service of God. Now let's come to I Chronicles 29:9. "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy."

Now let's look at the blessing David give to all the people, verse 10: "Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed *be* Thou, LORD God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is Thine*; Thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all" (verses 10-11). This is the same thing that we find in the New Testament, where Paul wrote: "What do you have that you didn't receive?" (I Corinthians 4:7, paraphrased). And this here is the whole lesson here. And we're going to see one of the easiest things that people forget in spite of the fact that it's all out there before them, that that's the very thing they forgot. And, as we will see, that's the very thing that Solomon himself forgot.

Now let's continue on. "Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who *am I*, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (verses 13-14). So then he continues on with the blessing and instructs Solomon some more. And let's see what happens to Solomon here. So they ate, they drank, they had a feast for the transfer of power, as it were. And let's come over here to verse 23: "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and

prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king. And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him *such* royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel” (verses 23-25). Then it gives a little summary of how David died.

Now let's see how Solomon started out. And in many times this is like a lot of us. When we hear the truth, when we hear God's word, when we repent and we are baptized we are all full of zeal and wanting to understand and learn and grow in grace and knowledge. And so we start out, as it were, with a bang. And a lot of people liken this unto the first love, which is in a sense, which is true. So let's begin here in the book of II Chronicles 1, and let's pick it up here in verse 7. Now Solomon had gone and offered a great offering unto God in thanksgiving for being made king, in thanksgiving for being able to make the temple, to build it and so forth, after the plans that God had given David. And God was pleased. Now remember, this is an important thing to understand; as it says there in I John 3:3, that our prayers are answered because we keep His commandments and do the things that please God. So here, we have the same thing here concerning Solomon beginning in II Chronicles 1:7. And after he had given those wonderful offerings: “In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. Now, O LORD God, let Thy promise unto David my father be established: for Thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge...”

So here is what he asked for. He could ask for anything. But he wanted wisdom and knowledge, as he said: “...that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this Thy people, *that is so great?*” (II Chron. 29:7-10). So there it is. And this fulfills a lot of the Proverbs and Psalms that are written, that wisdom and knowledge is to be desired above gold; the commandments are to be desired above gold, yea fine gold. So here was the right thing. See how he started. And I can look back and I can see in our experience in the church of God, I can look back and see a time when that was so; when the church began, when the college began, when all of these things began, and God's blessing was there and was added to it, and everyone was striving with the right heart and attitude to love God, and serve Him, and do the things that God had given us to do. And it was really a wonderful time. And what we experienced with the colleges and with the church at that time, even it was said that the campus in Pasadena was just like a little piece of the kingdom of God for its beauty, for the harmony of the students, and so forth. And there was a time when even in our lifetime we could see that the church was doing much like it was here with Solomon. And we'll see, and we know what happened. We can look and see that today.

Now here's God's response. Is God pleased? Let's ask a question: since God gives us choice - and the choice is to love Him and serve Him and keep His commandments - we have good and evil set before us, life and death; and He commands us to choose life that we may live. And when we do, is God pleased? Yes indeed. We can do those things that please God with a humble heart and with a repentant attitude like

Solomon had here. He realized that he entered into the kingdom and everything came from God through David his father. Now it pleased God that he had this attitude. “And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart...” Because remember what David told Solomon, God tries the reins and the heart doesn’t He? So this is a true statement here. “...This was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king: wisdom and knowledge *is* granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like” (verses 11-12). Now obviously there was only Saul and David who were kings before him, but this certainly could apply to the kings of the earth. Now this is a great and a tremendous thing. God gave this to him, and later on God appeared to him a second time. So this is really a great and marvelous thing that happened.

Now let’s come here, since we’re here in II Chronicles, let’s come to II Chronicles 9 and let’s see how things progress. Let’s see what God gave him. And this is when the Queen of Sheba came. Now let’s see the magnitude of his kingdom. Not only did he rule over all the children of Israel, but he was made the greatest king on earth. And so we see that he had so much gold and so much silver, that silver was just likened unto gravel in the street. And there was great prosperity. And why is it that when prosperity comes that people get spiritually lax? That’s what happened to Solomon and the children of Israel. And that’s what happened to those that the Bible calls the Laodiceans, where they grow rich and increased with goods and feel as though that these are all the blessings of God, and “what more do we have need of?” So here we have the same thing.

Here’s what happened - II Chronicles 9:22: “And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year” (II Chron. 9:22-24). So here he had a worldwide ruling empire and tribute coming into him every year. Now Solomon had the choice to fulfill the original words of the covenant that God gave to Israel when He brought them to Mount Sinai. Now let’s see what that was. Let’s go back to Exodus 19. Quite a tremendous thing. The world could have indeed been a much different place. Just like the sermon I gave years ago, “What would the world have been like if Adam and Eve had not sinned?” Well, what would the world have been like if Solomon had not sinned? Because he had this great knowledge, this great understanding, tremendous influence, all the kings of the earth came to hear his wisdom, to understand what he was doing, and he passed it on to them. Now if he would have done this...

Now let’s come here to Exodus 19 and let’s see the original basis of the covenant that God gave to Israel. And this is based upon the promise that God gave to Abraham; that God said, “In blessing I will bless you, and bless those that bless you, and curse those that curse you; and you shall be a blessing to all nations” (Gen. 12:2-3, paraphrased). God put it within our choice and our decision to do so. Likewise with Solomon. Likewise with

all Israel. And they couldn't even get past the first forty days that Moses was on the mount receiving the Word of God before they sinned and went back to their paganism. But just think what it would have been if they hadn't done that. There would have been no wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Think what would have happened if Solomon had done what God wanted him to do in the way that He desired him to do. He started out right. He started out pleasing God. He started out with a right heart. And just like a lot of us.

Now let's pick it up here in Exodus 19:3: "And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." Now here's another great point of history. And that's why we have all of the things in the Old Testament for us, not only to know and understand the commandments of God, but so that we can learn from history. And here is what God told them that He would do for them if they would do what God wanted them to do: "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth *is* Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 19:3-6).

Now Solomon, being established, having peace and rest round about, if he would have done this: the kings come to him, he should have given them God's statutes and commandments and judgments. He should have preached to them about idolatry and demonism and repenting of that and serving God. Think what the world would have been like, even for the time of Solomon had he done that. But he didn't do it. Just like the children of Israel did not do it. And so all of this is contained in the book of Ecclesiastes. And this is why Ezra commanded the children of Israel to read the book of Ecclesiastes during the Feast of Tabernacles. Now the Feast of Tabernacles pictures all the blessings of God. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the great harvest, when there is so much, we are filled to the full, that we focus in on the futility of just the physical things. So let's go to the book of Ecclesiastes. Let's see some important things here that we have from this.

Now first of all, let's see who wrote it. Remember, there were only two kings who ruled over all of Israel: David and Solomon. Now this one here, the son of David - and the only son of David to succeed and rule over both kingdoms was Solomon, though his name is not recorded in here. However, we can see from the evidence of the book that he certainly was the one who wrote it. "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity" (Eccl. 1:1-2). Now what does this mean? Here we have all the physical things. Here we have abundance in the kingdom that God gave to Solomon. And here he is teaching a lesson. I'm sure that he wrote the first part of this after he had finished all of the rest of the book of Ecclesiastes. But the book of Ecclesiastes, in showing "all is vanity," he began to understand that, and from the experiments and things that he went through.

Now let's look at some of the things that this tells us: Without God and without the purpose of God, and the righteousness of God, and living by God's way, all is vanity.

All is self, and deceit, and comes to nothing. Another thing that's important that this shows, if there is no life after death, there is no purpose, and all is vanity. Or we could put it another way: without God, you're left with purposelessness. And that's exactly as we find it in the world today. The world is left with purposelessness. And we will see that's exactly what Solomon gave himself over to in a very profound way, and it didn't work. There's another thing we could say concerning vanity: if you do not use this life and the time given to you and attain salvation, then your life has indeed been in vain. Or even worse yet, if you do like Solomon and start out well but end up sinning and forsaking God, cannot that be even the worst vanity of all? So Solomon fell victim to everything that he wrote here. It's quite an incredible thing to understand, isn't it? And we can read it that not only is it a witness to us, but it was also a witness against Solomon himself.

Now let's look a little bit more concerning vanity and concerning the things that we need to understand concerning vanity before we go on. Let's come to Psalm 39. Let's understand about man. As great as man is, as great as a creation as God has given man - given us free choice, given us life, created us in the spectacular and fantastic way, that we can be made in the image and likeness of God. And we understand today that our calling is to enter into the kingdom of God and be like God at the resurrection. But without that, look at life. Let's begin here in verse 1. This is David talking. And of course, when you read the book of Proverbs, most of the Proverbs are David's proverbs to Solomon. Then Solomon added some, and some of the other kings of Israel - such as Hezekiah - added some toward the latter part of the book of Proverbs.

Now Psalm 39:1: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." And how many proverbs are written about the use of the tongue? Yes indeed. "I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: *then* spake I with my tongue..." (Psa. 39:1-3). This kind of sounds like Elihu back there in the book of Job, which we'll see in just a minute, that he said, "I'm sitting here listening to you four men talk, and I thought that the gray hairs and old men were wise. But I perceive that you don't have any understanding concerning Job." And he says, "My spirit is ready to burn within me" (Job 32:4-18, paraphrased). So likewise, David had a similar experience looking out there and seeing how things are, and then seeing his own life.

Now verse 4: "LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*." Now all of those of you who are teenagers and young adults, please understand: you are in the strength and the power of your life. But God shows that we are all weak and frail. And as we get older we realize that more and more, don't we? Getting old is not really the problem - the rusting out that comes along with it is the difficulty. So David said: "...*That* I may know how frail I *am*." So whatever this experience was that he went through to come to this point and this attitude...and there will be times in your life to you will too, because God with His Spirit will lead you there. Now verse 5: "Behold, Thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth..." (verses 4-5). Want to know how important you are? Just pick up your

hand and look at the palm of your hand. Stretch it out as far as you can, and that's the greatness of your life. Not very much is it? Because it's all based on "if." Like Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

"...And mine age *is* as nothing before Thee..." What is 70 years compared to all eternity? Or, as we will see a little later, as Solomon said, what if a man live a thousand years twice over and his life ended up being empty in vain? What profit is it? "...Verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity..." (verse 5). And that's the whole thing that we are going to be teaching the people during the millennium. Christ is on the earth; we're ruling and reigning with Him; we're teaching and training the people. And what is it that they're going to have to learn? In the midst of all the abundance they have, in the midst of the great things they have, in the midst of having their spiritual teachers being the very sons of God and manifesting themselves to them to teach them, to train them, to help them, and so forth; if they waste their lives, and if they don't choose God's way, it is indeed the greatest vanity of all, isn't it? Yes. Because we know there will be some who will choose that, right? Yes. So man at his very best state, when you're all cleaned up, and gussied up, and primed and dressed in your best, and you have the best attitude, and you have the best behavior, if you don't love God and keep His commandments, you are all vain at your very best.

Now notice verse 6: "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope *is* in Thee." Now here's the way that you overcome that vanity: "Delivery me from all my transgressions..." And that has to be through the sacrifice of Christ, through repentance, through yielding to God, and God delivers us through His grace. "...Make me not the reproach of the foolish" (verses 6-8). And so therefore, quite a lesson, isn't it? Man at his best state is altogether vanity. Just like Solomon said in Ecclesiastes to open the book of Ecclesiastes, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, says the preacher."

(Turn tape)

Now let's continue on. Let's go to the book of Job 35:13. Now Elihu, as he was talking to Job, he perceives that Job was full of vanity and his own self righteousness. And so Elihu was telling Job: "Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it." Very true statement. So you see, it is futile to try and build spiritual character on the vanity of carnality. And that's exactly what Job was doing, even though he kept the commandments of God in the letter. Keeping it in the letter is not unto salvation. God expects that as a matter of course of all human beings.

Now here is my favorite part of the book of Job. And this shows how God will not regard vanity, and how unless Job really understood that there has to be repentance and the receiving of God's Spirit, and total trust and faith in God, that he couldn't save himself. So let's come over here to Job 40:1. "Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct *Him*?" Now that's quite a statement, isn't it? Is any man going to tell God what to do at any time, or instruct Him?

Now you need to think about this in relationship to a lot of the false doctrines in the world, where they go and pick and choose out of the New Testament mainly those scriptures which just give you the false sense that all you have to do is believe and there's nothing else left for you to do. And what's happening with that is this: men are telling God how they're going to respond to Him, and God is due to give them salvation because they say so. Now they need to read Job 40. And it's going to be something that we're going to be teaching during the millennium all the way through. So: "...He that reproveth God, let him answer it" (Job 40:1-2).

So here, just picture Job all covered with scabs, and dust, and ashes, and miserable; and finally his vanity is deflated. And finally God is speaking to him. He even demanded that there be an umpire between him and God. Now who was going to do that? Well, Elihu acted more like the umpire. But what he really did, he said, "Job, you're wrong. You're out." "Then Job answered the LORD, and said..." Now when God deals with you directly, you have an entirely different perspective of your life, and how you think, and what you are. So Job said: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer [again]: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (verses 3-5). So there comes a time when all human beings have to recognize the vanity that we have (every one of us), and we come to the point of total repentance and yielding to God. And this is what we're going to have to teach the people all during the millennium.

"Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee..." Because you see, God demands of us. If we go to God and we start complaining to God, criticizing God, then God is going to demand of us. And He says: "...and declare thou unto Me." He says, "Now you think about this. You think about what you really said, Job..." and all the other chapters leading up to this, "Wilt thou also disannul My judgment?..." Now the modern word is, "Will you annul My judgment? Will you make void My judgment? Will you, Job, make vain My judgments, and My commandments, and My laws?" "...Wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous?" (verses 6-8). Now that's exactly what the Protestants do, don't they? And yea, even many in the church of God: "Oh, we don't have to keep those commandments of God. The God of the Old Testament is harsh, and mean, and evil. The God of the New Testament is loving, and kind, and good." What are they doing? Because they don't realize that Jesus was the one Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament, they are in fact condemning Jesus Christ so that they can be righteous and have their form of righteousness, and keep their vain traditions, and things like this.

I recently got a letter from a man who said, "Thank you for the website. Thank you for the things that you have put on there. Thank you for the New Testament. I am tired of going to church and hearing the traditions of men." Probably a Protestant. He even said, "I went to the Seventh-Day Adventists and they didn't have it." Now let's stop and think a little bit here about what we have done in the church of God. All of those of you who were part of the largest church of God that has probably been in history - in modern time, at least - we ended up telling God what to do. Because they were taught to idolize a man, to idolize buildings, to idolize all the physical things. And what we're

going to learn in the book of Ecclesiastes is that when you do that, it's vain. But we never realized that we were actually telling God what to do. There are some people who say of a certain particular man who they proclaim as an apostle of God, that if you don't follow his teachings to the letter, then you don't understand. In other words, they're saying this one man had all the teachings of God personified in his being and in his ministry. So therefore, they're limiting God. That is not so. That is idolatry of a man to the nth degree. God is not going to be limited and bound by any man. And that's what Job is being taught here. And there will be no salvation if you limit God.

Notice what He says. He says: "Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?" Now if we think we're all so great and mighty, let's think about this: God said to Job, "You think you're so important?" "Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him. Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand [righteousness] can save thee" (verses 9-14). The most vain thing in the world is self-righteousness. And why is it the most vain? Because you do so good in your own eyes that you think that's going to save you. Well now if you do, then try doing some of these things. You can't do that, can you? No, indeed. So there's a great lesson for us, even from Job.

Now let's come back to the book of Psalms for just a minute. Let's come to Psalm 62. Now here is a tremendous contrast in Scriptures. Let's begin here in verse 5; how we are to look and trust in God and not in any man. "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from Him. He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *He is* my defense; I shall not be moved. In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God. Trust in Him at all times; *ye people...*" That's how we're to believe God - have faith in God, have trust in God at all times. Now if we don't do this in the good times, do you think that God is going to rush in and rescue you in the bad times? You just need to think on that, because we're talking about the vanity of human nature. So, "Trust in Him at all times; *ye people*, pour out your heart before Him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah." And that means meditate and think on this. Now verse 9: "Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree *are* a lie..." Now what you need to do is just think about that, especially on the political scene. And is that not so true? Yes indeed. That's why, as Solomon said, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity." "...To be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*" (Psalm 69:5-10). Now Solomon never learned that lesson.

Now let's come back here to the book of Ecclesiastes. And as we're turning back there, let's remember where we ended yesterday; that God has given the whole creation subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of the hope that God is going to save it. And we have a part in that. Let's come back here to chapter 1. We've gone through verse 2, now let's begin here in verse 3. Now you think - this is very interesting how he looks at these things. Because Solomon stood back and looked at life and analyzed things for

the way that they were. So he says: “What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?” And you think down through time and down through the generations and down through history, all of the works, all the building, all the civilizations, all of the people that have been born and died who lived their lives to whatever age it were, being old age in peace or in young age because of war and plague and death. So what is it? What does it profit? “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.” That’s still going on. “The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and he hasteth to his place where he arose” (Eccl. 1:3-5). So they understood about the earth, they understood about the roundness of the earth, and so forth. And don’t you think in all the wisdom of Solomon that he understood that the earth was round? And here’s talking here about the rotation of the earth.

“The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither it they return again.” So they understood about the water coming down into the oceans, evaporation of water going up into the clouds, and coming and raining and snowing on the mountains, and then coming back down again. “All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*...” (verses 6-8). And that’s true. God has given us work to do. And isn’t it an amazing thing that in the whole world, with all the people that are in it that God has provided work for everyone if they would do it? Beginning with the work of the basic necessities just to live, the work of doing in building and creating, the work of making, and weaving, and making clothes, and garments, and shoes. And you just think about all the works, and all the labors, and all the skills that different people have everywhere. And every day we get up and we go to work, don’t we? And when we’re done with that it’s still not finished. So God has given that. It’s quite a thing. It continues on and on.

Now then he covers another thing that is important: “...The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” We always want to see more. We’re always curious and want to see the new thing, or see something that is old. And we want to hear something new. You think about that. The whole entertainment and television and music industry is based upon this. Not satisfied with seeing, you want to see more. Not satisfied with hearing, you want to hear more. And God made us that way so that we actually should learn and grow and have knowledge and wisdom and understanding, so that in a proper way that would be a good thing. Now then he gets very philosophical here, which is really, really a fantastic and true statement: “The thing that hath been, it is *that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun” (verses 8-9). And that is absolutely true.

See, there are two mysteries that men have not been able to figure out yet, which men have done in the past: number one, how did they build the pyramids? Number two, how did the Incas cut the stones from a valley over here, and come down four thousand feet in that very sharp valley, and go up over four thousand feet and build their buildings? Because they know that the rock over here is the rock of which they built their buildings, and some of those stones weigh four to five thousand pounds or more. Now how did they

get them down and get them up? I've often thought that it's been because they understood how to use the magnetic forces of the earth. And now they're just beginning to come back and understand that again; that the greatest force on the earth is to harness the magnetic powers that God has put here. After all, the earth in its turning is held in orbit, and is accurate, and can be measured and can be defined. And every time that the earth needs some more magnetic power God sends a sun storm with a magnetic storm which envelops the earth. And it brings up another question - in my mind at least - which is this: when they generate electricity, are they actually generating it, or are those turbines only a gathering point of energy, magnetic energy that is already in the earth and they are turning it into electricity? We don't know.

All the use of electricity, which here in doing this video, it's all done by electricity and digital equipment. But the thing that is profound, even though we use it, even though it can be measured, no one can tell you what electricity really is. And so now they're beginning to think that the cheapest way to launch a rocket into space is not with all the rocket fuel that they have used through the years. But if they could develop a magnetic sling, it would shoot the rocket off into space with virtually no energy at all. So that's quite a thing, isn't it? And if you read the book, *The History of Lost Races* by Rene Nurenberg, then you will see they had flight, they had atomic energy and things like that just before and after the flood. So this is true, "That which has been shall be."

So verse 10, it says: "Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after" (verses 10-11). Now unless we had memorials, unless there were cemeteries, unless there were a written and a visual record of World War II, in two generations who would know that there was a World War II? And you can take that backwards going backward in time. How many people even think about a flood which God caused to come upon all the world? They don't have any understanding of it. Most of the people out in the world don't. Some do. Some who read the Bible and study the Bible, they understand that. But what have they learned? They haven't learned anything from it. So here, here is sort of the philosophical dilemma that Solomon was posing and showing. And I am sure that all of this, verse 1 through verse 11, was a prologue to the book of Ecclesiastes, which was written after he pretty well had experimented and written down all the other things.

So here we go. Let's continue in verse 12: "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem." Here's what he did: "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith" (verses 12-13). Now he's going back and he's understanding what happened with Adam and Eve, and how the punishment came that man was to work in the sweat of his brow; and that he would have to produce his fruit, and fight off thorns and thistles; and he would do so from the day that he was born until the day that he died; and he was made of dust, and to dust shall he return.

So he wanted to see what it was that God had given men to do. And think of it today. If we could just sort of back off and look at everything that there is in the world today, and all of the work, and all of the things that are going on in the world today, an amazing array of things that men do and God has given men to do. “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit” (verse 14). See, without God it’s futile. Without the knowledge of God and living by God’s way it is all vanity and vexation of spirit, or frustration.

Now notice. Think of this in relationship to trying to straighten out the society today and how we are going to be able to straighten it out tomorrow. That’s why it’s going to take Jesus Christ, as King over the earth, and all the sons of God as kings and priests ruling and reigning with Him, to straighten out this world. Because as human beings, look at all of the problems and think of this now when you watch the evening news: “*That which is* crooked cannot be made straight...” We’re always trying to untangle problems aren’t we, trying to correct them? So they correct them. And do they really get them corrected completely and take away the problem? No they don’t. “...And that which is wanting cannot be numbered.” Quite a thing isn’t it? So: “I communed with mine own heart, saying...” So he’s talking to himself. Every once in a while we have to talk to ourselves too, don’t we? “...Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all *they* that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge” (verses 15-16). Because God gave it to him.

And we’re going to see, what did he do with that knowledge and wisdom? How did he handle that? We’re told today that if we educate ourselves that that is the key. The key is knowledge and understanding. But remember, is that the knowledge of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? And if we seek after that understanding, will it lead to salvation? Of course not. We have to come to God, and we have to eat of the tree of life, and we have to receive of the Spirit of God.

So here he has all this wisdom. And now he’s going to experiment. So the whole book of Ecclesiastes could be said to be “the great experiment.” “And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom *is* much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow” (verses 17-18). Why? Because this is examining the knowledge of the tree of good and evil. See, because the tree of life was cut off. God cut it off with Adam and Eve. And He has only opened the way for those who are called through Jesus Christ. So here he is. He is going to find out. He’s going to see what his life is going to be like. And this is really quite a thing for us to really know and understand.

Now let’s come to Luke 12, and let’s see what Jesus said. Let’s see how He showed that another man had another experiment. And he, much like Solomon, he had what? He had plenty of everything. Now let’s come to Luke 12:16 (FV): “Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, ‘The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. And he was reasoning within himself [just like Solomon reasoning within himself, talking to himself] saying, “What shall I do, for I have no where to lay out my fruit?”’” (Luke 12:16-17, FV), forgetting that everything he had came from God. He didn’t take

care of poor, he didn't take care of the needy; he was totally selfish and only thinking upon himself. And of course, that's the opposite of what God wants us to do. And Christ also shows that if you act like this man here in the parable, it's also going to be in vain.

So he's reasoning within himself, saying: " ' ' "What shall I do, for I have no where to lay out my fruit?" And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater *ones*, and there will I lay out all my produce and my good things." ' " Totally for myself - that's what he's saying. This is the whole reason of the parable. You see, when God blesses someone, when God gives them wealth and increase they're not to just keep it for themselves. They are to do for others, they're to help others. That's why Jesus said, "You always have the poor with you," and to take care of them as well. So notice, he said: " ' ' Then I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest, eat, drink, *and* be merry.' " " (verses 18-20, FV). Sounds an awful lot like what Solomon said a little bit later on, right? Yes indeed. So if you do that, you are shirking a responsibility. Because you see, Christ has also said that if you give, it shall be given back to you. And always remember that. And remember that concerning the things spiritually. Never say, "Oh, we have this; we have that; we have the other thing. Oh, this is great, this is marvelous..." and you don't take it and apply it to your lives. You don't take it and make it a spiritual quality through the Spirit of God that is in you to develop and build the character of God, as we saw yesterday.

So this man wasn't doing that. Totally selfish. "But God said to Him, "Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?"'" (verse 20, FV). Now this is the same lesson that we're going to see that Solomon was teaching in the book of Ecclesiastes. Now we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. That's why Jesus said continually seek the kingdom of God first, for the evil of every day is sufficient. In other words, the problems and difficulties of every day are sufficient unto itself.

Now if we come to a point where we have been blessed with many things physically and spiritually; and of course this is the great lesson of the Laodiceans, isn't it? So isn't there a great parallel between what Solomon was doing and what the Laodiceans were doing? Rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing? And that's exactly what Solomon did. And this is exactly what this man did. So here we have a parable made explicitly for the Laodiceans. And if we're living in a Laodicean age (which we are), do we not need to learn and heed those lessons, and humble ourselves before God so that we can learn the lessons that are taught in the Scriptures, learn the lessons of life, and the trials and difficulties that we go through, so that we don't have to be like this man here?

Now notice what Jesus said. He said: “ ‘So shall it be to the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.’ ” Then notice what He told His disciples: “And He said to His disciples, ‘Because of this, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...’ ” So we’re not to be just filled with frustration and anxiety. If we have faith in God, is He not able to provide? Yes. If we trust in Him, is He not able to give for us? Yes. Now God is not going to give us great riches now. Because we need to be able

to take care of whatever we have at the present time so that the true riches will be given to us when Christ returns. This is quite an important and tremendous thing. So He said, Don't be anxious and say: “ ‘...what you shall eat; nor about your body, what you shall put on. For life is more than food, and the body is *more* than clothing’ ” (verses 21-23, FV). And that's what we are going to see in the book of Ecclesiastes. Life is more than the physical things. Life is more than having a good time. Our lives need to be totally centered on Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Now then, He gives a lesson on the physical things, which is important for us to understand: “ ‘Consider the ravens; for they do not sow [they're not out plowing fields], nor reap; neither have they a storehouse or granary [like this man had]; but God feeds them. Of how much greater value are you then the birds?’ ” Now you think about that. You are of great value to God, provided what? That you yield to God, that you grow, that you overcome, that you do the things that are pleasing in His sight, and that you don't get hung up on all the physical things around you and begin to think how great that these things are, and how great that we are. Now we've also seen how that mistake has been made by others. Therefore He says: “ ‘And which of you, *by taking careful thought*, has the power to add one cubit to his stature?’ ” (verses 24-25, FV). Just like God told Job, “Array yourself, deck yourself now with majesty and glory, and cast your rage abroad like Me. Then I'll tell you can say you save your own self” (Job 40:10-11, 14, paraphrased). Same thing here - add one cubit to stature.

“ ‘Therefore, if you do not have the power *to do even the least*, why are you anxious about the rest?’ ” That gives us something to think about, right? One of the things that is the hardest, absolutely hardest thing to do is this: in the midst of prosperity and abundance and blessing, it is hard to remain humble. So that's why during the Feast of Tabernacles that Ezra said that the book of Ecclesiastes should be read. Now let's go on and see what Jesus says about Solomon, since we are talking about Solomon and studying his writings. Verse 27: “ ‘Consider the lilies, how they grow; they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all of his glory was adorned like one of these.’ ” And so we're to learn lessons here. And here again, it shows in this parable somewhat of the vanity that Solomon was talking about in the book of Ecclesiastes, where Jesus says: “ ‘But if God so adorns the grass that today is in the field, and tomorrow is cast into an oven, how much more shall He clothe you, O you of little faith?’ ” (verses 26-28, FV).

See, now we're to grow in faith, grow in knowledge, grow in understanding; and it's the hardest thing to do so in the midst of plenty and abundance. So that's harder to overcome than almost anything else, isn't it? You think on that. Then He says: “ ‘Then do not be seeking what you shall eat or what you shall drink, and do not be anxious. For all the nations of the world seek after these things; and your Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you’ ” (verses 29-31, FV). So that's what we need to be doing. That's the whole lesson for us during the Feast of Tabernacles. That's the whole lesson for teaching young people, teenagers, young adults, and old people that we all come to see and understand

this, and we remain and have the humility of Christ. Because we all know and realize that we have nothing that we didn't receive.

(End Tape)

Tabernacles – Day 3 – 2004	
Scriptural References	
1) Isaiah 11:10	12) Exodus 19:3-6
2) I Kings 5:1-5	13) Ecclesiastes 1:1-2
3) I Chronicles 28:2-10, 20	14) Psalm 39:1-8
4) John 16:33	15) Job 32:4-18
5) Hebrews 13:5	16) John 14:15
6) I Chronicles 29:9-11, 13-14, 23-25	17) Job 35:13
7) I Corinthians 4:7	18) Job 40:1-14
8) I John 3:3	19) Psalm 62:5-10
9) II Chronicles 1:7-12	20) Ecclesiastes 1:3-18
10) II Chronicles 9:22-24	21) Luke 12:16-31
11) Genesis 12:2-3	22) Job 40:1-11, 14

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