

The Tabernacle of God

(Feast of Tabernacles—Day 1)

Fred R. Coulter—September 27, 2007

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles is a wonderful Feast, a great time. A time:

- for fellowshiping
- for getting together with each other
- for learning
- for really concentrating on drawing close to God
- for drawing close to each other

In many cases, people have said the Feast of Tabernacles has been a ‘turning point’ for them; that they could rededicate themselves to God.

Let’s hope that this will be effective in your life and other people’s lives in the things that we do for God. We’re thankful for all of you who are able to attend. We’re thankful for your kindness, your goodness, your support for the Christian Biblical Church of God and the things that we are able to do and provide for the brethren because of your prayers and because of your tithes and your offerings.

As you know, every year we work our way through season-by-season all the way through the Holy Days of God as listed in:

Leviticus 23:33: “And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘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”’” (vs 33-34).

That’s why we are here now, and it says in another place that we are to remember that the children of Israel dwelt in booths or temporary dwellings and then you expand beyond that and everything is temporary. We’re going to see that there are multiple meanings to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse 35: “On the first day shall be a Holy convocation. You shall do no servile work *therein*. Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD...” (vs 35-36).

Those were the offerings that they made on the altars and so forth at that time (Num. 29). There was a tremendous amount of offerings that were given and you can imagine the feasting. The feasting that they had at that time really pales into insignificance the feasting that we do today.

“...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*.” (v 36).

It’s really quite a thing when you understand that from the least comes the greatest. When we get to the Last Great Day—here it’s just listed as the eighth day—there’s hardly any mention of anything in it. It’s really amazing how God fulfills His Word to the nth degree.

Verse 37: “These *are* the Feasts of the LORD...” ***They all belong to Him:***

- they’re not the Feasts of the Jews
- they’re not the Feasts of Israel
- they are not the Feasts of Moses
- *they are the Feasts of the Lord*

God has good reason why we keep them. As we keep them, we understand them. Just like it is with everything else, those who don’t keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, don’t understand them and don’t realize the significance of them. We learn by *doing!* We learn by *keeping!* That is because God is with us, and God gives His Spirit to open our minds, to give us ***love, Truth and understanding of His way!*** We need to keep that in mind.

Verse 38: “Besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.”

We need to keep that in mind, and we know that it says in Deut. 16 that during the Feast of Tabernacles *we are to appear before the Lord*.

Now then, here comes the individual things that people are to do at that time. ‘Every man shall give *as he is able according to the blessing that the Lord God has given him.*’ The other ones that are listed here are the community sacrifices of the bullocks and the rams and the goats and the lambs and so forth for keeping the Feast. But in Deut. 16 it is as it is for ***every individual***. And every time we give our tithes or give our offerings we have an opportunity to prove God and to test God as to whether He will give us sufficiency in all things or not.

So, brethren, at this time we’ll pause and take up the offering and we thank you for it and know that it will be put to ***very good*** use.

(pause for offering)

On this first day of the Feast of Tabernacles we're going to cover many aspects and many meanings of the Feast. As we've learned through the years, there are so many meanings to the Feast of Tabernacles that it just sort of grows and multiplies and paints a tremendous picture. What we really need to understand is that the Bible in effect is really a story about the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also a history of the meaning of God in dealing with His people.

When He created Adam and Eve, He put them in the Garden of Eden. A perfect setting; no sin, everything was wonderful, everything was great! God was with them; they lived with God in the Garden of Eden. So, God is able to appear as an ordinary human being whenever He desires to, so they were able to talk with God and walk with God until they sinned. The whole story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is the whole story of man with God, which is this: ***you cannot dwell with God and live in sin!*** God is not going to abrogate His laws just so people feel happy in their sins and their self-righteousness. It isn't going to happen!

After they sinned they were cast out of the Garden of Eden, the dwelling of God; now they had to make it on their own. The whole plan of God is the restoration from that time clear down to the end as fulfilled in the book of Revelation. In these things we begin at the beginning and we end up at the end. Those things always happen.

Then we have the time, especially for us, when we come down all through the time past the patriarchs before the Flood, through Noah's time and then the story picks up again with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Let's understand something that is true: *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were heirs to the promise!* They even lived in the 'promised land,' but it was not theirs. God had not given possession of it to them.

Let's understand something that is also true. ***In order to keep the commandments of God it takes faith:***

- to keep the commandments
- to keep the Passover
- to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread
- to keep Pentecost
- to keep Trumpets
- to keep Atonement
- *it takes faith* to keep the Feast of Tabernacles
- *it takes faith* to keep the Last Great Day

It takes *no faith* whatsoever to not keep any day or to keep Sunday, a day which God never

commanded; or to keep the holidays of this world, which God never commanded. It takes *no faith*, everybody does it.

Those who love God and keep His commandments ***are not of this world***—though we live in the world, just like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They lived in the 'promised land' as sojourners, they didn't own it, yet, just the promise. Of course, that promise expands out to the whole world (Rom. 4).

Heb. 11—Let's read about Abraham. All of these are by faith, and the thing that is important is like James says: 'You show me your faith with your works and I'll show you my faith with my works.' ***Because each has works one way or the other! So, works follow faith and faith sustains works.*** They go hand-in-hand.

Why did Abraham do the things that he did. Though Abraham had a large household, he and Sarah were alone as far as a relationship with God. Yes, he governed all those who were his servants who lived with him, according to the laws and statutes and commandments of God, that is true. But they were alone. So we need to realize and understand this: ***If you have to serve God alone, by yourself, that's better than standing in the congregation of the wicked!*** And that's what Abraham had to do.

Hebrews 11:8: "By faith Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place, which he would later receive for an inheritance ... [and he still hasn't received it] ...obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going."

Just like us today; who would ever thought that we would be where we are today, doing what we are doing today and following God by faith and keeping His commandments? *None of us!* The same thing applies to us today.

Verse 9: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles..." ***Their very life, in living in the tabernacles and tents was a precursor of the coming Feast of Tabernacles, and the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles!***

"...dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob..." (v 9)—because the truth is that Abraham lived long enough to see the birth of Jacob. Isn't that something?

"...the joint heirs of the same promise; for he was waiting for the city..." (vs 9-10). Where do we find the city of God—New Jerusalem—listed? *Rev. 20-22!* This goes clear to the end. God is going to finish and complete His plan. The Feast of Tabernacles is a giant step in completing and

finishing the plan of God. So he was waiting for the city.

“...with *the foundations of which God is the Architect and Builder*” (v 10). *Everything that man does is temporary*, because we’re flesh, we’re of the dust of the earth. Everything that we do is temporary, though it may last for centuries.

You can see on the History Channel about the underground cities. In other words, the cities which have been built upon the old city and all the ancient parts of Rome, Istanbul, London, Paris and so forth, They all have tunnels, graves and things that are buried underneath, and it just shows the temporariness of man. That’s why God is going to give us eternal life. That’s why the rule of God is going to be forever. “...waiting for the city with *the foundations of which God is the Architect and Builder.*” That’s a tremendous thing for us to understand and realize.

After Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and then the children of Israel, and then after God sent Moses to bring them out of the land of Israel, ***God led them and brought them out***, and brought them to Mt. Sinai. There God gave the Ten Commandments, then the statutes and the judgments, and they sealed the covenant with the sacrifices and the offerings, Moses sprinkling half of the blood upon the Book of the Law and half the blood upon the people, and the covenant was signed, sealed and delivered. Now God began to *reveal* what He was going to do, why He was going to do it, and it all has to do with ***dwelling with His people.***

God created us to live with Him! That’s what God intended. So, God wanted to *dwell* among the children of Israel. God told Moses, in giving the instructions for the tabernacle—the tabernacle was where God put His presence—‘everyone was to bring a gift.’ God has it so that we *participate* in His plan. We’re just not passive, sitting on the side and everything is funneled to us. He expects us to *participate* in it. That’s why He had them walk all the way to Mt. Sinai to get the Ten Commandments and the laws and statutes and all of the things that would govern Israel.

After that here’s what God told Moses when he went up on the mount and was there forty days and forty nights to receive the instructions. I just want to make a very important point here because this will come in later, that ***no one is going to build a tabernacle or a temple for God unless God gives them the plans!*** Very important to understand. Let’s see the participation:

- God wants us *to work*
- God wants us *to participate*

- God wants us *to do*
- God wants us *to believe*
- God wants us *to have faith*

We see it all in action:

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. And this *is* the offering which you shall take of them...” (vs 1-3).

God commands an offering, but we decide what we are going to do and how much. In this particular case, the offering had to be defined, because it was for a specific purpose.

“...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...” (vs 3-5)—*instead of badger skins because badgers are unclean*, so God would not have any unclean thing on the tabernacle.

“...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...***” (vs 5-8).

For what purpose? *God has created us. God has given us all these things!* God said, ‘Where’s the house that you’re going to build for Me? For all these things My hands have made’ (Isa. 66).

God looks to the one with ‘a broken heart and contrite spirit.’ Here we have the same principle. You bring a willing offering from the heart. That’s the same way we need to do today. Whatever we do we do from the heart, ***willingly!*** Not just in bringing and offering or tithes or anything like that. But everything we do, we do it *willingly and from the heart!*

“...***so that I may dwell among them***” (v 8). Was God’s desire in the beginning to dwell with Adam and Eve? *He put them in the Garden of Eden!*

- God wants to dwell with His people!
- God wants to bless His people!

We’ll see how that applies to us today!

After all the trials and difficulties they had—because they wanted to go their own way—and rebelled and sinned, and made the golden calf, and then all the trouble that happened there. After that was all taken care of then they went ahead and they built the tabernacle, they made everything according to the instructions of God and then Moses began to set up the tabernacle and the tent of the

congregation on the first day of the first month of the second year that they were in the wilderness.

After everything was done, and it was all set up, then Moses dedicated it according to the instructions of God. Moses anointed Aaron according to the instructions of God and put on Him the priestly garments and then they set aside all the Levites to serve and everything like that so **that it would be known that God was there**, because He said *He wanted to dwell among His people!* God would put His name there. His presence would be there and, all during the Exodus *they had the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night!* I want you to remember that because this becomes important when we answer the question in part two: What kind of temple will there be during the Millennium?

Exodus 40:17 “And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first of the month, the tabernacle was set up.” Then he went through and did everything and dedicated it, got it all ready to go, everything was all set. Then when it was all done:

Verse 33: “And he set up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the court gate. And Moses finished the work.” **Christ has a work that He is doing and He is going to finish it!**

Verse 34: “And the cloud covered the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” *In other words they saw the cloud come right down and fill the tabernacle!*

Verse 35: “And Moses was not able to enter into the tabernacle of the congregation because the cloud stayed on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” **What a spectacular event!**

If you saw something as spectacular as this, would it really impress you so thoroughly that you would always be in love and fear of God and never go out and grossly sin again? *Well, the answer is—through the Bible—probably not!* If you did you would be a rare person indeed, because the children of Israel **saw** this. Remember:

- *they saw* the fire and the flame
- *they saw* the cloud on Mt. Sinai
- *they heard* the voice of God
- Did it stop them from sinning?
- Did it inspire them to want to love God and keep His commandments?

It should have, but things become ‘old hat’ after a while! You know the rest of the story, what happened throughout all the wilderness for the 38

years. God even brought them to the ‘promised land’ and said, ‘Go up!’ But they said, ‘Oh, no, can’t do it, the enemies too tough for us.’ So, God said, ‘All right, it’ll be another 38-1/2 years, a total of 40 years, and I’ll bring the next generation in.’

Here we have a spectacular event; Moses was not even able to enter in. *Now, you think of that!* Here they had all the tribes of Israel around whenever they were in a place, a stationary place; here’s the tabernacle of God and there’s the cloud in the day time and the fire by night right over the tabernacle. You could look from your tent right in and look over and see, yes, there it is, **God’s presence is there!** Moses goes there to talk with God. *Amazing!* Likewise today. That’s why today *we need the Spirit of God and we need the faith of God to remain faithful and to always walk in God’s way.*

Verse 36: “And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed on in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey until the day that it was taken up; for the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys” (vs 36-38). *Very inspiring!*

Now let’s see what happened. The children of Israel finally made it into the ‘promised land’; God finally gave them rest from all of their enemies through raising up David. David became king—first king over all Israel and Judah—and God blessed him, gave him rest from his enemies and he was able to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Obed-Edom and made a tent right close to his house where he had different of the Levites and so forth to attend the tabernacle. {Note sermon: *The Tabernacle of David.*}

Let’s see that now another phase concerning *God dwelling with His people* was about ready to take place. And it was because it was in David’s heart. This was **before** David sinned the great sin with Bathsheba. This is right after the Ark was brought up:

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.’” (vs 1-2).

Isn’t that amazing? The great God—Who created the heavens, created the earth, everything that there is in—*dwelled in a tent!*

Verse 3: “Then Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with

you.’ 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?’” (vs 3-5).

What man is going to build for God? Is that possible? Quite a thought he had in his heart.

Verse 6: “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.” *Great meaning!* This shows **the humility of God!**

- Is it the power of God that’s so important to Him?
- Is it the creating of everything that He leans upon and says, ‘Behold I’ve done this’?

He does that to show and impress men!

- But what is the most important thing for God? **To dwell with His people!**

That’s why during the Feast of Tabernacles:

- we need to be filled with the Spirit of God
- we need to be yielded to God
- we need to be growing in grace and knowledge
- we need to be understanding the things that we need to do
- we need to **rejoice that God dwells with us**
- we need to **rejoice that God dwells within us**

Verse 7: “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 sheepcote...”’” (vs 7-8).

He was the eighth son of Jesse. He wasn’t even there among the sons, the other seven, to be considered to be king. And you read in 1-Sam. 16 how they all came by and Samuel kept saying in his heart, ‘Oh, this has got to be the one that the Lord has chosen.’ And God said, ‘No, this is not the one.’

So, he went through it two times and finally he said, ‘Jesse, are all your children here?’ ‘Oh no, the youngest one is out tending the sheep.’ He said, ‘Go bring him in, he’s the one that God has chosen.’ It’s interesting that He selected someone who had been a shepherd to shepherd His people. You can even draw quite a few analogies and lessons from that.

God is talking to him and said, “...from following the sheep, to be prince over My people, over Israel.... [God made the choice] ...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” (vs 8-9).

Let’s just ask all of ourselves, because it’s awfully hard to do this: If God blesses you greatly, regardless of what it is, can we still remain humble to God and not get all lifted up in vanity and get lifted up in pride and think how great we are?

Remember the pride of Nebuchadnezzar when he stood up and said, ‘I’ve built me this great Babylon.’ He already had the vision of what was going to happen to him, so when he stood up and said that the vision was fulfilled and he was turned over for seven years to be as a beast, to eat the grass of the field and to have the dew of heaven come upon him. They didn’t even cut his fingernails or his hair—for seven years—to show that **‘God rules in the kingdoms of men and gives it over to whomsoever He wills and sets up over it the basest of men.’**

So, here’s David; God said, ‘I’ve been with you wherever you’ve gone. I given you a great name and I’ve defeated all of your enemies; made you what you are.’

Verse 10: “Moreover, I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them...” That’s a prophecy of the ten tribes of Israel going to their modern possessions that we have today.

“...so that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more. 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 10-11).

What great thing can a man do for God? **NOTHING!** The greatest thing you can do for God is:

- to love God
- to serve Him
- to keep His commandments
- to let Him mold you and build you into what He desires

He told David: *I’m going to “...make **you** a house.”* And then He said:

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” (vs 12-13).

That is *if* he would love God and follow His commandments. We’ve talked enough about Solomon so we’re not going to dwell on it, but what we’re going to do is this: We’re going to see what happened after the house was built.

{Note sermon: *It’s Not How You Start, but How You Finish*}

Look at how great Solomon started, but nevertheless, let’s see what happened after the temple was built, everything was dedicated, all the priests were in order, everything was there for the official ceremony of dedicating the temple. In this case it happened at the beginning of the seventh month; and they had from the first day of the seventh month. The first seven days they had dedication of the temple; then they took time off for a covering between the seventh day until the beginning of the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and then they didn’t have feasting during Atonement. They had the Feast of Tabernacles; we’ll see all of that. Isn’t it interesting that this is a type of fulfillment of the return of Jesus on the Day of Trumpets? Everything was all ready. The Levites were there.

2-Chronicles 5:12: “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.”

This was a *spectacular event!* The temple was finished and built according to the plans that God gave to Solomon. Everything was set in order.

Verse 13: “It came even to pass...” *There are times when they did please God and God fulfilled His will to them; when they loved God and kept His commandments.*

“...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” (v 13).

Just like the tabernacle, to show that God put His presence there. Now later, the Jews referred to this as the Shekhinah or the *presence of God*. So God filled it with His presence there.

Verse 14: “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!”

Now imagine: here’s the beautiful temple, here’s the whole area all around, and here are the other altars that were there for burning of burnt offerings, so the people could rejoice in the Feast of Tabernacles. And here, on the very first day, this spectacular event took place. What would your reaction have been if you were out there and saw this? *You would know that God is with you! You would know that God was there, yes, indeed!*

Then Solomon began his long prayer; quite a long prayer and quite a wonderful thing that took place. You read the whole prayer of Solomon and all the way through it’s a plea to God concerning His people. *‘If your people...’* do this, and *‘if they sin and they return to You and repent’ then forgive their sin* and ‘help them always to look to this place.’ And this was such a place that God said that He would put His name there and He would dwell there forever *IF* the people kept His commandments and loved Him and served Him. Eventually that’s going to be fulfilled, as we know, through the Feast of Tabernacles and the meaning of it.

Now let’s see what happened after Solomon got done with this powerful and meaningful prayer.

2-Chronicles 7:1: “And when Solomon had made an end of praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. And the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house” (vs 1-2). *Amazing, spectacular thing!* It happened a second time.

Now, you go back and you think about this: When did this happen before? *This happened when God gave the promises of the covenant to Abraham!* With the sacrifices that were given there, fire came down from heaven and devoured them. When did that happen another time? *It was later, during the days of Elijah when there was a confrontation between Elijah—who was the only prophet of God—and all the prophets of Baal, 450, and all of the priests of the house of Baal. So, they made the offering; God didn’t answer. But when Elijah set everything in order and put his sacrifice on there and then poured the water on three times it ran all over every place. Imagine this: After three and half years of drought, they would take the water and do that!*

Elijah made a very simple prayer, ‘O Lord God, let it be known today that You are God in Israel and hear and answer my prayer.’ What happened? *Fire came down from heaven, consumed*

the sacrifice, consumed all the wood, all the stones and there was just a pile of ashes left! Then the people of Israel, who always vacillate between who's God and who's not God, said, 'Oh, the Lord He's God! He's God!' Here we have a very similar thing. This is quite a great and marvelous thing that took place.

Verse 8—so we get the time setting: “And at the same time Solomon kept the Feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt. And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. And on the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shown to David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people. Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house, and he prospered *exceedingly* in all that came into Solomon's heart to accomplish in the house of the LORD and in his own house” (vs 8-11).

That was quite a thing! And *after that God was pleased!* Listen, when we do the things that please God, He is right there all the time. We need to realize this and ask ourselves:

- Can we concentrate on doing the things that please God?
- Can we please God? *Yes!*

Notice what happened here; God was so inspired; men *can* inspire God with love, a right attitude and humility.

Verse 12: “And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night and said to him, ‘I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place to Myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up the heavens, and there is no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send a plague among My people, **if My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.** Now My eyes shall be open, and My ears shall be attentive to the prayer offered in this place, for now I have chosen and sanctified this house so that My name may be there forever. And My eyes and My heart shall be there perpetually. And you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked...” (vs 12-17)—I will bless you.

Well, you know the rest of the story. Solomon couldn't handle it. Solomon became corrupt and God divided the kingdom. Now we're going to see how God chose to resolve the problem.

(go the next track)

Now let's see how God was going to solve the problem. We will see that that begins, first of all, with Christ, that begins with what God was going to do through Him. Remember, there was the prophecy back in Deut. 18 that God would ‘raise up *a Prophet* like unto Moses,’ and Him everyone was to listen to. This is what we have in the book John.

Let's see how God began to solve the problem, and what God is doing now to solve the problem. We're going to see that the physical building—because when Christ came the second temple was still there—and *the physical building does not make anyone righteous!* That's the whole key. Without the Truth of God and the Spirit of God, no one can be righteous and the problem cannot be solved unless it is solved *God's way!*

That's why John starts out his Gospel the way he did, John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” One of Elohim became Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, and was made flesh.

Verse 14: “And the Word became flesh, and **tabernacled among us...**” *God chose the way to solve the problem was to become a human being with the same human nature that we have and to dwell among men and to bring the message of God directly to men from the Son of God, Who was a man. “...tabernacled among us...”* That means He dwelled *temporarily* among us. Here's the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. Even in Jesus' life. As I said, there are many meanings to the Feast of Tabernacles.

“(and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and Truth” (v 14).

Let's see how profound this was in God sending Christ in the way that He did. What did God do voluntarily taking upon Himself in the person of Jesus Christ:

Romans 8:3: “For what *was* impossible for the Law to do...” The Law without the Holy Spirit, the Law without having the spiritual means to keep the *spiritual* Law, could not compel anyone to do anything. The Law stated what was right, what was wrong, but the Law of itself had no power. The flesh *was weak*, so in trying to follow the Law, the weakness of the flesh would always overcome.

So, to solve that problem, Christ was sent, v 3: “For what *was* impossible for the Law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for

sin, condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit” (vs 3-4).

In order to solve the problem, *God was going to change where He dwelt!* So, He dwelt and tabernacled among men, and made the Truth and grace of God known.

John 1:15: “John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, ‘This was He of Whom I said, ‘He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me’”’—*meaning that John understood that this was God in the flesh Who came and existed before he did!*

Verse 16: “And of His fullness we have all received... [this is John writing] ...and grace upon grace.” We need that grace and it is only through grace that we are saved; and it is only through grace and the love of God that we grow and overcome. Let’s see how that fits in to solving the problem and God dwelling with His people.

Verse 17: “For the Law was given through Moses, *and* the grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ.”

When Jesus began His ministry let’s see what happened, because the first place that Jesus went to *officially* was to the temple.

John 2:13: “Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” *He was the Lord God Who gave all the commandments to build the temple!*

Even in the book of Ezekiel, the plans that were given there were the plans to build the second temple. The Lord God became Jesus Christ. He came to the temple where He had put His name. He had not yet removed His name from there. But it was destined to be removed because of the sins of the people. It was destined to be removed so that God’s dwelling would no longer be at the temple, but God’s dwelling would be some place else. God’s dwelling would be where it would be effective to do and complete what God wanted it to do. So, the first place He went was to the temple.

Verse 14: “And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money exchangers sitting *there*.” *They had made the place a house of merchandise*, and there was a lot of haggling, bargaining, lying and cheating going on right there at the temple of God where God placed His name.

God had not given His Holy Spirit to those people. And the weakness was in the flesh, so Jesus came so that the weakness of the flesh could be

overcome by the power of the Spirit of God within us.

Verse 15: “And after making a scourge of cords, He drove them all out of the temple... [because He owned it; He was boss of it; He was Lord of it] ...*with* both the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money exchangers, and overturned the tables.”

After reading that I always think about what it would have been like throwing over all the tables of money and coins going everywhere and the money exchangers going, ‘Oh! Oh! Where’s my money? Where’s my money? Oh!’ and those tending to the offerings and everything, ‘Oh, look the sheep and the oxen are gone! The turtledoves are gone! What’s going to happen here? Who is this guy coming in and overthrowing everything? Who does He think He is?’ He did it again at the end of His ministry as we find just before He was arrested and so forth.

Notice what He said. He said, v 16: “And to those who were selling the doves, He said, ‘Take these things out of here! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise.’” WOW! Nothing like this had ever happened.

Verse 18: “As a result, the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?’” *Jesus always had a way of answering the question that answered it*, but didn’t answer it the way that they wanted, and answer it in a way that they could understand.

Verse 19: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” *They were thinking of the physical temple here*, the one that Herod, who was half Jew and half Edomite, decided he was going to improve and glorify the second temple.

Verse 20: “Then the Jews said, ‘This temple was forty-six years in building, and You will raise it up in three days?’ But He spoke concerning the temple of His body” (vs 20-21).

We’ll talk about the body of Christ in relationship to a temple and in relationship to us, because we will see that is a solution.

Even the disciples, who saw this going on, it took them over three years before they understood it. Here’s a lesson for us: *The things we know and understand, we know and understand!* The things we don’t know and understand, don’t worry about it because there will come a day when we will understand.

Verse 22: “Therefore, when He was raised from *the* dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scriptures, and the word that Jesus had spoken.” *Quite a thing!* This was also a prophecy of the destruction of the temple.

Verse 23: “Now, when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the Feast, many believed on His name, as they observed the miracles that He was doing. But Jesus did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all *men*” (vs 23-24).

He entrusted Himself to God the Father—Who is Holy, righteous and perfect—*not to men!* Men are fallible, men sin, even the best. What man is there that does not sin? This is why we need our sins forgiven every day.

Verse 25: “And He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man” Why? *Because He put it there!* Yes, He put the ‘*law of sin and death*’ within man beginning with Adam and Eve—passed on by inheritance to us.

God is going to do something great. God is going to change the circumstances, and He’s going to change the place in which He dwells. He’s going to open up a way so that His spiritual temple can be built. We know that the last warning that the Jews received was from Stephen, who was called in before the Sanhedrin, ‘You uncircumcised in heart and mind, you always resist the Holy Spirit of God.’

Now we’re going to see that God is going to change His dwelling place, because the temple was destined to be destroyed. It is recorded that the Jews had a warning. There was one prophet, who for many years went through Jerusalem saying, ‘God is going to destroy the temple. God is going to destroy the temple!’ Then came one night, on the night shift with the priests, in 66_{A.D.} Just before the Romans started invading, the priests heard a voice that said, ‘Let us remove from here.’ And they saw the glory, the Shekhinah of God, go up out of the temple and then they saw chariots of war over the Mt. of Olives circling, circling, circling, until the day that the temple was destroyed.

But, God had already made a plan and was working the plan as to what He was going to do. Jesus told His disciples about it. Let’s see where God is going to dwell, because the whole theme of the Bible is: **Where is God going to dwell?** It started out with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God said, even to David, when he wanted to build the temple, ‘I’ve always dwelt in a tent_[transcriber’s correction (see pg. 6, 2 Sam. 7:6)] or a tabernacle.

Then the temple was a great failure because of man, beginning with Solomon. It was destroyed in 586_{B.C.} and then they came back and rebuilt it and then destroyed it in 70_{A.D.}, never to be built again. God is not going to rebuild the same temple during the Millennium. You’re going to be absolutely amazed what the house of God is going to look like, because it’s right there in the Scriptures, believe it or not. It’s going to be some dwelling!

This is also part of the covenant that God makes with us. Remember, God made a covenant with David and with Solomon, for the building of the temple. He said ***IF—then*** He would bless. Let’s see this—John 15—because this extends, not just for the Passover time, though this was given on the night of the Passover, but this extends on all the time that God is doing and working with down through all the time until Christ returns again. This is a precursor, a type of what God desires, and also a way that God is going to build His spiritual house, and God is going to complete His plan.

Jesus says, John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [we need to bear fruit] ...but He cleanses... [or purges—‘kathairo’] ...each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit” (vs 1-2). Look at it this way: ***every trial and difficulty that you go through, look at it as a pruning from God that you can bear more spiritual fruit!***

Verse 3: “You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you.” {note Eph. 5:26, ‘*by the washing of the water by the Word.*’} That’s why Bible study is so important, because ***it has an effect upon your mind***, to keep it in the right direction. And another profound thing to always remember is this: ***Spiritual knowledge cannot be retained in the physical brain!*** With the *spirit of man* coupled with the *Spirit of God* it must be renewed and renewed—and that comes through personal prayer and Bible study—daily; that comes through Sabbath and Holy Day keeping—weekly and yearly—that we are renewed.

Human beings are that way. If you don’t believe that that is true, think about those who have left the Sabbath and left the Holy Days, and have gone all the way back into the world; and even come to the point that they now affirm—even in the *Journal*, which is supposed to be informational for the Churches of God—that ‘we really didn’t intend to, but now we believe that God has abolished all of His laws.’ How long does spiritual knowledge stay in a physical mind? ***It can’t, unless it is renewed!***

- it is to be living
- it is to be growing

- it is to be active

God then gives us the greatest strength, power and information to grow, change and overcome!

Verse 4: “Dwell in Me, and I in you....”
That’s how God solves the problem today!

Let’s see what even Paul wrote, and this will help us to understand. This is why *you cannot solve spiritual problems with political means!* or *You cannot solve spiritual problems with carnal means!* This is why God has called us. This is why, with the Spirit of God—through repentance, baptism and the circumcision of the heart and the mind—we receive the Holy Spirit of God. But there has to come a *division* between the world and God’s people. We can’t be lukewarm and be dabbling our hands and feet in the world and expect not to be burned.

2-Corinthians 6:11: “O you Corinthians! Our mouths have been opened to you, and our hearts have been enlarged *toward you*. You are not suppressed by us, but you are restricted in your own hearts” (vs 11-12). How many people have restricted their own hearts?

- with unbelief?
- with bitterness?
- with bad memories?

Verse 13: “Now in return *for our ministry to you* (I am speaking to you as to children), you should also enlarge *your hearts toward us*.” *What caused them the problems?*

- the false prophets
- the false teachers
- the carnality
- the viewing of things politically

Verse 14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.... [here comes the separation] ...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common?....”

You can’t be double-minded. Anyone who is double-minded is *unstable in their ways* and they don’t grow and they don’t overcome; and they become disgruntled and, sooner or later, leave, because they haven’t made this commitment.

“...And what fellowship *does* light have with darkness? And what union *does* Christ have with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer have with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols?....” (vs 14-16).

God has called us. We were *called, selected, chosen and special* to God. It doesn’t matter who

you are, where you are or what you are. It matters what is your standing before God, and God’s calling you for most magnificent thing to fulfill the Feast of Tabernacles, personally and individually in our lives.

“...For you are a temple of the living God...” (v 16). YOU! ME! *All the saints everywhere are a mini-tabernacle of God.*

- What did He do in the tabernacle? *He put His Spirit in it!*
- What does He do with us? *He puts His Spirit IN us!*

“...exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (v 16).

That’s how God solves the problem, and this is the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles for us. God is dwelling in us by His Spirit. God the Father has begotten us with the begetting of eternal life. God delights to dwell in His people. Just like there were conditions that were given to the children of Israel and Solomon when the temple was built, for God dwelling there, there are conditions for us that God continues to dwell with us. The problem is not with God if anything goes wrong, the problem is with our human nature. *God is there:*

- to help us
- to purge us
- to lift us out of it

So therefore, here’s a warning (v 17: “‘Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord, ‘and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (vs 17-18). *That’s the solution to it!*

Each one of us, as we keep the Feast of Tabernacles is, with the Spirit of God living in us, *a walking, breathing tabernacle* for the Spirit of God. We don’t have to dwell in booths. We don’t have to dwell in tents. Some people have said, ‘What if I build a booth out in my backyard because I can’t go to the Feast of Tabernacles, would it be all right to build a booth?’ *But of course!* But, if you don’t have the Spirit of God in you, building the booth won’t do you any good. *You’ve got to let Christ be in you!*

2-Corinthians 7:1: “Now then, beloved, since we have these promises, we should purge ourselves from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the* spirit, perfecting Holiness in *the* fear of God.” *There is the whole description of:*

- how we live
- how we can please God

- how we can do the things that God delights in

So that He can pour His Spirit out to us as mini-tabernacles; just like He put His Spirit in the temple and put His Spirit in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Maybe you've never thought about it that way, but this is really the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles for each one of us individually.

God has a work and plan that He is doing for each one of us, and it is so important that **He has chosen to dwell in us!** What I want you to do is think on that and then think about what's important in the world. *Really nothing!*

John 15:4: "**Dwell in Me, and I in you.** As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can you bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me."

Unless we are tabernacling in Christ and Christ is tabernacling in us, we cannot bring forth any fruit, any character, that is going to last unto eternal life.

Verse 5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches.... [Christ is the Head of the Church] ... The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing"—*nothing spiritually.*

Oh, you can do things. But really, when you stop and think about it, this is a true statement, because Who gave you life in the first place? Who gives you breath every time you breathe? *God does!* So, apart from God you can literally do *nothing.*

Verse 6: "If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned." *We've seen that happen!*

We haven't seen the Lake of Fire, yet; but that's coming. It's so important to God that He wants it done the right way. If people reject Him then they have an opportunity to repent. But if it comes to the end of their life and they haven't done it, then they've made their decision. They have judged themselves.

Notice how this is very similar to what we read concerning Solomon and God dwelling in the temple:

Verse 7 "**If** you dwell in Me... [we're the **if** part, not God] ...and My words dwell in you..." We need both!

- **if** you're dwelling in Christ and Christ is dwelling in you

- **if** His words dwell in you; because 'man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God';

Then "...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7) *The thing we ought to desire is eternal life and to make it to the resurrection*; everything else is subordinate to that.

God isn't going to give us what we want to fulfill our lusts, our desires, our selfishness. **He's going to give us whatever we need to finish the course for eternal life!** That's what He's going to give us!

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love" (vs 8-9).

We're to dwell in Him and dwell in His love, or live in His love, **constantly.** All you have to do is just take that one verse, examine your own life and see what's happening in the Church and realize, brethren, we are all falling so short that we really need to wake up and really need to take advantage of what God will give to us if we repent and return to Him. Christ is dwelling *in us.* **We are that living tabernacle!**

Verse 10: "**If** you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love... [so He tells us how to do it] ...just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full" (vs 10-11).

Remember what was said there of the Feast of Tabernacles when the temple was dedicated, they were all joyful and left happy and in great gladness. That's what it is to be for us.

Let's just do another thing: While we're here at the Feast of Tabernacles, let's forget all about the troubles, whatever any of us may have, and put them away. Then after we're done with the Feast of Tabernacles and have grown in grace and knowledge during this time, come back and look at the problems, and I will guarantee you you'll have a different perspective of them, and you will be able to handle them.

Verse 12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you." *Let's understand this! Let me just say clearly:*

- stop your fighting
- stop your arguing and quarrelling
- stop your hatred and suspicions toward brethren

Even if they have problems, and even if they are false brethren, God will help them take care of their problems or reveal the false brethren that they may go. ***So stop your fighting! Stop your arguing!***

- we have to stand for Truth
- we have to stand for right doctrine
- we better stand for love
- we better stand for doing the things that please God

—which we can do!

Verse 12: “This is My commandment... [Do you believe Christ?] ...that you love one another as I have loved you.” He wants to make it clear. No one, *no one, no one* has really done anything for God. Just like God told David: ‘Are you going to build a house for Me? No, I’m going to build a house for *you*.’

Likewise here, v 13: “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you” (vs 13-14).

- Did not Jesus lay His life down for each one of us?
- For you, for me, for all the brethren of God?
- All down through history?
- *Yes, He did!*

He wants us to understand that! He has done the greatest, so that He may dwell in you, and the Father may dwell in you.

Verse 15: “No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father.” *Think about all the things of the plan of God that we know. Brethren, the world doesn’t know it!*

I just might mention here: that there have got to be people on the Internet who are doing Google searches and are asking: What is the plan of God? There are people out there wanting to know what’s going on, is there a plan of God? You were on the other side and you knew nothing about the plan of God. Now that you know about the plan of God:

- How are you going to handle it?
- How thankful are you going to be?
- How grateful are you going to be?
- How involved with God are you going to be?

Verse 16: “You yourselves did not choose Me...” In other words, you didn’t come to God of your own accord and say, ‘God, here I am!’ Remember when Peter said, ‘Lord, I’ll never deny You’? Jesus said, ‘You’re going to deny me three times before this night’s over.’ *No, that will never happen.*

God wants us to know that you didn’t come to God because of your goodness, He’s called you. If you’ve been seeking God, that’s fine. You need to do it, but He’s the One Who does the calling.

“...but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know it hated Me before *it hated you*” (vs 16-18).

So, ***don’t worry about the world***, just keep yourself away from it. We have to live in it, but don’t become a part of it.

Verse 19: “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world...”

Let’s see where it’s also likened unto a tabernacle. Let’s see where Peter refers to his life as a tabernacle, that he’s going to let these things be made known. Peter was telling them that he’s now going to write them. He’s going to set in order and we know that he was responsible for the Gospel of Mark and 1st & 2nd Peter.

2-Peter 1:12: “Therefore, I will not neglect to make you always mindful of these things, although you *already* know them and have been established in the present Truth. For I consider it my duty, as long as I am in this tabernacle...” (vs 12-13). *He understood Christ was dwelling in him!* He understood that the plan of God was to dwell in us, and so all of us are mini-tabernacles.

“...to stir you up by causing *you* to remember *these things*; knowing that shortly the putting off of my tabernacle *will come*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has signified to me. But I will make every effort *that*, after my departure, you may always have a *written* remembrance of these things *in order* to practice *them* for yourselves” (vs 12-15). *That’s why we have the New Testament! Amazing!*

Let’s see where Paul talks about it; he mentions that each one of us are a temple:

1 Corinthians 3:16: “Don’t you understand that **you are God’s temple...**”—*individually and collectively*, and then he builds and puts it together.

“...and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?” *That’s where God desires to dwell!*. To have an intimate relationship with you.

Verse 17: “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is holy, **which temple you are.**” Now, that’s amazing!

Let’s see where he talks about the tabernacle, 2-Corinthians 4:18: “While we consider not the things *that are* seen, but the things *that are* not seen. For the things *that are* seen *are* temporary; but the things *that are* not seen *are* eternal.”

And he says that after, v 16: “For this reason, we do not lose heart; but if our outward man is being brought to decay, yet, the inward *man* is being renewed day-by-day.” *This is what has to happen!*

1-Corinthians 5:1: “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle is destroyed...” *This body, because it’s going to be destroyed*; it’s going to die; it’s going back to dust. Now, if you happen to live long enough to be alive when Christ returns, then you’re going to change.

“...we have a building from God, a house not made with *human* hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we truly are groaning, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.... [the change from flesh to spirit] ...If indeed *that* being clothed, we may not be found naked. For we who are in *this* tabernacle truly do groan, being burdened; not that we wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon so that the mortal *flesh* may be swallowed up by life” (vs 1-4).

We know that Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body. Let’s see that after ‘we are the workmanship of Christ (Eph. 2:10), then we come to:

Ephesians 2:18: “For through Him we both... [Jews and Gentiles] ...have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father.” *That keeps us in contact with God!* We are dwelling in Him and He’s dwelling in us.

Verse 19: “So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God. You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone in Whom **all the building...**” (vs 19-21).

As God looks down on the earth and sees all His people in whom He’s dwelling, He’s looking at *all the building*.

“...being conjointly fitted together... [God is working out His plan] ...is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 21-22).

Brethren, remember the Feast of Tabernacles has many meanings and the most important one is **Christ dwelling in us!** So, dwell in Christ and you be the **walking, living, mini-tabernacle** all your life, and during this Feast of Tabernacles.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:33-38
- 2) Hebrews 11:8-10
- 3) Exodus 25:1-8
- 4) Exodus 40:17, 33-38
- 5) 2 Samuel 7:1-13
- 6) 2 Chronicles 5:12-14
- 7) 2 Chronicles 7:1-2, 8-17
- 8) John 1:1, 14
- 9) Romans 8:3-4
- 10) John 1:15-17
- 11) John 2:13-16, 18-25
- 12) John 15:1-4
- 13) 2 Corinthians 6:11-18
- 14) 2 Corinthians 7:1
- 15) John 15:4-19
- 16) 2 Peter 1:12-15
- 17) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
- 18) 2 Corinthians 4:18, 16
- 19) 2 Corinthians 5:1-4
- 20) Ephesians 2:18-22

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 29
- Deuteronomy 16
- Romans 4
- Revelation 20-22
- Isaiah 66
- 1 Samuel 16
- Deuteronomy 18
- Ephesians 5:26; 2:10

Also referenced: Sermons:

- *Tabernacle of David*
- *It’s Not How You Start, but How You Finish*

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