

Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles—2008

Fred R. Coulter—October 13, 2008

Greetings, brethren! We're happy that you're able to be at the Feast of Tabernacles, to worship together, to come together wherever we have our fellowship sites for the Feast of Tabernacles. Or, if you just are unable to travel and you're at home—God is there with you; God's Spirit is there with you and the Feast of Tabernacles is one of the greatest, most important Feasts that we can keep; because this tells us:

- what our purpose is,
- what our goals are,
- where we are headed,
- what we are going to do when Jesus Christ returns.

And this is why the Feast of Tabernacles is so important. And as we have covered, the true meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles is really defined in the New Testament and in particular in the book of Revelation. And so, we need to really keep all of this in mind. And ***we are blessed*** to be able to have understanding. That even the prophets and the writers of the Bible—even including some of the apostles and the early members in the Church in the first century—that we have the whole Bible, that we can understand many, many, many parts of it. It doesn't mean that we have full understanding of the Bible, because it's been inspired by the mind of God, but He leads us with His Spirit to understand. And so, just as Jesus said, "A scribe who teaches brings out some things old and some things new." And so, that's what we're going to be doing during this Feast of Tabernacles, and we are going to understand our purpose, our goal and why God has called us even more than ever before.

Now, in Revelation 20:6 it says: "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection... [Now, 'blessed and holy' has to do with qualities of God. And this means we're going to be the children of God.] ...over these the second death has no power.... [You are going to ***live forever!***] ...But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." And that is the true, full meaning of the completion and the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

So, let's ask the question: How do we get from here to there? And what is the most important thing that we need to be doing during the Feast of Tabernacles?

- so that we can derive the most out of it,
- learn the most out of it,
- be inspired to go forward, be uplifted

- and encouraged in the Word of God
- So that we can face the times that are ahead ***with courage, with faith, and with strength;*** because we know there're going to be some difficult times.

And if we are not ***grounded in Christ***, if we are not ***rooted in love*** and if we are not ***walking in faith*** and believing in the ***hope of God***, then we won't know how to handle ourselves when the difficult days come.

So let's come back to Deuteronomy 10 and let's see what God requires of us; and also, what will make this the best Feast of Tabernacles that you have ever had, though you may have kept the Feast for decades.

Deuteronomy 10:12 (pg 303): "And now, Israel... [You can just put your name there, because you're part of *spiritual* Israel.] ...what does the LORD your God require of you, but to **fear the LORD** your God, to **walk in all His ways**, and to **love Him**, and to **serve the LORD** your God with all your heart and with all your soul... [See, we are not here for a religious experience. We are here to be trained further for eternal life and our responsibilities under Christ. And to do that we have to serve God with all our heart, with all of our mind, all of our soul, everything there.] (now notice, continuing, v 13): "...To keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" Now remember, we always live in the present. We don't live in the future because it hasn't come. We don't need to live in the past because it's over with. And anything that has occurred in the past that needs to be repented of, repent of it! And also forget it and go forward. "...for your good."

Now here are the promises of God, based upon His very creation. Verse 14: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it." And God has called us to a great and fantastic purpose: ***to serve and reign with Christ as kings and priests, rulers and overseers, to bring to the world what it desperately needs—the true government of God!***

Now notice, v 15—of all that there is and all the people that are in the world, here's how special you are to God, and you need to understand that: "Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them... [And it goes back beginning with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, on down through time, down

to Christ—through the apostles and down to us.] ...and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today.” Isn’t that something!

- Why are we here?
- Where are we going?
- Why has God called us?

So we can be His children. So we can live and reign with Him. That’s a tremendous thing and really awesome and amazing when you understand it.

Now we have a responsibility because of that. And part of this is accomplished through the circumcision which is in Christ. But we have our parts, too, because we have to respond to God in overcoming and changing by using His Spirit, using His Word, using His laws and commandments—the very words of Christ, the words of the apostles, etc.

Verse 16: “Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked...” Now we can modify that also today. Do not be as those who are chasing after many strange and weird doctrines, because there are a lot of them out there. And when I look at the condition of the Church today, all I can do is say, ‘God help us!’ And if we, as the collective body of Christ, with all the Churches of God, are to be a witness to the world, I think we are a strange and stupid witness in too many ways. So we need to change that. And each one of us—beginning with each one individually—we need to change all of those things and be right with God, so that we can be a people that

- God is pleased with;
- that God will bless;
- that God will use;
- that God will resurrect.

So let’s read on: “For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, the mighty and awesome God Who does not respect persons nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger in giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.... [So let’s not think that we’re so mighty and special that God just had to call us! No! He called us personally because He loves us.] ... You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve Him, and you shall hold fast to Him, and swear by His name. He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.... [And they saw all the things that God did for them as they were brought out of the land of Egypt and led through the wilderness; and now here at the end of the 40-years of wandering they’re ready to go into the ‘promised land.’ Now here we are living in the end of the age, and we see all the things that are taking place here. And we are going to see more awesome things of

greater portent, of greater power than they ever saw in all of the things that took place in Egypt. And God has called us to give us the strength so we change and grow and overcome and live through those times.] ...which your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons. And now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude” (vs 17-22)—which is also a prophecy of spiritual Israel.

Now let’s see how we are to do this in the New Testament. Let’s come to Mark, the twelfth chapter. Because the only way that the things of God are going to work is if you truly, truly do this: Mark 12:28 (pg 1,010): “And one of the scribes who had come up *to Him*, after hearing them reasoning together *and* perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, ‘Which is *the* first commandment of all?’ [And the Greek there is ‘protos’—*the most important*. So let’s ask the question for ourselves today: What is the most important commandment of God for us, that we can attain to the fullness of our calling? And the fullness of reward that God will give us? All right, let’s read it]: ...Then Jesus answered him, ‘*The* first of all the commandments *is*, “Hear, O Israel.... [and again, put your name there.] ...Our one God is *the* Lord, *the* Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This *is the* first commandment’” (vs 28-30). That’s the greatest one. And the reason is: is because this comes from inside, motivated from God’s Spirit, that you belong to God wholly, totally, absolutely. And to do what He wants, you are motivated by the love of God from within!

The truth is, no minister can beat you into the Kingdom of Heaven. No minister can secure your salvation—only God can. And God is dealing with us so that we, all together, can grow in grace and knowledge; grow in truth and understanding; so that we can ***be ready*** when the time comes. We can ***be ready*** for whatever comes. We can ***be ready*** so that when the resurrection takes place He can tell us, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You be over five cities. You be over ten cities. You be over two cities.”—whatever the reward is going to be and whatever the job will be. But, it’s all based on love! Now also, this applies with us for the Feast of Tabernacles today; because the way that we make the Feast of Tabernacles the best that it can be is to have this attitude and love toward God. Now why is that so important? *Because then you’re going to love the brethren as Christ has loved us.* And that’s what makes the Feast: ***loving God and loving each other.***

Now Jesus went on to explain a little further, v 31. ““And *the* second *is* like this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.”—that is, for all

people in general. There is another commandment greater than these, which also is love. And we find that in John 13:34—let's turn there. Because here is what we need to be doing.

John 13:34 (pg 1,072): “A **new** commandment I give to you... [special, direct from God in the flesh Himself, Jesus Christ.] ...that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you... [And that's what needs to be in the Church of God. And the ministers and elders are **not** to lord it over the brethren. They are to love them. They are to teach them to love God and love each other.] ...that *is how* you are to love one another. By this... [Not all the strange doctrines. Not all the fighting, arguing and quarreling.] ...**By this** shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another.” That's what it needs to be. To love God and hate your neighbor and hate the brethren, or be hoity-toity toward some, or partial toward some and look down upon others, exalt others, *it doesn't work that way*. You've got to have both together. You have to love God and we have to love the brethren—every one of us. And that's the way that they are going to know that we belong to Christ.

Now let's carry this a little bit further. Let's come over here to 1-Peter, the first chapter. We're going to go through almost the whole chapter of 1-Peter so that

- we know and understand the calling that God has given us,
- what we are to do,
- what Christ has done, what God is doing,
- how we are to live our lives,

and all of these things all come together right here in 1-Peter, the first chapter—so let's turn there, pg. 1,130.

The introduction is very important. And notice; notice how God inspired him to write this; because it is true: When you keep your mind and your eyes and your thoughts and your affections on the things that are above then you're going to understand what God is doing. So he starts out this way: 1-Peter 1:1: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *Who have been chosen* according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father... [This is why we are to love one another; because God has chosen every one.] ...by sanctification through the Spirit... [That's why we are to grow in grace and knowledge. We are made Holy with the Holy Spirit.] ...unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ... [Which was on the ground on earth and in the heaven above, when He ascended to heaven.] ...Grace and peace be multiplied to you” (vs 1-2). Not strife and suspicion; and in some churches: tension and spying and reporting and talking down and attacking the

brethren as if they're the scum of the earth. *No!* “**Grace and peace** be multiplied to you.” That's what we want in the Feast of Tabernacles. And that's what you want in the Feast of Tabernacles. And when you understand it, that's what we are going to bring to the world when we reign under Christ.

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... [That's something, brethren! That's why we are to “**walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love**”—because of this. And He's begotten us! Given us His Spirit! And beyond that even more]: ... Unto an inheritance **incorruptible** and **undefiled** and **unfading**, reserved in heaven for us... [Christ is going to bring it when He returns. And when we're resurrected and meet Christ in the air on the Sea of Glass He's going to give us **all** of these things.] (v 5): ...Who *are* being safeguarded by the power of God through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in the last time” (vs 3-5).

It isn't going to come any sooner than that. Christ is going to return when He returns. No man is going to speed it up. No man is going to slow it down. No man is going to tell God what to do. And no man is going to appoint himself to a office of God, to exalt himself that he's some great ‘mucky-muck’ and everybody needs to bow down to him while he lords it over them. *NO! NO!* Salvation's going to be revealed in the last time. We're safeguarded by the power of God through faith.

“In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials... [That's the nature of what it's going to be in the world. And they're going to increase and be more. And if we are not fortified and strengthened in mind and heart and soul and love and devotion to God, it's going to be difficult to endure some of these things.] ...In order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ... [That's why we're here. So that we can fit in and do all of these things, brethren.] ...Whom, not having seen, you love... [Now, the day's coming when you will see Him. And the day's coming when He will see us as resurrected, glorified, spirit beings.] ...in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory; *And are* receiving the end of your faith—*even the* salvation of your souls...” (vs 6-9).

So this is the whole reason and purpose. The time-scale of God is ticking closer and closer and closer and closer to the end. With that we need to also be drawing closer to God; growing in grace and

knowledge; and all of the things that we need to be doing.

“Concerning which salvation the prophets... [So this really something that I want all of you to grasp: that we can understand the magnitude of what God has called us to, so that we understand why we keep the Sabbath; why we keep the Holy Days; why we keep the Feast; why we are here at the Feast of Tabernacles.] ...Concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired... [they wanted to know] ...Searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow; To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but **to us** they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the gospel to you by *the* Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels desire to look” (vs 10-12). Now that’s pretty special, isn’t it? That’s absolutely something!

- God loves you,
- has called you,
- entrusted you with knowledge—knowledge that even angels desire to look into.

And I imagine that looking at carnal, sinful man that it is a mystery to them—they desire to look into—how God could take us, lead us to repentance, bring us to baptism, give us His Holy Spirit, and begin creating in us His character and the mind of Christ; and preparing us for eternal life. Angels desire to look into it. That’s something!

Verse 13: “For this reason, **be prepared in your minds**, be self-controlled, *and* be fully hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the former lusts, *as you did* in *your* ignorance. But according as He Who has called you *is* holy, you yourselves also **be holy in all your conduct**... [and the way that you be Holy in all your conduct is: *love God, love the brethren, love your neighbor, and even love and understand your enemies*. It doesn’t mean you join them. That doesn’t mean you agree with them. But that means that you know that that enemy today, in the second resurrection will be converted. So we need to understand that. They’re all out there blinded by Satan the devil and they don’t know what’s going on. So we are to be Holy—and here is the reason]: ...For it is written, ‘You be holy because I am holy.’ And if you call upon the Father, Who judges according to each man’s work without respect of persons, pass the time of your *life’s* journey in *the* fear of *God*; Knowing that you were not redeemed

by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from *your* forefathers...” (vs 13-18). Regardless of what the religion of the past has been. The way of God is NOT a religion. And our redemption is not by physical things that we can bring to a temple or lay before an altar or put under an idol. NO!

“But by *the* precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before *the* foundation of *the* world...” (vs 19-20). So brethren, as I’ve mentioned before, the whole plan of God was foreknown before the foundation of the world. **And we are a part of that!** And all that God has called are a part of that! This is why the Feast of Tabernacles becomes such a special time for us; because we’re looking forward to the time when the world is going to be saved, when the world is going to be rescued. And not only that they’re going to be rescued, but WE **will be part of the saving and part of the rescuing and part of the changing and part of the teaching—and part of bringing the world together before God**. And just as you look out and see the evils of the world today, and the evils of the wretched things that are going on—which are going to multiply and get worse. So as you have the grief and sorrow in looking at that, **have the joy and blessing that God has called you to solve it**. But first we have to learn the love of God. We have to know the truth of God. So that’s something!

Now let’s continue on here: “...but was manifested in *these* last times for your sakes; *Even for you* who through Him do believe in God, Who raised Him from *the* dead and gave Him glory, **so that your faith and hope might be in God**. Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto **unfeigned brotherly love**... [loving the brethren as Christ has loved us. That’s how we need to have the Feast of Tabernacles and the attitude that we need in loving God.] ...through *the* Spirit, love one another fervently with a pure heart” (vs 20-22).

Now let’s look at some other Scriptures that go right along with this. Let’s come here to the Gospel of 1-John—just a couple of pages over (pg. 1,136)—and here is what does it. Now we are going to see that the Feast of Tabernacles pictures the ultimate of our salvation beyond the Millennium and the coming of New Jerusalem when we will live with God the Father and Jesus Christ in New Jerusalem. And the way that we are prepared for this is that our relationship with God, called ‘fellowship’ here by the Apostle John, is how then we remain in contact with God, understand His way, understand His truth, grow in grace and knowledge and all of these things combined together. And God inspired him to write this so we would know that **we** are part of something that began before the foundation of the

world.

1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life... [Which ties right back in with John 1:1-3] ...(And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;)... [For what purpose? ***That we can become like Christ!*** Isn't that's something?] ...That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that **you also may have fellowship with us**; for **the fellowship**... [And that's what it is in the Greek] ...—indeed, our fellowship—... [all of us collectively together] ...*is* with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ” (vs 1-3). There it is, right there.

Now, let's come over here to 1-John 2:4: “The one who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him... [Now they may be so thoroughly deceived they don't know they're a liar. But if they're deceived and are lying, they're still lying.] ...On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected...” (vs 4-5). And that's what we want for this Feast of Tabernacles. Let the love of God, the love of brethren, ***grow!*** Let it be perfected. Let it set the tone and the attitude in everything that we do so; so that we can live in peace and harmony together now during this Feast of Tabernacles, because we're going to bring it to the world.

Now let's come over here to 1-John 3—let's see some other things here that are very important for us to realize and understand. 1-John 3:11: “For this is the message that you heard from *the* beginning—that we should love one another...” Now let me just say this: If there is some (how shall we say) hitch in your thinking or attitude toward someone, why don't you pray about it and then get up and go do something about it. And that you make a special effort to show your love to those who really need it, and be concerned for them. We should love one another.

“Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother... [And of course, it says if you have ‘hate in your heart’ that's as good as murder.] ...And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous. My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you... [Now think of this: The world hates us! So why, when we get together, why can't we love each other. That's where it has to be.] (now notice this, this is very important): ...We know that we have passed

from death into life **because we love the brethren**. The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him” (vs 12-15). So he makes it very clear, so that's why we need to understand how important it is to LOVE one another—love the brethren. We're not going to be perfect. Hey, we all have our hang-ups and difficulties. I do, you do. God has called the weak of the world, the low-born, and all of that. But He's called us to change and grow and overcome and be strong in the Lord.

Now let's continue here—v 16: “By this *very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us: and **we ourselves are to lay down our lives for the brethren**... [Now notice our relationship that we are to have with one another]: ...But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?” (vs 16-17). So you do this: ***You make a special effort to find someone who does not have as much as they need to have and you make a special effort to take them out, show them a good time, show them that you love them, treat them to a meal, help them in the things that they need help in, and you will receive a blessing from God beyond that which you could ever expect!*** So make a special effort for that.

Now here's the key, v 18: “My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in truth... [Our actions, based in love and truth, is how we are to conduct our lives. You know the old saying for the hypocrite: *I can't believe you because what you say is not what I see.*] ...And in this *way* we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him, That if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things... [So we can overcome these things with the help of God.] ...[Brethren] Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight... [And how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in peace and in love. So this is what we need to do for this Feast of Tabernacles. And let that be a springboard for our conduct from then on.] ...And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, **and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us**... [‘Love one another as I have loved you.’] ...And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him; and by this we know that He is dwelling in us... [Which has to do with the Feast of Tabernacles. We'll talk a little bit about that later.] ...by the Spirit which He has given to us” (vs 18-

24).

So brethren, welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles 2008, and let's have this be the best Feast ever—and don't worry about the world. **God will take care of it!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 20:6
- 2) Deuteronomy 10:12-22
- 3) Mark 12:28-31
- 4) John 13:34
- 5) 1 Peter 1:1-22
- 6) 1 John 1:1-3
- 7) 1 John 2:4-5
- 8) 1 John 3:11-24

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- John 1:1-3

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