

Feast of Tabernacles—Day 2, 2008

Fred R. Coulter—October 15, 2008

Let's continue where we left off last time in 1-Samuel, the third ^[transcriber's correction] chapter. And what we always need to understand and keep in mind is this—it's the same principle that Peter said: ***Judgment must first begin at the house of God.*** Now that is true whether it was:

- the nation of Israel
- or later when the ten tribes were sent off into captivity
- or whether it was the Jews and Benjaminites and Simeonites and the Levites who were left in Judaea
- or whether it is the Church.

Judgment must begin at the house of God; and the house of God is always judged first.

Now, what we have seen is: is that when there is corruption in the leadership that God has established—in this case with Eli and his two sons—Hophni and Phinehas—and there was not corrective action taken. Now you see the important thing to realize is this: We have choices, everyone of us. Samuel did, Eli did, Hophni and Phinehas did, the people who came there did, all the children of Israel did, just like with the Church all of us have free choice—and free choice is powerful because God will not modify it or take it from us. He has given it to us that we are to exercise it. Now we are to choose.

We are to choose life and blessing—to love God and serve Him; or death and cursing to go our own way. And what we are going to see here in just a minute is something very important that we need to understand, which also adds to the corruption of the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas—which is this: ***No man is going to impose his way upon God or the people and get away with it.*** Now, you think about that in everything that there is.

- And this is especially true when people are being led by the leaders that God has established.
- This is especially true with the ministry today, which is the stewardship to serve God's people.
- This is also absolutely true in each one of our individual lives, because as we have seen, the government of God today within the Church starts with each one of us, because God has called us.
- Everything else after that is a form or degree of stewardship.

Now let's look here, let's come to 1-Samuel, the fourth chapter, and let's see something very instructive and corrective—because God will let you do your way and seemingly enforce your will upon Him, or add your way to His instructions. And He'll let you get away with it for a while. He'll give you a space of repentance. And if the space of repentance doesn't work, then you've got enough rope to hang yourself. Now let's see that in operation, 1-Samuel, the fourth chapter. And this is important for us to understand because when we attain to the first resurrection and are in the Kingdom of God, and we are going to be ruling and reigning with Christ—in whatever capacity it may be—those people are still going to have free choice, but they are going to be given a different nature to begin with—more like the nature Adam and Eve had before they sinned. Not quite like that, but more like that. Less like the great hostility that we have today. We'll see that a little later. But what we need to do is look at this: ***Every form of human government will fail!*** Whether it is the judgeship; whether it is the kingship; whether it is by tribal council; whether it by, in today's world in America, whether it's the federal government, the state government or the local government or the smallest level of governing. It will all fail because of the evil of human nature. And it's especially evident here with what happened.

1-Samuel 4:1: “And the word of Samuel was *revealed* to all Israel. And Israel went out against the Philistines to battle and pitched beside Ebenezer. And the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in order... [that is in 'battle order'] ...against Israel. And when the battle commenced Israel was beaten before the Philistines. And they killed about four thousand men of the army in the field. And when the people had come to the camp, the elders of Israel said... [Now, here's the council gone wrong.] ...‘Why has the LORD beaten us today before the Philistines?’...” (vs 1-3). And they came up with the wrong answer. Let's read what the answer is. God expected something ***before*** they did this action, because this action constitutes additional sin because they didn't repent and return to God so that God would fight this battle for them. They went out to do their own will. They came back and asked the elders, ‘Why did this happen?’

“...‘Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh to us...’” (v 3). ***Yes! Let's bring God on our side.*** Well, the truth is, if you're not on God's side He's not coming on your side, on your terms though you invoke Him; though you

bring the Ark of the Covenant. And we're going to see what a grievous sin this was, how presumptuous this was. Because remember, in the book of the law that Moses gave to Israel, what did God tell them? *'You don't go to war unless I tell you!'* And God didn't tell them to go to war. They didn't come and consult God. They didn't come and say, 'Oh God, we know that the Philistines are here because of our sins, and we repent to You. We put away our idols. We put away our false gods. We will keep the Sabbath and stop keeping the days of Baal and Astorah, which are all the religious days of the world today—there are various kinds, they all come from Baal and Astorah. No, they didn't. They said:

"... 'Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh to us so that when it comes among us **it** may save us out of the hand of our enemies.' ... [The Ark of itself cannot save. God can! But not the Ark.] ... And the people sent to Shiloh in order to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts from there, *the ark* which dwells *between* the cherubs. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And it came to pass when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into *the* camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again" (vs 3-5). And just like what happened on God Bless America when at 9/11—'Oh, God has to be with us. God bless America, God bless America.' Here comes the Ark! Hooray! God is with us. NO! He's not with you just because the Ark is there, nor is He with any of us in our circumstances—even if we ask Him to be with us in our circumstances—if our hearts are not right with Him. Perfect example.

"And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, 'What is the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?' And they saw that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, 'God has come into the camp.' And they said, 'Woe to us, for there has not been a thing like this before! Woe to us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These *are* the gods that struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong and fight like men, O, Philistines..." (vs 6-9). If they really believed that, they would have turned and gone back home. And if it was a war that God said He would fight, then they could just send a few thousand troops and lick up the rest of them. But not so.

See, when people get comfortable in their sins and accept them and live with them, and do not draw close to God, do not remain in an attitude of repentance, are not willing to keep the commandments of God, but when there's trouble come and say, 'God, be on our side.' And then go

off in your own self-willed way and do what you desire. That won't happen either. Now remember the instance when they were ready to go into the land that we find that in Num. 14 and also a rehearsing of it by Moses in Deut. 1—God said, "Go up!" *Oh no, we won't go up.* "Go up! All right, you won't go up, you're going to have 40 years wandering in the wilderness"—judgment already given. And they said, *we'll go up, we'll go up.* Moses said, "Don't go up." *We'll go up!* He said, "God isn't with you." *We'll go up.* So they went up and what happened? They got slammed to ground, beaten back and kicked back **because they were going against the will of God** presumptuously, using the name of God saying this is a battle of God—which is taking God's name in vain because He was not with them.

So we have exactly the same case here. So the Philistines said: "... 'Be strong and fight like men, O, Philistines so that you may not be servants to the Hebrews *as* they have been to you. **Be men and fight!**' And the Philistines fought, and Israel was beaten, and each one of them fled into his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for there fell thirty thousand footmen of Israel.... [Now what happened? Let's understand something important here. Here is a very important part of understanding the nature of God: **When you rely on yourself and you're claiming you're relying on God it will not work!** So the unthinkable happened. The Philistines, those hateful, evil people... It would be like today: If the Jews had the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem and the Palestinians got it. Can you imagine the uproar that there would be from the Jews?

Let's put it in context—v 11: "**And the ark of God was taken....** [Because the Ark of God, though it's where God was to put His presence, God will remove His presence when the people do not worship and honor Him. When the people refuse to keep His commandments and His days. Now you can just stop and think: Do we live in a lukewarm society today? *Yes!* And I think we better all consider ourselves Laodiceans and repent! And I think the best we can do is be repenting Laodiceans. And stop taking our own devices and claiming God is doing this. Now how many times must God fight against His people because of such stupidity—just like here? Today, this is equivalent of everything in Pasadena being taken over by the enemy.

Let's go on: "...And Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were slain.... [Now remember the prophecy was that Eli, Hophni and Phinehas would die on the same day. We'll see that happen.] ...And a man of Benjamin ran out of the army. And he came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and with dirt upon his head. And he came in, and behold, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching,

for his heart trembled for the ark of God... [Why? *He knew the prophecy against him! He knew what his sons were doing and didn't change!* No wonder he was trembling.] ...And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, 'What is the noise of this tumult?' And the man hurried in and told Eli. And Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see. And the man said to Eli, 'I am he who came out of the army, and I fled today from the battle.' And he said, 'How did the matter go, my son?' And the messenger answered and said, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also there has been a great slaughter among the people. And also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.'.... [Horror of horrors! The most unspeakable thing!] ...And it came to pass when he spoke of the ark of God, Eli fell backward off the seat by the side of the gate. And his neck broke, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years" (vs 11-18).

What an ignominious end! So that's something! You know what happened when the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant. God is not going to let the Philistines off the hook either. So they brought it and they put it in the house of Dagon. Now, they were all struck with hemorrhoids and later with mice. And when you get hemorrhoids, that ain't very pleasant. And these were little, itty-bitty hemorrhoids, that a little Preparation-H might be of some assistance to you. And besides, there was no Walgreen or Rite-Aide on the corner. So they were stricken. They put it in the house of Dagon. You know what happened. Dagon fell on his face before the Ark and broke off his arms and his hands, and finally, when the plague of mice came the five princes of the Philistines got together and they said, 'What are we going to do?' They asked the priest, 'What are we going to do?' And the priest of Dagon couldn't continue to have Dagon falling down and breaking. After all, what kind of god is this that it falls over and breaks in pieces? So what happened? They said, 'Look, give an offering—of hemorrhoids and mice—and put the Ark of the Covenant on a cart and have it sent off in the direction toward Israel. If it goes over toward Israel, then we're done, the plague is over.' So that's what he did.

Now, when it got there, let's pick it up here in 1-Samuel 6:17: "And these *are* the golden hemorrhoids which the Philistines returned *for* a guilt offering to the LORD: for Ashdod, one; for Gaza... [sound a little familiar] ...one; for Askelon one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one. And the golden mice were *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines for the five lords, of fortified cities and of country villages, even to the great meadow on

which they set down the ark of the LORD to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. And He struck the men of Beth Shemesh **because they had looked into the ark of the LORD**. He even struck seventy among the people, *including* fifty chief men. And the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter" (vs 17-19).

The point is: The carnal mind never gets the point! ***God means what He says, and says what He means.***

- And you better honor God!
- And you better fear God!
- And you better keep His commandments!

Because if you don't there's going to be trouble. And if you start messing directly with Him—because they should have known better to call the Levites. They should have all stood back and said—because these were the 'chief men,' right? Fifty of them. They should have said, 'Hey, we know that only the Levites can touch that.' Put a ring of men around it; don't let anyone get into it and send off for Samuel and the Levites and let them bring it. No, they didn't do it.

Verse 21: "And they sent messengers to the people of Kirjath Jearim, saying, 'The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD. Come down *and* bring it up to yourselves.'" So Kirjath Jearim was one of the Levite cities, so they finally did it after everything was slaughtered, and it was there for a good long time.

Now notice, let's come here to 1-Samuel 7:3 and let's see what Samuel told the people: "And Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel saying, 'If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts to the LORD, and serve Him only, that He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.'.... [After all of that, they did.] ... And the children of Israel put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. And Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you to the LORD'" (vs 3-5). So they gathered, he prayed for them, and God intervened and the Philistines were beaten back.

Everything's calmed down again. Now what happens? *People get complacent*. You also have another problem, too. Though Samuel was a very righteous man, his sons ended up being much like Hophni and Phinehas. Isn't that something? So let's come to 1-Samuel, the eighth chapter, and let's see something here that also is important. Just because Samuel was a righteous man did not guarantee that his sons would be righteous men. After all that they saw and all that they heard and all that they grew up with, you would think that they would be willing to

follow their father. But no, human choice is involved. And they chose to go their own way.

Let's pick it up here, 1-Samuel 8:1: "And it came to pass when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel. And the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second was Abiah, judges in Beersheba. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted judgment.... [That's exactly what we see happening today in all of our courts.] ...And all the elders of Israel gathered themselves and came to Samuel to Ramah" (vs 1-4). Now, didn't fifty of the elders give wrong advice? *Yes!* So here come another group of elders—how many years later we're not told—and they came to Samuel and they're going to set the record straight.

[So they] "...came to Samuel to Ramah. And *they* said to him, 'Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.' [They were tired of it. God is tired of the ups and downs and ups and downs of these carnal-minded people of the children of Israel. That's why you know they were never granted salvation.] (They said): ...[give] us a king to judge us...But the thing was evil in the eyes of Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, 'Hearken to the voice of the people...' (vs 4-7).

So there are times when God will listen to you and give you what you desire—but that may not necessarily be what is right. It may be an improvement over the evil that you see, but to make a decision that is not necessarily right, though it is an improvement over the evil, is not necessarily the right decision. And that's a problem that people have today. And that manifests itself this way: People try, through elections, to overcome the results of spiritual problems by political means. And you can't overcome spiritual problems by political means; because you're off-track from God. Now, you may retain some values that God says that you need to have, but that's nothing to brag about. Look at all of the things that they reject. Don't look at the few things they accept.

So this really upset Samuel—v 7: "...prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, 'Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.'" [Goes clear back to the Garden of Eden where we started. They didn't want to dwell with God. Then God let them come to the east entrance of the Garden of Eden so they could still have contact with Him, offer offerings there, receive instructions from God. No, they didn't want to do that. What

happened? Well, you look at the Flood. The whole world corrupted God's way. Every way when God was dwelling in the Garden of Eden. So we have a repeat of this over and over and over again.

So God says, 'All right, let's give them a king.' He told them what kind of king they would have. That they would have to take another tithe and give to him, which ended up being much more than a tithe later on, as we will see. And he would confiscate or draft men for his army, women for his housemaids, and they would be under the authority of the king. So sometimes God will give you what you want, because you're also going to learn a lesson: That ***having a king instead of a judge does not solve the spiritual problems.*** It's still a matter of obedience to God that is important.

Now, with all of this I want you to begin to understand WHY the Kingdom of God is going to be brought, by Christ, to this earth—and imposed upon the earth. Because the last great king they're going to have is the Beast and his partner, the False Prophet. And it is going to end up being the most destructive thing that men have ever done. So God is going to impose His government; but He is preparing His people now so that they will be faithful, they will be true, they will serve, they will do as God says, because everything that we do is based upon the love God with all our heart and mind and soul and being. And God has converted us and changed us and made us spirit beings so we can reign on earth! So God is going to change the circumstances.

Well, what happened? *They selected Saul to be the first king.* And he was tall, and he was handsome, and boy, everyone was excited about this and he turned out to be what he turned out. And then here comes the dedication that Samuel did for the installation of Saul as king and then the covenant that God made with the children of Israel, beginning with the kingship of Saul.

Now let's come to 1 Samuel 10:24 (pg 389). After they insisted that they wanted to have a king and refused to obey God in following the system of the judges, then God let them have the king. And God told them if they would obey, He would still be with them even though they had selected a king: "And Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people?' And all the people shouted, and said, 'Long live the king!' Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom... [how it would be] ...and wrote *it* in a book and laid it up before the LORD.... [Because the Ark had not yet been brought back to the

tabernacle.] ...And Samuel sent all the people away, each to his house” (vs 24-25), etc.

Now then, we know what happened with Saul. Saul rebelled against God, lost the kingdom, God raised up David—a man after His own heart—who was a shepherd boy, by the way. And David served God with all of his heart and he was sitting one day—now let’s come to 2-Samuel, the seventh chapter (pg 419). Now here we have another phase where then the priesthood part is going to transits from a tabernacle to a temple. You see, men always like to have a plan to present to God that they ask God’s blessing on. And sometimes God will bless it, but the inherent problems are always there just like it was when they first selected the king. And of all the kings, there was not one—NOT ONE—even David, who was totally faithful and righteous through his whole lifetime. And none of the kings of the ten tribes of Israel were faithful whatsoever.

But let’s see where then David wanted to do something for God. He wanted to build a temple. Let’s read it here, 2-Samuel 7:1: “And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house, and when the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies, The king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains.’... [Because he had the Ark brought up to Jerusalem and he put it in a special tent within his house. And David had special direct access to God coming before the tent where the Ark was; and he had Asaph and the Levities and priests to minister there, so David was not a priest. He didn’t do any of the attending to the rituals or the sacrifices or the incense offerings or anything like that. And also, all the Psalms that David wrote, he gave to Asaph—and Asaph was the one who took them and cataloged them. You can read of that in the commentary of *How God Preserved the Old Testament*.

So Nathan comes to David and David says, “...‘the ark of God dwells within curtains.’ Then Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you.’... [This is before his sin with Bathsheba] ...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? 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.... [And there are great lessons to be learned from a tent or tabernacle. And that is: that’s *temporary*. And the ultimate solution is not complete until Rev. 21 & 22 with New Jerusalem. So nevertheless, because his heart was right, God said He’d let him do it.] ...For I have not dwelt in a

house since the day that I brought up the children out of Egypt until this day, but have walked in a tent, and in a tabernacle. In all *places* in which I have walked with all the children of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the tribes of Israel, *those* whom I commanded to feed My people Israel, saying, “Why do you not build Me a house of cedars?”” (vs 2–7).

“Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘I took you from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be prince over My people, over Israel. 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. Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel... [Which is a prophecy of the ten tribes later being moved into the area of northwestern Europe and the British Isles and America.] ...and will plant them 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.... [That was if they did not sin.] ...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.... [And that is a dynasty which continues right on down to Jesus Christ.] ...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 8–13). Quite a promise.

So then David’s response was, “Oh Lord, who am I and my house that You should do this for me.” And he had a right and good response. Well, when it came time—let’s short-circuit all of this—when it came time to build the temple in the last days of David, in preparation for it, God gave David all the plans for the temple to give to Solomon.

Now, let’s read some of these things because it becomes very important. Let’s come to 1-Chronicles 28. David gathered everything together. He organized the whole thing. He organized the kingdom, he organized the army, he organized the priesthood. God gave him the plans directly, and he drew them out so that he could give these to Solomon. He also stored up iron and brass and copper and gold and silver and linen and purple and all the things necessary to build the temple.

1 Chronicles 28:1—so just before he died he had a great ceremony transferring the kingdom to Solomon. “And David gathered to Jerusalem all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that ministered to the

king by division, and the commanders over the thousands, and commanders over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the property and livestock of the king, and of his sons, with the officers and the mighty ones, with all the valiant men.” It’s like having all the big ones in Washington DC gathered together. Kind of like the President’s *State of the Union* speech gathering.

“And David the king stood up on his feet and said, ‘Hear me, my brethren and my people. I had in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations for the building. But God said to me, “You shall not build a house for My name, because you *have been* a man of war and have shed blood.” However, the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be the ruler, and of the house of Judah the house of my father. And among the sons of my father’s house He was pleased to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel” (vs 2-5).

Now, he gives a special message to Solomon, and this becomes a very important thing for us to realize—because we’re going to see that Adam and Eve didn’t want to dwell with God; the children of Israel didn’t want to dwell with God—though He wanted to dwell with them—and now the solution is a temple. Let’s make a permanent place; and *we will see that didn’t solve the problem*, because the problem is *human nature*; and the problem is sin and *rebellion* and *wrong choices*. Now, Solomon could have done a whole lot better than he did. And here is a perfect example of someone who started out really well, every good and perfect thing physically he needed; every blessing from God that he needed. And God appeared to him twice. But notice the injunction that David gave to Solomon.

“And He said to me, ‘Solomon your son shall build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father. And I will establish his kingdom forever **if** he continues resolute in keeping My commandments and My judgments, as he is today.’ And now in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God... [Now this is David talking to Solomon] ...keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess this good land and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you forever. And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a

willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.... [Now these are really some instructive words, aren’t they?] ...Take heed now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do *it*” (vs 6-10).

Now we’re going to see, let’s just project ahead a little bit further. *The One Who is building the spiritual house today is Jesus Christ, the King and the Priest*. So let’s continue on here.

Verse 11: “And David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch, and of its houses, and of its treasuries, and of its upper rooms, and of its innermost rooms, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the plans of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the rooms all around the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the holy things; And for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD; Even gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all instruments of every kind of service; silver for all the vessels of silver by weight...” (vs 11-15). And it goes on for all the things, all the plans were drawn and ready to go and Solomon was then made king. Later David died. He was buried. God appeared to him and Solomon started building the temple.

Now let’s see: Does a temple, a physical thing, solve the problem of sin and wrong choices?

(go to the next track)

Let’s continue on with the episode of Solomon. And you know, he started out well; he had every blessing; everything was given to him; he built the temple; he completed it; God appeared to him two times; He was pleased with what Solomon did and what he prayed. And, as you find the prayer recorded there in the book of 2-Chron. and also the book of 1-Kings.

- But, did that solve the problems?
- Did that change the people?
- Did that change human nature? *No!*

And as a matter of fact, Solomon became the greatest Laodiceans in the history of the world. After all the blessings: God made him the wisest, the richest, the best, the most of everything. But what did he do? *He got corrupt*. He had 300 wives, 700 concubines. Now, you imagine a household like that? He built incense altars for all the wives and temples to the pagan gods and built what was later called ‘The Hill of Abominations’—where all those incense altars and temples were built. After all, since

Solomon built the temple of God, boy, don't you think he could make a nice temple for this little pagan god over here? And make it really good! And if it were made really, really good by the one who built the real temple of God, well then that surely would be acceptable.

Well, let's learn the lesson of the whole thing. Let's understand what all of this really means because now we need to get to the heart of the problem.

- It's not necessarily government.
- It's not necessarily religion.
- It is not buildings.
- It is not land.
- It is not where you are.
- It is not who you are.
- It's really: ***What is the right contact with God.***

Since none of those things really worked, and none of those things really change the nature of the people, what is the solution? Let's come to Isaiah 66, and let's see what God Himself says. And here we will see the solution and the reason for the New Covenant. And the reason why, in the New Covenant, a temple is not necessary, a building is not necessarily in the physical realm. God has something else and greater in mind.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?... [Now you may be well intentioned, you may be very sincere, you may have a great desire to do so, but God says if you do it...] ...For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD...." (vs 1-2). He made them. He created them. So how are you going to build a house for God out of something He has created that has no life, that has no soul, that has no thought—it's just a building. And what is a building used for? Well, it's used for people. And the answer is: ***the problem is with the people, with the leaders, with the judges, with the kings***—because of human nature. And there has to be a solution for human nature before any of those other things will work.

Now let's see what God says, continuing here: "...**'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'**" (v 2). So it starts with the individual. And it starts with our minds and attitudes toward God. This is why the solution then, in the next part of God's way of doing things, is the New Covenant. Where they will fear God, be of 'poor and contrite spirit and tremble at My Word.' Now it doesn't matter how great the altar is; how great the temple

is; how great the priesthood is; how wonderful their dress is; how absolutely exquisite and perfect everything is in the flesh. If the heart and mind is not right, if there's not repentance and if there is not yieldedness to God of what worth and value is it? Well, let's see what God says.

Verse 3—if you don't do those things He said—"He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man... [Yet, God commanded to sacrifice oxen, didn't He?] ...he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine's blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, **they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.**" So there has to be a change. Now, with the temple it got so bad that God had to send Jeremiah. And you read the book of Jeremiah, what Jeremiah had to tell the children of Judah what they needed to do to repent and change and quit taking the name of God in vain and standing in the temple and say, 'Oh, we're wonderful people, we're delivered to do all of these things.'

Since we're right here in Isaiah, just come a few pages over to Jeremiah 7—and here explains the whole problem very clearly, and why we need the New Testament and the New Covenant to correct the problem.

Jeremiah 7:1: "The Word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 'Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house... [Now remember, he was a priest, son of a priest, he could do that.] ...and proclaim there this Word, and say, "Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD." Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.... [See, the problem is the heart, not the building.] ...Do not trust in lying words... [You come and force God to accept your will!... [Now, all of those who have a strict hierarchical government in their churches, you better sit up and pay attention. You're forcing upon God your will that God detests! And you're ruining and destroying the brethren of God by making them obedient to you, a sinful man, instead of God!] ...trust in lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these.'"" (vs 1-4). Solomon built it. It's wonderful! It's great! It's perfect! And even the disciples during Jesus' day said, 'Lord, look at these buildings, how beautiful they are.' What did He say? *I tell you there's not going to be one stone left upon and another!*' Because unless the heart is right all the buildings are worthless. In fact, they are handicaps. That's why God has to take them away. They keep people from

God when they look to those things as signs that God is with them because this is God's house.

Verse 5: “For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; *If* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your hurt; Then... [there's always the *if* and the *then*.] ...I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever” (vs 5-7).

Now here's the truth as to why a temple or a building or a structure, or a council, or a hierarchy will never work—*because only God can change the heart*. That's why! And that's the business we will be in serving under Christ in the Kingdom of God—*to help change the heart!*

Verse 8: “Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know; And then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’?... [Then He said, ‘I want you to learn a lesson.’] ...Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it,’ says the LORD. ‘But now go to My place which *was* in Shiloh... [And we talked about that earlier, right? *Yes!*] ...where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel” (vs 8-12). He says *I've spoken to you! I've warned you*. They wouldn't listen. So what happened? *They went into captivity, into Babylon*. They came back. They improved for a little while. But, by the time of the end of the apostolic era in 70 AD—not quite ended then—God had to destroy it again because they wouldn't listen.

What did God do? Let's come here to John, the first chapter. What is it that God did? God said, “All right!”—and He planned this from the beginning, too—“let's see if they will obey My Son. Let's see if one of Us”—one of Elohim (one became the Father, one became the Son)—let's see if they will listen to God speaking to them as God manifested in the flesh; rather than from Mt. Sinai with all the thunder and lightning and trumpets and the thick clouds and all of that; rather than through the prophets; rather than through some other man. ***God became a man and He spoke to us***. Now let's see how God's solution begins with that. But let's again see how the people received Him.

John 1:1—let's read here; very instructive for us; very foundational and, as strange as it may seem, there are some people who have been in the

“Church” for decades and decades and decades and yet they cannot believe that Jesus was God before He became human. And they have to have this “one God” theory, which the Bible does not teach, and the New Testament does not teach, and they cannot believe the simple words that are here in the first few verses of the Gospel of John—and all the way through the rest of it, Jesus said, ‘I came from heaven. I'm going back to where I was before. Father, give Me the glory that I had with You before the world existed.’ Now, what does that tell you?

So you see, that is a manifest example of the problem is with the heart and the stubbornness of human nature and of the choices that we make. Now that's where it all lies. That is the problem that needs to be solved. And it's one of those problems that has to be solved continuously on a continuous basis.

Let's begin here, Gospel of John 1:1 (pg. 1,054): “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... [Can that be any more simple and plain? It means it in the English, and it means it in the Greek absolutely literally with this. So that says there are *two Gods*—one became the Father, one became the Son.] ... All things came into being through Him... [So he had to be there to do it. And some minister, in his vain imagination, got up and said, ‘Well, Jesus was the ‘thought’ of God, so He existed then.’ The *thinker* was the Father, the *thought* was Jesus. Well, that's so much balderdash and intellectual stupidity that it's incredible!] ...All things came into being through Him... [Now, what are ‘all things’? That's the whole universe, everything there is. Everything we can see, everything that is manifest to us, everything we can't see. Jesus made it.] ...and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not comprehend it” (vs 1, 3-5).

Because people don't want to be bothered with God, because they have more important things to do—failing to realize God created the heavens and the earth; everything on the earth to accommodate human life. They eat, they breathe, they think, all this sort of thing. Then they think and reject God, and wonder why things don't go the way that they should. Well, they won't! Don't expect them to!

Now, let's come down here to v 9: “The true Light was that which enlightens everyone who comes into the world.... [That means the very spirit of man that is in each one of us comes from God to make you and me and every other human being that has ever been a special and individual creation of God—different and separate from any other human being. And yet, they reject that.] ...He was in the

world, and the world came into being through Him, but the world did not know Him” (vs 9-10). Isn’t that an amazing thing when you stop and think of it?

Now, some man may design some great thing—you never hear the end of what a great thing that this man did. Who was the one who invented the light bulb? Everybody knows: *Thomas A. Edison*. Who created the world? *Well, we don’t know*. It just evolved! And the silliness of men to think that they can create life in a laboratory. Let them try, but I agree with God: ***Get your own dirt! Don’t use Mine.*** And they’re trying to replicate what is called ‘fusion.’ And plasma fusion which is what the sun is. And you look out in the universe and there are billions of stars of greater magnitude than our sun. And they say if can just understand the secrets of how the sun perpetuates itself then we will have never-ending power. All right, so what do they do? Don’t believe in God, believe in evolution—these things just happened. It just came into being. BANG! There was big bang in the universe one day and there it all was. Didn’t tell you where the bang was. So now what do they do on this project? They have a project now that part of it’s going to be done in 2013, and part of it’s going to be done in 2018. And they are trying to be able to sustain fusion—the same kind of power that the sun is composed of, which goes every day without fail. Has for years and will continue to do so.

So here they get all of the best brains, all of the best scientists, all the best technology, all of the most complicated instruments and metals and electronics and magnets and all of these things, and they are building a machine that is like a great cyclotron where they are going to spin the elements, let them collide and see if they can make them into a fusion pattern that they will be able to hold. And they’re all excited about this. The best brains; the ones who are the brightest; the ones who know; the scientists; the physicists; and electricians and building all of these things. And they think that they are great and marvelous.

God did it by command! In the person of Jesus Christ! Yet, they won’t believe in Him. “...the world did not know Him. He came to His own... [Because he came through the physical lineage of David through the son of David, Nathan, not Solomon.] ...and His own did not receive Him... [You would think that if you say, ‘We have the true God. We know what the true worship is.’ And He comes on the scene and shows up, you would embrace Him—right? *No!* Because human nature wants God to join with it, rather than repent and let God draw him to Him. They didn’t receive Him.] ...But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become *the* children of God, *even* to

those who believe in His name... [So that’s why what God is doing on this earth is a mystery. A lot of substitutes out there. A lot of counterfeits out there. But they’re not of God. That’s the first thing Jesus warned about.] ...Who were not begotten by bloodlines, nor by *the* will of *the* flesh, nor by *the* will of man, but *by the will* of God” (vs 10-13) He has selected and called and chosen us to be the solution.

But first the solution must begin within us: In our minds and in our hearts and in our attitudes in our lives. Now to make this an important thing so people would understand, the Word Who was God became flesh. And as Paul wrote: ‘God manifested in the flesh and tabernacled among us.’ So here’s a meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. Perhaps one of the greatest of all: ***that God dwelt among men!*** Tabernacled. He was here for a while.

- How did Jesus live?
- Did He live in a big mansion?
- Did He live in a castle?
- Did He dwell in a temple?

No, none of those accepted Him—they all rejected Him. So He came to do a work and to call twelve apostles, and to have recorded for us all of His words so that we will know this part of the plan of God and what He is doing and who He is, and where we are going, and what everything is all about.

- Why are we here?
- Why are we born?
- What are we going to do?
- What is God doing?
- Who is God?

Answering all of these perplexing questions—because He gives us the answers in His Word. So that’s quite a marvelous thing! They didn’t receive Him. That’s something!

“...the Word became flesh...” (v 14) and so forth. Now, we come down here to v 17: “For the law was given through Moses, ***but the grace and the truth*** came through Jesus Christ.”

Now, let’s look at the rest of solution in the New Testament. And let’s begin by come here to John 15. And God is doing an unseen thing as far as this world is concerned. Now there will be manifestations of it in our behavior, in our attitude, that the world will see is different than theirs. But they still won’t understand it because it is spiritual. It is done by the Spirit of God—and that’s where God is dwelling today on the earth: ***spiritually in all of those who have the Spirit of God.*** God literally is dwelling in heaven—the third heaven where the throne of God is, with Jesus Christ at the right hand.

But He is working out His solution here on earth, through the power of the Holy Spirit through those that He calls and converts and chooses.

Now let's see this operation. We've covered this in *What is the Authority in the Church of God #2*. But let's cover this again because this tells us the inner workings of what God does when we receive the Holy Spirit and what that puts us into the relationship with God that He described there in Isaiah 66: "To this one will I look: to the one who is a broken spirit, a contrite heart and trembles at My word"—and loving God with all your heart and mind and soul and being. Yielding to God in everything that you do. Now this is what God is doing now so that He can save the entire world. But God is not going to save the entire world without saving us first.

John 15:1—here's what we need to always, always remember: Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.... ['husbandman' means *He takes care of us*.] ...He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [That explains what happened in the Church. Don't you think with a carnal church, not following God, that there were a lot of carnal people coming who were never converted, that had to be shaken out? Don't you think there were also carnal, unconverted ministers that had to be shaken out? *Of course!* So God took care of it. Explains it right here.] ...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit" (vs 1-2).

So God wants us to grow and keep on growing and never be satisfied with what we have done, though what we have done may be all perfectly in accord with the will of God—because there's more to do beyond. It's just like the Word of God. Here it is. We've had it. We've studied it for how long? How many decades have we known the Word of God? Is there more for us to learn here? *Absolutely! Constantly!* I learn every day. And also, I remember a man said—he asked me a question: 'Well, what do you do when you read through the Bible and after about five years you know everything.' I said that's not the way it works! I said, 'This is inspired by God Himself, Who is eternal, and these words are spiritual; and these words are eternal; and these teach us the way of life coupled with the Holy Spirit within us.' That's why everything begins with repentance and baptism and entering into that covenant with God the Father and Jesus Christ, so that He can work His will in our lives as we choose to yield ourselves to God and always love and serve and obey Him, and submit to Him.

That's how our lives have to be. Because in effect, as we're going to see, we are as temporary as

any tabernacle or anything in the world can be. ***But the eternal purpose that God is working out in us is going to be the solution for the salvation of the world.***

- That's why God loves you.
- That's why God has called you.
- That's why you are here.
- That's why we are keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and loving each other and loving God and doing the things that are pleasing in His sight.

So let God have His perfect work in you. He is cleansing you. And as it is there in Ephesians, the fifth chapter, "...with the washing of the water of the Word" every day, every day, every night—building the Godly character in your heart, in your mind. Writing in your heart and mind His laws, inscribing into your heart His love.

"You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. ***Dwell in Me***... [and that means *live in Christ; live for Christ*. And your relationship with God and Jesus Christ is the most important thing, because that goes directly to the Father Who Himself personally loves you.] ...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" (vs 3-4). So it's a constant thing that we do. A constant thing that we are growing in, dwelling in, bearing fruit, producing the character of God, letting the Holy Spirit of God lead us, letting the Holy Spirit of God guide us, let Christ dwell in us! ***We then***, as we will see in a few minutes, ***become the true temple of God***. Now, think on that.

The solution to the problem of a temple and a tabernacle is a ***true temple***. Right? *Yes, indeed!* Now, let's continue here: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him..." (v 5) by the power of the Spirit of God. And we have the two parts of the Spirit of God:

1. the mind of Christ;
2. the begetting of God the Father.

And as Jesus said, 'The one who loves Me and keeps My commandments WE will make Our abode or dwelling place with him.' Because that's what God delights in. And it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that He does this. Now, that's exciting. That is a tremendous solution. And the world doesn't know what's going on, because it's being done secretly, inwardly.

"I am the vine, *and you are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing.... [Now let's amplify that just a little bit. If

you try to do things with human will, then you're not doing it God's way, and you're not dwelling in Him.] (v 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. If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (vs 5-7).

All right, let's come to 1-Corinthians 3—now this becomes important for us to understand and realize what we are to do, what Christ is doing, and how important we are to Christ. 1-Corinthians 3:11 (pg. 1,162): "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ." We are on the foundation of Christ.

- Has to be the true Christ
- with the right way,
- with the right things,
- with the right understanding,
- with the right message,
- with the Spirit of God.

"Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble... [So this shows there are choices involved. Gold represents the finest kind of righteousness that can be in relationship with God. Silver is next. Precious stone is made beautiful by the fire—just like gold and silver is. So that's why we have trials and difficulties that come. Then the ones that do not have the works, but rather have 'wood, hay and stubble,' notice what happens to them]: ...The work of each one shall be manifested... [or tried, or the trial will manifest the works] ...for the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire" (vs 12–15).

So there are going to be different levels of rewards. Now notice v 16—why this is all important, Paul writes this: "**Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?**" See, *that's the solution!* The building is not the solution. The conversion of men and women who truly love God is the solution. We, collectively, represent the true temple of God, because that's where God is dwelling! Not dwelling in any building. That's why it's important that we have the right understanding.

- That we love God.
- That we serve God.
- That we pray.
- That we study.
- That we have our lives completely

dedicated to doing the will of God the way that God wants it done.

Now, let's continue on here, v 17: "If anyone defiles the temple of God... [Now every minister and elder better also heed, too, because you can defile it by wrong teachings, bringing in your own ways and methods instead of doing the things the way that God wants.] ...God shall destroy him because the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God's sight*" (vs 17-18). That is to totally yield yourself to God.

Now, let's come to Ephesians, the second chapter, and let's see how Paul expresses this, because this is not a building built of stone. This is a living temple that Christ is producing and creating, which then is His priesthood and His kingship that's going to be under Him. So this is tremendous, brethren.

Let's pick it up here in Ephesians 2:10 (pg. 1,190). The truth is, God is constantly creating. Creating in the world. Everything that comes into being, God made it, so He's created it. It's not that He created it at that instant. It is that He put in motion the process so it would reproduce and do the creating. But nevertheless, it comes from God. And what God is doing in us is a creation to mold us, to make us after His image.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them. Therefore, remember that you were once Gentiles in *the* flesh, who are called circumcision by those who are called circumcision in *the* flesh made by hands... [And he says now...] ...*And* that you were without Christ at that time, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world... [That defines everybody, doesn't it? *Yes.*] ...But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace... [It's through His blood and the covenant that we have with that; and the receiving of the Holy Spirit]Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition... [Now, I want you to understand why bringing in and forcing men's way to try and accomplish a spiritual thing of God is contrary to the Word of God because that's what the Jews did with their commandments—and he speaks of it right here.] ...Having annulled in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in *the* decrees of men... [code of Jewish law and the pagan religious laws] ...so that in

Himself He might create... [see, He's creating] ...both into one new man, making peace; And *that* He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, having slain the enmity by it. Now when He came, He preached the gospel—peace to you who *were* far off and to those who *were* near. For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father” (vs 10-18).

That is a marvelous thing! The greatest thing you can have is your relationship with God

- through prayer,
- through study
- through living
- through understanding
- through letting all of these circumstances that God will mold you and create in you and build in you the things that He wants, that will last forever and ever throughout all eternity.

That's why we are a temporary tabernacle now. *Yes!* Let's read on: “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... [That's New Testament prophets, inspired preaching] ...Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone In Whom **all the building**, being conjointly fitted together... [As God is working it out] ...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 19-21).

And so the true tabernacle is every converted Christian. And the true temple is all of us as God looks down and sees us, that's He's building us into a spiritual temple, a spiritual work to serve under Jesus Christ and God the Father, and to reign with Him a thousand years, as the Feast of Tabernacles pictures.

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Samuel 4:1-18
- 2) 1 Samuel 6:17-19, 21
- 3) 1 Samuel 8:2-7
- 4) 1 Samuel 10:24-25
- 5) 2 Samuel 7:1-13
- 6) 1 Chronicles 28:1-15
- 7) Isaiah 66:1-3
- 8) Jeremiah 7:1-12
- 9) John 1:1, 3-5, 9-14, 17
- 10) John 15:1-7
- 11) 1 Corinthians 3:11-18
- 12) Ephesians 2:10-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 14
- Deuteronomy 1
- Revelation 21 & 22
- 2-Chronicles
- 1 Kings
- Ephesians 5