

Examining God'S Judgments

God's Judgments in the Four Fall Festivals

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I wish all of you had the opportunity to hear Richard's sermon this morning titled, *Woulda Our God Do That*. I liked it especially, because I think it is going to provide a very good lead-in for my sermon. One of the things that he covered in it was the Bible shows that the shofar blows on three occasions. This is not just for the Feast of Trumpets. These are things that it shows in the Bible that it was blown for. Two of these are taken right out of Exodus 20. They are very easy to see.

The shofar blows whenever God is drawing near. Apply that to the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets. Number two is that the shofar is blown when God's law is given, and this is the standard by which all of us are measured. It is the standard against which all of us are judged. The third one is the one that is going to be the subject of this sermon, and that is the shofar is blown when God's judgments are being executed.

If there is one overall lesson to this season of the year, it is that this time of the year is set apart for us to understand more about the judgments of God. In these four holy days various aspects of His judgments are set forth so that we can intensify and magnify our understanding in this area.

The word "judgment" has several applications in English, and most, if not all of them, are seen in the Bible in reference to God, and they are **magnified** by this holy day season. Number one is judgment is used as **sense**. We say a person has good or bad judgment. We would also say that a person has little or no sense. We say a person has no common sense. Saying that a person has no good judgment would be another way of putting it. Also in the Bible good judgment is frequently referred to as "wisdom." If a person has wisdom, he knows the right application of principles of truth. Judgment therefore refers to one's ability to weigh matters.

The second way it is used in Scripture is that judgment also refers to the announcement of a legal decision and opinion. We hear this in movies when sentences are handed down. The judge says, "My judgment is . . ."

The third way is a way that does not always appear in dictionaries, but it is important in biblical understanding, and that is the actual process of judgment. For example, I Peter 4:17 says that "Judgment is now upon the household of God." This is not something that takes place in one moment of time, but rather judgment in this sense is a process

leading to the actual handing down of a decision. It is during this time that we are evaluated against the standard. All three of these appear within the context of the four holy days that we will be observing over the next three weeks, and the first two most heavily within the framework of the Feast of Trumpets.

What book in the Old Testament has perhaps the most vital and broadest information having to do with the end time? I do not know what your guess is, but my opinion is that it is the book of Daniel. It is the term's broadest and most vital over all. Do you know what "Daniel" means? It means "God judges," or "God is Judge," depending on whether it is used as a noun or a verb.

Turn now to Daniel 4:17 and we will continue laying the foundation here.

Daniel 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men.

What the verse is saying very succinctly is that God sovereignly rules; therefore, God judges. To most of the earth, if God even exists in their thoughts, He is at best a remote personality who acted a long time ago, but seems to have grown disinterested because nothing has happened for a long, long while. At least it seems a long while to most. But the Bible shows Him overseeing matters on planet Earth to the end of fulfilling His purpose of establishing His Kingdom on earth.

Daniel 4:24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king.

A decree is a judgment. Here comes God's judgment.

Daniel 4:25 That they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will.

This of course was spoken to Nebuchadnezzar who really had a problem with his lack of

humility. He was one proud man, and God was showing him who really is boss. Just in a snap of the fingers Nebuchadnezzar went from being the most powerful and proudest man on the face of the earth to a man who was like an animal. That quickly God changed him, and debased him, and put somebody else in his place.

Who did the judging, and who had the authority to put whoever it was who replaced Nebuchadnezzar in his place? Well, it was God.

I think that you will find that much of what takes place in the book of Daniel is God doing things like this. A king makes a judgment, and then God considers it, and changes it by *His* judgment, and so we see the episode there with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. "Into the fire, you three!" God went right into the fire with them, and the first thing you know they were not even hurt there. God has the power with His judgments to put the judgments of men to nothing.

Then there was Daniel in the lions' den. This time the king, instead of being Nebuchadnezzar, was Darius the Mede. Daniel went into the den with hungry lions, and Daniel came out, and the lions were still hungry, because God altered the judgment of the king.

Turn now to Daniel 5. The king is now Belshazzar.

Daniel 5:18-19 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

Nebuchadnezzar had seemingly god-like powers, did he not?

Daniel 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.

Daniel 5:25-28 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting. PERES; Your kingdom is divided, and

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given to the Medes and Persians.

What Daniel did was he reminded Belshazzar of a number of God's judgments regarding Nebuchadnezzar, and then he showed Belshazzar God's judgments against him, and that is what verses 26, 27, and 28 are about.

Those things that took place in the lives of "the high and the mighty." But what about you and me? Is God doing the same kind of things in our lives from time to time? Yes, He is, and I think that we need to consider this, because in the book of Proverbs, it says:

Proverbs 19:21 There are many devices [or plans] in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LOORD, that shall stand.

What we need to learn is that we should not be deluded into thinking that our plans are made in a vacuum, and that somehow God does not care because we are so insignificant compared to a Nebuchadnezzar or a Belshazzar. But now wait a minute! Does not Jesus clearly show that God cares about sparrows, and that God even passes judgments on whether they live or die? He does.

Do we not, as parents, overrule some of our children's judgments? I should not say "some," but should say "most" of them. When we think of our own children's judgments we think, "Boy! That's pretty silly," or "Boy! That's pretty dangerous," and so we overrule and say, "No. You can't do that." This ought to give us some sort of an idea of how some of our judgments might look to God. I wonder how many times I made judgments and He overruled them for my well-being, for my good, because if I had gone through with doing what I was thinking of doing, a real disaster for me or for somebody else might have taken place?

Go now to Psalm 33, beginning in verse 8, gets back again to a larger context.

Psalm 33:8-9 Let all the earth fear the LOORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

Just think of something like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace. Voom! They went in, and just that quick the fire had no affect on them. All God has to do is to speak, or to think, and His Spirit carries forth and carries out whatever it is that He

wants. "For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Psalms 33:10-11 The LORD brings the counsel of the heathen to naught: he makes the devices [the plans] of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Not only is God making judgments constantly, but His mind is at work manipulating, I guess you might say, the direction that things on earth are going in, and He is ruling and overruling constantly. *Every one of His judgments is absolutely perfect!* It is appropriate to every situation, and it stands forever.

Psalms 33:12-15 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance. The LORD looks from heaven; he beholds all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashions their hearts alike; he considers all their works.

He is judging constantly, and evaluating what is going on. It is a *marvelous* thing to know that the judgments of this God are of awesome wisdom, and *they* will be the ones that will stand. Man has a multitude of plans, and those plans are man's judgments of what he is going to do in the near or the far future, but the Bible counsels that God must always be taken into consideration when we make our judgments.

Isaiah 27:12-13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and you shall be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

There can be no doubt about the time-context in which much of this chapter appears. The "great trumpet" nails it down, because it must be the seventh. The entire context of this chapter shows God making judgments that concern not only individual people, but also all the land of Israel.

Look at the words "beat off" in verse 12. Modern translations translate that as "thresh," but this is not the ordinary word that this activity connotes to us. Ordinarily, when grain

is threshed it is beaten either with a stick or maybe even against a wall, against something that is solid. The purpose of this beating or threshing is to detach the grain from the stalk so that it can be separated away from the stalk.

This word here indicates ripe fruit being detached from a tree in such a manner as to keep it from being damaged. What it does is show more than usual concern. This is then emphasized by the term "gathered one by one." This has interesting implications when we start to consider the time, because the time element that we know that this is going to take place is toward the **end** of the Day of the Lord; at the very earliest, at the end of the Tribulation, and then maybe carry on over into the Day of the Lord.

During that period of time the Israelites, who have been scattered from one nation to another all over the earth, are undoubtedly in prison camp conditions; starved. I am sure their minds are just about worn to a frazzle from all of the stresses of having to endure those things that were going on during the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. We find God using His judgment, and treating these people now with the utmost of care, and singling them out as though one would a ripe piece of fruit on a tree. Even then He is going to call people one by one, using His judgment as to whom this calling, this invitation, should be given. And they are ripe for what? Conversion. And that is where the judgment is going. "This person is ready." They are repentant. They are going to accept the truth.

So the words "beat off" or "thresh" indicate ripe fruit being detached from a tree in such a manner as to keep it from being damaged, and so it shows more than the usual concern. What is described through this metaphor is not just separation, but even now purification is taking place during Israel's regathering.

Brethren, are we even going to have the faith that we are not lost in the shuffle? God's judgment oversees **everything** that is going on—from sparrows to people—even at the time of the end of the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. And right now, with all of this chaos on the earth going on, you are not lost in the shuffle. God is judging His household, and we are leading toward something of very great import. The "great trumpet" it says, will sound at this time.

Revelation 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry, and your wrath is come, and

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the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that you should give reward unto the servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear your name, small and great, and should destroy them which destroy the earth.

In this context the seventh trumpet sounds, the active reign of the Son of God on earth is announced, and then immediately after that the word "judged" appears. Nations are judged. The giving of rewards involves judging, and the destroying of those who destroy the earth is a judgment of God. This is why Trumpets is associated with judgment. But it is not going to end here. It only lays a foundation. Connect this with I Peter 4:17.

I Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

We are beginning to see in Revelation 11 some of the *end* of that judgment. The term in I Peter 4:17 does not indicate a conclusion, but rather a process *leading* to a conclusion. This was number three at the very beginning of the sermon. This judgment is a process, and it ends at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and some of the judgments, as conclusions, or a sentence, will have been reached. So in these two verses—Revelation 11 and I Peter 4—we see numbers two and three of the definitions given at the beginning of this sermon.

The prophets spoken of back in Revelation 11, and the saints, will have inherited the Kingdom of God. Their sanctification will have been completed, and they will have **made** it, as we say today. So one judgment process ends with the issuing of judgments, the reign of the King of Righteousness begins, and then so does another judgment process. Did you get that? Judgment is on the church now, then "judgments"—decrees, sentences, including rewards—are handed down. Christ takes rulership of the earth, and then another judgment like I Peter 4:17 begins.

Revelation 14:6-7 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the execution by God of His judgments. These are sentences—judgments that involve rewards for some, and judgments that involve punishments for others.

We are seeing a wide variety of places in which the word or the term "judgment" appears, and it is good to understand these in their context. Go now to Revelation 20:4-6. Remember, in Revelation 11:18 judgments are made giving rewards to the saints and to the prophets.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.

Judgment was given **to them**. This is judgment in the sense of rulership, governing power—the kind that God is exercising now in His position as sovereign ruler—and part of the rewards that is given to the prophets and to the saints to begin to exercise judgment as God exercises judgment.

Revelation 20:4-6 And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Thrones indicate rulership, and rulership requires the exercising of judgments [that is, having good sense, having wisdom] and the **making** of judgments [making decisions]. In this context then, judgment indicates governing.

I Corinthians 6:2 Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

We see the fulfillment of that in Revelation 20:4-6, but we see a major step of that in Revelation 11:18, where rewards are given. Therefore, the rewards given in Revelation

11:18 are positions of rulership from which to exercise judgment—a level of judgment that is learned within the relationship with God prior to the resurrection.

Now there comes a job. This is one of the things that we are to learn as we go along in this life in this relationship with God. We are to learn to judge as He judges. This is one reason why the judgment that is spoken of in I Peter 4:17 is so long. It takes a long time to learn to judge in the way that God does. We are very difficult to teach at times.

Our judgments show up all the time. Every day we are making choices. We are choosing. We are judging to do this or that, and the first thing that we have to do is come to the place where we are able to govern ourselves—to judge in our own lives what we need to do in the way of behavior and in the way of conduct, and put it into practice, and then watch for what God's reaction is. If we are in tune with Him, He will let us know one way or another. We will feel the pain of making a wrong choice [judgment], or we will get the pleasure or blessing of making good judgments. But it takes a long time to learn to judge as God does.

As we move away from Trumpets and toward Atonement, the perception of judgment continues in the same general tone of a blending of definitions two and three that I gave at the beginning of the sermon. Decrees are made and enacted, and a new process of judgment begins.

Acts 3:19-21 Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Peter is talking about the overturn of authority on earth from unconverted man under the dominion of Satan, to mankind under the dominion of Christ and the Kingdom of God. This is what we saw in Revelation 18, Revelation 20:4-6, and I Corinthians 6:2—the transfer of authority on earth from man under the dominion of Satan to Jesus Christ and His brothers and sisters who have been resurrected and glorified.

This transfer is going to be the first visible step following God's judgments during the period of time depicted by the Feast of Trumpets. A reconciliation of God and man has been necessary since Adam and Eve's sin, because through them mankind became separated from God and the breach has never been entirely healed.

Notice in verse 19 how the verse points out that "the times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord." So when He comes, a restoring will take place. When something is restored, it indicates a **bringing back** of something that had been taken away. Or, as I have seen other commentators say, it can also mean an establishment of something **good** following something bad. The bad was the government of Satan and man, and the good is the government of God.

Regardless of which one chooses to perceive it through, the very fact that one thing is taken away so that another can be put into its place indicates **judgments** have been considered. That is what has to happen. A judgment has to be made to replace one thing with another. In this case it is God making the judgment. So judgments have to be made, and then the conclusions enacted. This restoration is something God has been prophesying of since the world began.

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Despite the fact that man is separated from God, the Bible says very little directly about it. It is as though the separation is so obvious that the Bible assumes everybody is able to see it. There is a place where it does speak of what caused and maintained the separation, and that is our sinning. It is that mankind will not allow God to rule it. The separation has been caused and maintained by mankind's hostility toward God. Romans 8:7 says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." This is a hostility that is motivated by the prince of the power of the air who has deceived all of mankind.

Revelation 20:1-2 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

Again, if we put this into man's everyday situation, a sentence has been made, a judgment has been made. We see here the carrying out of that sentence.

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little

season.

Though the word "judgment" does not appear here, it is clear that this is God's judgment on **him** for all the deception that he has sown and reaped through the six thousand years of man's time separated from God. So he is bound for one thousand years, and this judgment has a massive positive effect on those remaining alive following God's judgments pictured in the Trumpets scenario. Once he is bound, the reconciliation of God and mankind can proceed through the judgment period that we know of as "The Millennium."

We are going to go all the way back to the book of holiness—Leviticus.

Leviticus 25:8-13 And you shall number seven Sabbaths of years unto you, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto you forty and nine years. Then shall you cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and you shall return every man unto his possession, and you shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of your vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee you shall return every man unto his possession.

Here we have liberty and atonement tied together. In the year of jubilee, liberty is to be proclaimed, and everybody is to have his possession returned to him. Not only was the jubilee one of God's economic laws, its spiritual application involves liberty from the bondage to Satan, and the reclaiming of the inheritance of each family. Is that not what Atonement is about?

True freedom begins when Satan and his demons are removed. You will find statements in the Bible that we can honestly consider as **laws**. In reality they are judgments, and are so called, because they are judgments that take on the force of law. They are decisions that are made on the basis of the overall intent of God's mind, which is always to produce the greatest freedom possible.

The beginning of the jubilee year is the concept behind Isaiah 61:1-3. These are the verses that Jesus quoted in Luke 4:19 as He made the formal beginning of His ministry before the people of His hometown.

Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord Good is upon me; because the LOORD has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LOORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LOORD, that he might be glorified.

Now this is "the acceptable year of the Lord." The acceptable year of the Lord is the year that we are acceptable by God's judgment through the blood of Jesus Christ. That can be any time for us, but that is when liberty begins, because liberty has a spiritual dimension to it. And though we live, supposedly, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, I think that anybody who has his eyes open realizes that our liberties are being taken away from us increment by increment. Attorney General John Ashcroft was on the radio yesterday being interviewed, and he said that we can expect that more of the liberties that we accept as being "our right" are going to be taken away over the next few months because of what happened in New York City on Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

I am here to tell you that **true** liberty—the spiritual aspect, the spiritual dimension of it—is directly tied into us being acceptable to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. The year of jubilee, and Isaiah 61, which Jesus quoted in Luke 4:18-19, shows that you will find liberty of some form or another came up very frequently.

The binding of Satan, as part of God's judgment of *him*, is the practical step that moves Atonement out of the merely legal to a literal and practical **national** and **personal** reality. This is proved by the fact that when Satan is released at the end of the one-thousand-year period, people immediately become enslaved to him again. That is one of God's judgments that is given in writing beforehand so we will understand that His judgments are **always right**. It is the binding of Satan that is going to make the Millennium possible. That is God's judgment.

Now because Christ is ruling on earth during the Millennium, and Satan is bound, Israel

is enabled then to return to its rightful possession of the land, reconciliation with God by the whole nation becomes a literal reality, and their judgment for spiritual salvation begins in earnest, after He has plucked them off the tree as it were, very tenderly, one by one. We are seeing judgments all through this; not only the decree being given, but carried out with the utmost care.

Go now to Leviticus 16. As you can see, we have moved during the four holy days from Trumpets to Atonement

Leviticus 16:27-30 And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. And he that burns them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourns among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all of your sins before the LOORD.

Did you get that? "Clean from **all** of your sins before the Lord."

Leviticus 16:31-34 It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and you shall afflict your souls by a statute forever. And the priest [meaning the high priest], whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LOORD commanded Moses.

This is a lesson for all of the ages. It is God's judgment that **all** must be reconciled to God through the blood. That is why I began all the way back there in verse 27 so that we would bring in the mention of *blood*. Anciently, through this ritual, the whole

community was symbolically reconciled to God once a year.

Now what happened, (I cannot think of what the word might be, at least symbolically) is that all through the year the sins of the people were transferred to the Temple and to the altar. And then once a year the Temple, and then the altar on the Day of Atonement, was **purged** of those sins, and the people were free once again. All of this is done because it is God's judgment that we need to understand, that atonement comes only through blood through death.

Additionally, we can understand that Israel is just the seed through which the whole world will be reconciled to God through Christ. Thus the meaning of the Day of Atonement, when combined with Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, shows an ever widening circle of people reconciled to God. Reconciliation by God's judgment makes possible the change of a person's nature, because this is what enables them to have access to God and to His Spirit.

I want us to turn to a series of scriptures that gives us a preview of what is going to occur in the next judgment. We are going to go back to Genesis 42 in the story of the reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers. Every last detail of this story does not fit perfectly, but the overall principle does. In verses 6-8 we just get a picture of Joseph's regal position.

Genesis 42:6-8 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spoke roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come you? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

Go now to Genesis 45. I think you know what took place in between, that Joseph tested his brothers' attitude. We find that he found that they were sincere in the things that they were saying and doing.

Genesis 45:14-17 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him. And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto

Joseph, Say unto your brethren, This do you; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan.

Genesis 45:25-26 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

Even now there are indications of the separation of Joseph and his brothers. It is interesting in the events that took place during this past week that the immediate outcry was that an attack on one NATO country was an attack on **all** of NATO countries. There were cries of assurance that came from mostly largely Israelitish nations over in Europe, saying that they were with us and we could use their place for doing this, that, or the other, and that they will lend us a hand. But by the time the week was over we were already beginning to hear them back-peddling on their, let us say, *loyalty* to us, and the friendship was beginning to slip out of their grasp, out of their minds, because they were beginning to realize that this might turn out to be a very hard fight, and that their own national interest was not going to be best-served by being seen as being really an ally of Manasseh—Joseph. The only one I know so far that has not back-peddled is in Britain.

But there is coming a time when all Israel is going to be reunited, and they are once again going to be settled in the land of Canaan, and they are once again going to be given land. Who knows? Maybe even the land that was owned by their ancestors. I do not know. God may very well have a record all down through the ages of who owned what piece of land, and He knows who is descended from whom, and He is going to bring them all together, and the reuniting of Israel is going to be a major step in the reconciliation of Israel with God, and is going to play a major role in the reconciliation of the whole world to God.

There is a domino effect that is taking place here, because of the good news of Israel reuniting, and then reconciliation with God is going to be shared with the other nations, and at that time the envy of the nations will be dissipating. They will become more cooperative partly because they recognize that the result is going to be very rewarding for them too, and that they can be brought under the umbrella of God's government.

Let us go back to Romans 11. What we are seeing here may seem to be disconnected to you. This is a sermon that has to be thought on. We are seeing the effect of God's judgment put into an order, and it is almost like dominos, that once one thing begins to

get put into place, it opens up for something else to take place, and then something else to take place, and then something else to take place, and every single one is tied into a judgment that God has made. Many of these judgments are prophesied of so that we know what they are going to be even before they occur.

Romans 11:13-15 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

What a blessing this is going to be for the whole world when Israel is united, and they really and truly cooperate with one another! It was the salvation of Israel back in the days of Joseph, and this time it is going to be the salvation of the world when Israel is reunited with Judah.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Isaiah 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Isaiah 2:4 And he [the God of Jacob] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

God is making judgments all along here in bringing salvation to the world. Now consider the sequence used to bring the whole world at one with God. First He called Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob and made covenants with them. And then He made a covenant with all of Israel, and so we see things beginning to expand out. But in the course of their history, they rejected Him. Then we find that He turned to the Gentiles to bring some of them to be at one with Him until a certain number are so. And then He turns back once again to Israel, bringing them into oneness with Him, and then back again to the Gentiles. By the time this is completed, everyone who is going to be at one with God **is** at one with Him.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

Jeremiah 30:10 Therefore fear you not, O my servant Jacob, says the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

Jeremiah 30:10 states a sequence that we can see very clearly. There is a pattern when God makes a certain judgment. Before God gathers, He first scatters. That is the pattern. If He is displeased with the disobedience of His people, He will scatter. But because He is faithful, and because He carries out the promises that He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He then re-gathers. We see little steps like this all over the place.

He scattered Judah into Babylon, and then He re-gathered a small portion of them back again in Judaea. He scattered Israel. He has **never** re-gathered Israel, except in small types in the nations where they are now in northwestern Europe, United States, Canada, and so forth. But the time is coming that He is going to scatter Israel too, and then He is going to re-gather them once again.

I do not know whether you are aware of this, but there are **yet** seven gatherings, or reunitions that are going to take place in the future, beginning with the return of Jesus Christ. Each one is an at-one-ment in itself. **Each** is a step leading to all of mankind being at one with God and with each other. I'm going to go through these seven reunitions.

THE SEVEN REUNITINGS:

1. The Reconciliation of Judah to Jesus Christ

John 1:10-11 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Verse 10 more specifically says that "He came into the present order of things, and there wasn't even a flash of recognition." This is a paraphrase, but it is accurate.

Verse 11 is one of the more poignant statements in all of the Bible. "He came to his own property, or home, and He was rejected there." I think that we would expect that the world in general would not give God in the flesh a flash of recognition, but if there was anybody who should have recognized Him it was those to whom He had already given a large measure of revelation. But perhaps we should give the Devil his due, because he did a great job in deceiving the world. His deception has resulted in an almost complete spiritual blindness.

Matthew 23:37-39 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that killed the prophets, and stoned them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house [the one that Christ came unto] is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, You shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.

Looking at the rejection from our perspective, we can understand it. The good news is that the time is coming when Judah is going to wholeheartedly recognize Jesus for what He is and for what He has done.

2. Israel and Judah shall be reconciled:

Isaiah 11:11-14 And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall

obey them.

I think it is pretty obvious that there is not much good will between Israel and Judah, even though they will cooperate politically, militarily, and economically when it is their own best interest, but normally there is suspicion, distrust, and there is envy.

Zechariah 10:3-10 My anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LOORD of hosts has visited his flock the house of Judah, and has made them as his goodly horse in the battle. Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together. And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LOORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LOORD their God, and will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yes, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LOORD. I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.

3. Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will be reconciled to each other.

Isaiah 19:18-25 In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LOORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the LOORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LOORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LOORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LOORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the LOORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LOORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yes, they shall vow a vow unto the LOORD, and perform it. And the LOORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite

and heal it: and they shall return even to the LOORD, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LOORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.

Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will be reconciled to each other. These nations have historically been enemies, but I think if you will look at that again you will notice God's judgment. There are times that He is for and against Egypt, but as He begins to get these nations allied with Him, He brings them into association with each other as well. I believe that these three nations will be the ones that will serve as the conduit for all other Gentile nations.

4. All nations reconciled to each other.

Zechariah 14:16-19 And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LOORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LOORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague wherewith the LOORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Once again this context shows God judging. This time it will have very positive results. You can tie this to Daniel 2:34-35. This is the one where the stone comes out of heaven and strikes the statue on its feet. It begins as a stone, but it grows, and eventually fills the whole earth. That stone, when it is small, is the Kingdom of God, and as the other nations are added to it, it eventually comes to the place where it encompasses the whole earth.

5. Man and nature will be reconciled to each other.

Genesis 1:28 shows very clearly that man has a responsibility to the creation.

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

We have a responsibility to rightly control our powers so that the earth is properly used. However, we saw in Revelation 18 that God is going to punish those who destroy the earth. It shows very clearly that we are not taking care of the earth. For six thousand years now mankind has abused God's wonderful creation, and nature has no recourse but to defend itself. It defends itself by refusing to grow food. It is that simple. And so what happens when the land will not produce food? People have to move out. They have to go somewhere else. "The land will vomit people out" is the term that is used.

But now we have come to the place: "Where is man going to run to?" There is no place to run. Probably the last virgin territories on earth in Central Africa and in places like Brazil are being burned down at a tremendous pace, and there is no place to turn.

Hosea 2:18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

Joel 2:23-27 Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he has given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. And you shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that has dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Ezekiel 34:25-31 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will

cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LOORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the LOORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, says the LOORD GOOD. And you my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, says the Lord GOOD.

Amos 9:13-15 Behold, the days come says the LOORD that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sows seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, says the LOORD your God.

6. Families will be reconciled to each other.

We are going to go now to Zechariah 8. This is a very important one. Though on a scale of what is going to happen in the nation, this may not seem as though it is very large, but it is absolutely essential to the big things taking place, and that is families will be reconciled to each other.

Zechariah 8:1-6 Again the word of the LOORD of hosts came to me, saying, Thus says the LOORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus says the LOORD: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LOORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus says the LOORD of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell

in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus says the LOORD of hosts; If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in my eyes? Says the LOORD of hosts.

Isaiah 65:20-23 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that has not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LOORD, and their offspring with them.

I think that everybody knows that one of the major social problems in America is that family life is in disarray. It is been devastated by a combination of wrong spiritual, moral, and ethical teaching, and horrible social, educational, and economic programs, and they are going to get straightened out.

7. Mankind and God reconciled.

Zechariah 14:8-9 And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LOORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LOORD, and his name one.

Isaiah 45:20-24 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell you, and bring them near; yes, let them take counsel together: who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I the LOORD? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone

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out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LOORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

Romans 14:11-12 For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Maybe this is the most obvious one, but it is the one that drives all the others. But there comes a time when all of mankind is reconciled to Him, but apparently it is going to take a thousand years, plus the Great White Throne, even with God ruling.

Psalms 145:8-13 The LOORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LOORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All your works shall praise you, O LOORD; and your saints shall bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and talk of your power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

I think that this is a statement which one can easily overlook in the press of everyday events, because we become burdened by the ordinary cares of this life, and added to them are the pressures of being *in* Christ. Even Christ said that the way is difficult. This statement though is always true, and is one that becomes clear when one looks at God's purpose in an overall sense. Despite all that mankind has done to God's creation—and that includes each other—He is still merciful and is going to give all a chance to be at one with Him.

I think it very interesting that the Feast of Tabernacles pictures both our pilgrimage through life to the Kingdom of God, as well as the World Tomorrow, and that Ecclesiastes was read at Jewish feasts because they felt that the theme was suitable to or paralleled in some way the theme of the festival.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be

good, or whether it be evil.

The conclusion for us for the whole matter of life is to fear God and to keep His commandments. That seems so simple when it is stated like that, but it is not simple when it is put into practice in life. But I think that we can confidently say that since the purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day is to bring the greater part of mankind into at-one-ment with God and that **man's** major part in all of this is to keep His commandments. That is the way to the conclusion of the whole purpose of life, because in doing so it brings us into the image of God, because they are a summary of how He lives.

If we, and others do so—they and we—will be one with God. That is not hard to understand. It is hard to do. But even though we keep the commandments, always remember the tag line of that book is that God is going to bring **every** work into judgment, and He will make decisions that are absolutely right and absolutely wise, and they will stand forever.