

Why The Last Great Day?

A Day of Magnitude

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 25-Oct-05; Sermon #FT05-08-PM

As an editor, I have to be aware of how words are used and how often they are used. Many of you are not aware of that. You may think an editor would just simply make sure that an article or publication reads well. But really, how many times a word is used can be very significant.

And as an editor, I am not perfect—as any critical reader of the Forerunner magazine would know. Kristy and I, sometimes, just have to cringe after we go over the printed copy and find one or two or more errors. We wonder how that ever happened because the articles are proofread by at least eight pairs of eyes. And several of those pairs of eyes go over each article several times. But something—some mistake, some wrong usage of a word, a subject-verb agreement—goes wrong and slips through. And all we can do, once it is in print, is just grimace!

I also try and keep up with the evolution of the language and I am not really thrilled with the direction it is heading. Although English is not quite a sacred thing, it is something we should treasure because it is a wonderful language in many respects. The trend, of late, is toward very concise speech—at least that is the way it seems to me. Conciseness is good in one respect, but sometimes you can be too concise.

There are times when you need beauty and creative language and exactness. Those things are often missing because we have allowed the language of "business English" to prevail. Business English has its place, but it tends to be very terse and to the point. It just relays the facts and then that is that. Much of our language is devolving into that.

We are contracting everything—thanks to instant messaging and other things. We are welcoming loads of slang and acronyms into our speech. You can do whole sentences, now, in acronyms.

And the technological revolution, as well, is adding cutesy 'techno-terms' to our language. A few years ago when one would hear the word *floppy* one would think of 'Gumby' or maybe a teddy bear. But now you think of a floppy disk. And there are other things like that which have come into the language. My father-in-law calls it "language in the hands of the masses." He is very right.

Another step toward the devolution of the language is glaringly obvious in our overuse of certain terms, one which I think all of you will know—and hate—is the word *like* in every sentence. For example: "...like, you know..." "He said, like..."

I think you understand what I am heading toward here.

There is the overused adjective *cool*. Or if it is not cool it is *hot*. They are used almost indiscriminately so that there is no other adjective to use. You cannot be anything but cool or uncool—even though there might be half a million words from which to choose.

Another one, the worst one I think (at least in terms of the written language) is *very*. I do not know if you are aware of it, but some people use "very" very often. And, "very" used very often becomes very nothing. Things can be very good or very bad or they are very big or very small or they are very rich or very poor or very cute—very weird...very, very, very.

Why not, instead of very good, say, "It is divine." That is the original meaning of the word good—it comes from God. So that piece of pie is not just very good—it is divine (God made it Himself)! If it is very bad, why not say something like, "It is vile!" That is very bad. Even the word, vile, sounds bad. Or instead of very big, we may describe something as massive, or monstrous. Very small could be depicted as minute or miniscule.

The word *very* can be overused quite a bit. C.S. Lewis once said something to this effect: "Very should be used very sparingly and only when you really mean it." And I guess he really meant it. He once told a little girl who asked him about writing, "Never use the word, very, unless you really mean it because otherwise it loses its meaning."

The Bible was written in Hebrew (and the New Testament in Greek) and certain adjectives seem to be used an awful lot. Let us consider the word translated as *great* (G-R-E-A-T). Many of you are computer literate and are familiar with the term, *megabytes*. Those are *great* bytes! That is the Greek word from which it came—mega. In its various forms we see *megas* or *megala* or *megali* and they simply mean great, large, of physical magnitude. It also implies such things as prominence, exaltation, distinction, grandness, and similar types of words—things that are big, huge, wonderful, awesome, or beyond description. Those things are great! It is very similar, then, to our word in the English language.

It is a word, however, that is used so often that, in our reading of the Bible, it can become almost meaningless. Mega and its various forms are used 194 times in the New Testament and a whopping eighty-two times in the book of Revelation alone!

But this is the Last GREAT Day and, rather than being meaningless, this word points to the reason why this is truly a great day. Everything about this day is *big, grand, exalted!* Everything is on a huge scale. It is the last great *hoorah*—the grand final climax to God's plan!

I am going to start off in the book of Leviticus and in the twenty-third chapter. It is a fitting place to start when you are talking about the holy days.

This fall I had the morning sermon on the Feast of Trumpets, the sermon on the Day of Atonement, the afternoon sermon on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and now I have the Last Great Day. That is the "grand slam" among preachers!

Leviticus 23:33-36 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day [which is today] you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly [which we are doing right now], and you shall do no customary work on it'

Leviticus 23:39 . . . and on the eighth day a Sabbath-rest.

So not only is it a holy day, but it is a Sabbath—it is a holy convocation, and it is treated like all of the other holy days.

In our initial instruction about this particular day, it is simply called (as we see in verses 36 and 39) the eighth day. There is no *last* and there is no *great*, but because it is the eighth day it is obviously the last day. The idea of last is implied.

We must presume that in the Israelites' practice of keeping this day they considered it part of the harvest festival of Tabernacles. There were the seven days—and then the eighth day. Nothing in the Bible, at this point in time, distinguishes it from the first seven days. It is simply the eighth day and we have, then, another holy convocation.

In Numbers 29 we have a listing of the offerings to be given for each holy day in the seventh month. Instructions are given in verses 35-38 concerning the offerings for the Last Great Day and they are no different than for any other holy day, like the Day of Trumpets, for instance. There is nothing significant about the offerings that are to be given on this day. The other places it is mentioned—in II Chronicles 7:9 and Nehemiah 8:18—do not shed any additional light; it is just mentioned as being kept.

So we must go to the New Testament to find the meaning. John 7:39 is the first New Testament mention of this day as far as we are able to tell. The Apostle John, then, gets the distinction of naming it what we call it today.

John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great...of the feast [the word *day* is in italics. It is not in the Greek there. But basically, we can read it as 'that last great day of the feast'] Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Some quibble about whether this was the seventh day of the Feast or whether it was the last day, the eighth day. But it is clear, from the context and from the subject matter, that he meant the eighth day—the last day. And he uses, for the first time, the adjective mega (or great) with this day.

The first inkling of greatness appears with what Jesus says at the end of verse 38, "Out of his heart will flow *rivers* of living water." We are to understand this idea of '*rivers* of living water' in a sense of magnitude. This is not a stream! This is not a trickle or just a little bit of water. It is big. It is broad. It is gushing! It is voluminous (do you like that word?! There are gallons and gallons of water flowing past this certain point all at once!

The illustration is one, not of rivers such as the Kansas River (which is not at all notable in terms of size), but of Mississippi-type rivers—or the waters of the Niagara going over the falls! That is *great*! We are talking about huge volumes of water! Jesus is saying that His Spirit would be available in those quantities! Of course, in reality, it is available in limitless supply. So it is even more than "Niagara-type." It is even more than we have on this earth! Huge, great, big, awesome, wonderful, indescribable is what this day is all about!

Jesus says in verse 38, "As the scripture has said." Have you ever wondered what scripture He was talking about? It looks as though Isaiah 12 might have been on the list of scriptures about which He was thinking.

Isaiah 12:1-2 And in that day you will say: "O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation [Remember that the Holy Spirit is all wrapped up in our salvation], I will trust and not be afraid; for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation."

We know that this day pictures *many* coming to salvation—many, many, many, many, many—lots, multitudes. And so the idea, as we read through this hymn of praise, is one of God being praised for the salvation that He has opened up to those who were previously denied it.

Isaiah 12:3 Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

This is what was being sung as the ceremony was going on back there in John 7. It was part of the water ceremony performed on this day and was one of the choruses that was sung—"Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." We should understand these wells, as I said before, not as little seep wells, but as wells that are *welling up*, cascading, and the water just flowing up and out of it freely! These people are then able to go and dip into that well freely and so receive from it salvation.

Isaiah 12:4-6 And in that day you will say: "Praise the Lord, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples [Notice that this is not just Israel, but 'the peoples'], make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

It is interesting that, in this particular psalm about which Jesus was thinking (as this was happening here in John 7:37), that this Hebrew word was mentioned—"for *great* is the Holy One of Israel in your midst." At that time, Jesus Christ was the Great One, the Holy One of Israel who was in their midst—literally, Immanuel (God among us; God with us). But at this soon-coming time He is going to be there as King of kings and Lord of lords! The Great One will be known by all the peoples of the earth!

There are other scriptures that mention similar things.

Isaiah 44:1-3 "Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you: 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant; and you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring;

This is also very likely to what Jesus was referring because among those millions and billions of people who will enjoy the waters of salvation will be those of Israel and they will have the opportunity to have *floods* of His Spirit upon them at this time.

Isaiah 55:1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters...

Isaiah 55:5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you."

Israel will be the model nation at this time and they will be able, then, to show a good example to the world. This is describing nations running to Israel because of the God of Israel who is behind them—whose way is so wonderful!

So a time is coming when God's Spirit will be openly available in limitless quantities to everyone who desires it. And, as I said, it will not be just for Israel, but for those of all nations who desire to run to God. We know, too, from other scriptures that His Spirit will be accessible, not just to a specific generation (those who are alive at the time), but to *all* generations of mankind; not just to those who are alive then, but to everyone who has ever lived! Surely that qualifies as a great thing! Just think about the magnitude of this as we go through the pertinent scriptures.

Consider the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit as shown in the New Testament (which Peter thought was a great thing) in Acts 2. He thought it was so great at the time that he compared it to what Joel said in Joel 2. Here, the Holy Spirit was visibly (tongues of fire) and audibly (speaking in tongues) poured out as a witness, as a sign that God was doing this for His Church—separating these 120 names out from all other people. Peter sees this as a tremendous thing that has happened! There was a rushing, mighty wind! And suddenly fires came up over their heads! They, perhaps, were wondering, "Wow, what is going on here?" They may have even thought that their hair was burning! But Peter, looking at all of this and thinking of the significance of it says:

Acts 2:16-21 But this is what was spoken by the prophet, Joel:
'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great [great] and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'

If Peter thought that this initial outpouring of God's Spirit was great, although it was received by only 120 people (plus a few thousand who were baptized that day), what would *billions* of people suddenly receiving God's Spirit be called? *Mega* is what they came up with—great! But it is going to be absolutely indescribable in its awesome magnitude! How great a day that will be!

We will think it is great when God opens up His Spirit in the Millennium. Those who are alive will have free access to God's Spirit. They will come up to the mountain of the Lord and hear the law of God and turn to Him. This will happen throughout the Millennium. How many millions of people will that be?

But even so, that will pale into insignificance compared with this Last Great Day! Over a one hundred year period (which is what we think the period of the Great White Throne Judgment will be) all people will have an opportunity to live under the guidance and direction of that Spirit.

This opportunity will not just be for those who are born into this time (I do not know if any will be born into this time), but it will be freely offered to all mankind—raised from all generations—and whom God will allow to live during that time.

Now think of what it would take, as this sermon takes a little shift here, to make this possible.

One of the first things it is going to take is mentioned in Jude 6.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

We must consider that Satan will be bound three separate times.

He has already been reserved unto darkness and is, therefore, now restrained. He is, however, allowed free reign in certain areas to do certain things.

Revelation 20:1 shows the second restraint.

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while [so he is given a summary judgment at this time and placed under chain for a thousand years, but at the end of that thousand years he is allowed to go out once more]

Revelation 20:7-10 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea [That is a great number of people. Everything about this subject is *big*]. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

So one of the first things that must happen, in order for this to be a truly great day, is for Satan to be finally and definitely restrained to the point where he can have absolutely no influence at all—forever! Evidently, in the time flow of this chapter, this happens just before this Last Great Day is fulfilled.

In many respects, we might say that this is the opening salvo from God. He finally puts Satan down for good! And that is a great thing because now God's great outpouring of His Spirit will have no competition from the wicked spirit of Satan the devil and his minions. The earth will be completely free of this spirit except where it is found in human minds and hearts. It will be completely free from the destructive spirit of competition and strife; of things like lust and greed; of acts such as murder and deceit and other foundational, evil attitudes like envy and pride.

Will it not be a great day when Satan is cast into the lake of fire and we know that he will never be able to escape? We will know that this first time (in Revelation 20:1-3) is temporary. But then, as the Great Day is about to begin, he will be locked down forever! What a sigh of relief that will go through the camp of the saints! Finally he has been put in his kennel with the door locked and the key thrown away—and then the doghouse burned!

Through the eyes of Ezekiel God gives us a dramatic snapshot of Israel's portion of this time of greatness. Notice the terminology because the passage is written and designed to elicit in us a feeling of wonder and magnitude and bigness and quantity!

Ezekiel 37:1-2 The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones [just that phrase—*full* of bones in a valley]. Then He caused me to pass by them all around [it was as if he was whisked in a helicopter all around this entire valley], and behold, there were very many [Ezekiel must have been at a loss for words because he had to use 'very'] in the open valley.

Now here is another word—it is an *open* valley. It is not a narrow valley. It is not a ravine. It is an *open* valley, a *wide* valley—one that you look at from

the heights and it just seems to stretch. Have you ever gone up highway 81 through Virginia and seen the Shenandoah Valley open up through there? That is the kind of valley of which I am thinking—a *big* valley, a *broad* valley, one that seems to stretch for miles.

Ezekiel 37:2 and indeed they were very dry.

So not only was this huge valley full of bones, but these bones were old. They were desiccated. There was not anything in them or on them. Maybe we should think of some desert valley and a complete lack of moisture. Everything looks dead. We have all seen pictures of the cow skull on the desert. However, these are not cow skulls!

Ezekiel 37:3-10 And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know." [Ezekiel is saying, "It does not look like it to me, God, but if you can do it..."] Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." ' So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Maybe the most amazing detail in these ten verses is the question that God asks the prophet, "Can these bones live?" Think about it. We have already set the stage—millions, *billions* of bones in a broad valley just lying there under the sun—a huge graveyard. And Ezekiel is looking down into this valley of death and it seems utterly impossible that such a mound of bones—old, dried, and decayed—could ever support life. To a human being looking

at that scene we would say, "This is impossible! There is nothing left here. They are just old bones. They should be put in a crematorium and scattered. There is no good left in them!"

But what an awesome thing it would be for those old bones to come together and to be clothed with skin and then to begin breathing, to have life in them and to stand up on their feet and say, "Wow, I am alive!" Their last thoughts were, most likely, of the dead and of the dying: chopped by swords, riddled with bullets, overcome by disease, having fallen in an accident, screaming, "AAHHH!" as the truck slammed into them! And the very next instant they are standing before God—*alive!* "Then you shall know that I am the Lord!" What a shock that is going to be to the billions of Israelites who had lived and who had rejected God during their physical lives these last four thousand years or so of God's plan.

Now we come to the explanation:

Ezekiel 37:11-14 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' [He is not saying that they can literally say this. If they had been able to say something this is what they would have said, "There is no hope. We had our chance. We rejected God. There is no future."] "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you [It was not enough for God to just raise them to mortal life. He had something more to offer.], and you shall live [you almost get the idea that the physical life which they had was not living. It was breathing, but when God's Spirit is put into them, then they live], and I will place you in your own land [This has always been a part of that promise—they will have a place, their own land]. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.' "

He does not just talk a good fight, He fights a good fight. When He says He is going to do something you can take it to the bank, because He will perform it. He has told them this now for twenty-five hundred years—from the time this prophecy was written ('dem bones, 'dem bones, 'dem dry bones"—everybody knows it). Then, when it happens, when they are a part of that vast multitude, they will know that God does not say anything that He does not mean and that He will not do. This is not just a great thing that happens and that there are great numbers of people, but it is a *Great God* who does it!

What happens next—after *all* people come up out of their graves and face God?

Revelation 20:11-13 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away [This picks up right where Ezekiel left off. His last words, as inspired by God, were, "Then you shall know that I have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord. "Then I saw a great white throne..." and we go immediately to who that God is. He is the Great Father who sits upon this *huge* white throne from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away]. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead [who now are living] were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

But Revelation 20:11-13 takes Ezekiel 37 one step further because it is not just the dead of Israel, but it is the dead of all people: small and great, rich and poor, young and old, male and female—all of those who died—whether in the sea or on the land, whether in outer space. Who knows where these all died, but God will gather them from their graves—from wherever they were when they died. He will give them a period of judgment—a time to stand before Him and live—this time according to the guidance of His Spirit and not the spirit of wickedness and Satan the devil.

The magnitude of the numbers and the logistics of this period of time are truly astounding when you think about it. Some would go so far as to even suggest that such a thing was impossible—just from the logistics side of it—that the earth could not support these vast numbers of people. But could it? There are many scriptures that say it can—and with absolutely no problem!

For instance, we know that during the millennium the waste places will be made productive. We often read Isaiah 35 where it speaks of the desert blossoming like a rose. All of those wilderness areas that are not being used right now (sitting under the sun and exposed to the wind—totally unproductive) will suddenly be able to support forests and farms and ranches. This will enable all of the billions of people to feed and clothe and house themselves.

It says in Isaiah 40:4 that the mountains will be lowered and the valleys will be raised up. A lot more land will become productive at this point. There will not be the vast, snowy wastes because the mountains will have been lowered to a better climate and transformed into arable and inhabitable land. Freed from the bondage of corruption, as Paul says in Romans 8:21, the earth will produce food in such amounts and with such rapidity that "the plowman shall overtake the reaper" (Amos 9:13). They will not be able to get a crop out of the ground before the workmen who are responsible for putting the crop in the ground are chasing them out.

It is my thinking that the millennium will be used to prepare for this Great Day of God. We will have a thousand years in order to make the earth ready and to prepare the supplies needed for all these people to lead a good life under the guidance of God's Spirit. They will have a place to live, clothing, education, plenty of food, the right kind of entertainment, you name it. That will be part of our job in the millennium as we prepare for the potential *billions* of younger brothers and sisters. But even so, the numbers are absolutely astounding! As far as I understand it could be upwards of fifty or sixty billion people who have lived and died without the opportunity for salvation!

Now let us say we start with the 144,000 firstfruits and, then, each one of those is assigned a certain number of people during this time of the Great White Throne Judgment as our 'flock.' If I did my math correctly, each one

of us will have a medium-sized American city population, just short of half a million people, to shepherd to salvation. If I did my math correctly, it figures out to be about 416,000 people per firstfruit. That is a lot of people! We will be responsible for, as I said, the housing, clothing, feeding, supplying energy to, and providing jobs for all those people. This will be no easy task especially since it will have to be repeated 144,000 times all over the earth! It will be quite a project!

Consider the educational programs that will be needed to bring them up to speed. Many lived and died before the flood. Think of all the history they are going to have to learn. Some of that history will be important to them. They may not, necessarily, have to learn it all, but they are going to want to know what happened. And they are going to want to know why everything fell apart and what were the causes and what are the solutions. How did it come to be this way?

The church in that period of time will, of course, have a huge job of teaching God's way to people who have had absolutely no exposure to it. Their paradigms will be of varying faiths: animism or atheism or whatever 'ism' it was by which they lived their lives. And they will have to, as Mr. Armstrong said, 'unlearn' all that and relearn what is right. And the lion's share of doing that will fall to the Church. How many Bibles are going to have to be printed? Maybe we will give them all a laptop computer and they can have their PC Study Bible or something like that—or maybe bibletools.org. Little things like that, when you start extrapolating them out into fifty or sixty billion pieces, just become almost mind-boggling they are so tremendous!

The great part about this—as we have already read about in Acts 2, but I want to read it from Joel 2—is that all of these people, all at once, are going to be infused with God's Spirit, or at least have the opportunity for that. But it appears that God is going to just give it. The verb translated, poured out, just seems to imply God's active effort in all this.

Joel 2:28-29 "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Joel 2:32 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.

Terms such as *all flesh* and *whoever calls upon the name of the Lord* imply broad, universal acceptance of this way of life. What we see here in verses 28 and 29 (beyond the literal prophesying and beyond the dreaming of dreams and seeing visions) is God's Spirit being used by those upon whom it has been poured out. It will be used in acts of service, kindness, and all of those fruits of the Spirit and all of those gifts of the Spirit. It will be manifested in all of these sons and daughters who finally have the opportunity to have and be led by God's Spirit.

Can you imagine driving in such an environment? Would it not be lovely if everybody yielded? Just think of everyday-life situations like this and what a wonderful time it would be if everyone had God's Spirit! You would not have all the competition and the strife; the "I am going to get my way no matter who is blocking it." No more backstabbing, no more climbing the ladder that way, no more people with so much ambition that they cannot see straight. It will be a time of loving, a time of serving, a time of sacrificing, a time of turning the other cheek, a time of cooperation, a time of "let me get that door for you, ma'am." And those are just little things!

I was thinking about this in terms of baptisms (we had seven yesterday). Do you know how many will have to take place during the Great White Throne judgment period if there are *sixty billion* people to baptize? Now remember that a billion is a thousand million; and a million is a thousand thousand—and so you have sixty thousand thousand thousand. I do not know if I did my math right, but if I did my math right, that is...1.6 million per day? That is probably not right. I was trying to do it very quickly before I came up here. Anyway, it is a big number. I figured it was 36,500 if we used a 365 day year for one hundred years and then I tried to divide that into sixty billion and then you get 'error' on the calculator because it does not go that high. You have to add zeros, but it is a lot—an awful lot of baptisms to do each day. (And they thought they were working hard there in Acts 2 when they were dunking 3,000 in one day.) This will be, literally, hundreds of thousands of baptisms that will need to be done every day! What a glorious time that will be! What a great day to live!

This may be a little controversial to some (and I am only going to touch on it), but if we go to Revelation 7 we will see the numbers and the multitudes of this time. In times past we have said that these are the people who will come out of the great tribulation because it says in verse 14 that these are those that come out of the great tribulation. Well, I wonder, because God says that His firstfruits are going to be 144,000. Otherwise there has to be two groups. I will just leave it up to you to decide, but as we read this I want you to pick up on the Last Great Day themes. It is very interesting.

Revelation 7:9-13 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing [remember that from Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 20] before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands [remember from my first sermon (first day Feast of Tabernacles) one of the themes of the Feast of Tabernacles is taking down branches—and one of those branches, palms, is specifically mentioned. This is kind of interesting because palms, in this context, are thought to be a symbol of victory], and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" [Hearken back, then, to Isaiah 12 and the salvation theme there] All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

This is an interesting question if you think about it. It is almost like these people just 'popped up.' The question is rhetorical, obviously, and it is for our instruction because I believe the elder knew who these were. But the sense of it is, "Wow, look at all these people! Where did they come from?"

Revelation 7:14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb

Now notice that it does say "*the* great tribulation." But this is not the same phrase that is used in Matthew 24. It is similar, but it is not the same. Actually it says here, "the tribulation, the great" instead of "the great tribulation" as in Matthew 24. It is a different construction and, according to the commentators (people who know their Greek far better than I do), this construction—"the tribulation, the great," along with 'come out of' (I should add that because the whole phrase is "who come out of the great tribulation") generally implies ongoing trials and not just one particular trial or time of trial. It means the normal, yet terrible, trials of human life—normal human survival on this planet of which Satan is god!

Revelation 7:15-17 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat [Of what does that remind you? It reminds me of Revelation 21 and the new heavens and the new earth—the time just *after* the Great White Throne Judgment period. Verse 17 is where the big Last Great Day symbolism comes in]; "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters [This sounds very much like John 7:37, 38, and 39; Isaiah 12 and the wells of salvation and, of course, another Revelation 21 reference...] and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

They are finally going to be able to live great, wonderful lives—lives which they were not able to lead before this time. What an awesome time this Great White Throne period is going to be! It will truly be a great time, an awesome time! Everything about this period is larger than life, *huge*—even the throne is big—it is great, it is awesome, it is wonderful, it is magnificent, it is beyond description! It is the big event at the end of God's plan for mankind!

It will be a time of the greatest addition of members to God's family ever. God started with One. And then He will add 144,000—and to them He will add however many during the millennium (perhaps millions). But then He winds up in one big, grand-slam finish with billions of sons and daughters!

God does not do anything small. He wants everyone—all humanity—to be a part of His family!

Let us finish in Psalm 145. This is one of the great 'praise psalms' at the end of the book. Think of these verses in terms of the Last Great Day, of course.

Psalm 145:1-3 I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.