

## Hope!

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The Feast of Tabernacles is full of spiritual meaning, and great hope for all of mankind. Simply put, the Feast of Tabernacles portrays for us the wonderful world tomorrow under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ. A thousand years of peace, prosperity, and joy for the billions of mankind who will live in this utopian age. It is during the Millennium that the great autumn harvest of human lives will begin to be gathered into the Kingdom of God as divine members of the God family.

Satan will have been immediately disposed, at the return of Jesus Christ, and those who are first fruits at that time will be co-heirs with Jesus Christ, set apart to help rule, manage, and teach those who come through the Great Tribulation. (That was from the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.) All that we hope for will come to pass, at last.

*The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines "hope" as follows: 1. To desire with expectation. 2. To wish, want 3. To have a desire or expectation; usually to hope for the best. 4. To place confidence in, or to rely on. 5. To desire with expectation of fulfillment. 6. Confident expectation, that which is anticipated. 7. One who, or that which, is a cause of hopeful expectation or confidence, "to be the hope of a team" (i.e. Michael Jordan). In our case, Jesus Christ is the hope of our team.

In *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, it is defined as follows: "The original word denotes a joyful and contented expectation of eternal salvation." That is what hope is.

The world around us does not have any hope of the wonderful world tomorrow that is going to be there. What they see, if they are seriously looking, is disaster after disaster on the horizon, and they rush, any way that they can, to escape from thinking of it.

What the world sees today is a collapse of the world that just a few years back seemed so stable. The world that did not allow gambling, pornography, same-sex marriages, couples living together, nude sex acts in the street, the sixty million abortions, a country without AIDS, and the myriad of STDs that plague us today. A country that had a solid currency, and a nation where American products were made in America, and a nation that considered themselves "Christian."

God indeed sees what is taking place. He will act accordingly to bring about the wonderful hope and future that He outlines in Scripture, for Israel, and for all the other nations as well. They are all filled, at this time, with fear, hatred, and cruelty.

**Nehemiah 9:25-28** And they took strong cities and a rich land, and possessed houses full of all goods, cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and grew fat, and delighted themselves in Your great goodness. Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against You, cast Your law behind their backs and killed Your prophets, who testified against them to turn them to Yourself; and they worked great provocations. Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their enemies, who oppressed them; and in the time of their trouble, when they cried to You, You heard from heaven; and according to Your abundant mercies You

gave them deliverers who saved them from the hand of their enemies. But after they had rest, they again did evil before You. Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; yet when they returned and cried out to You, You heard from heaven; and many times You delivered them according to Your mercies.

This is what God did, over and over again. Israel sinned, and God forgave them. So what is taking place here is that these people who were captives are saying, "We're going have a document here, and we're all going to sign it, that we will obey You from now on."

**Nehemiah 9:38** And because of all this, we make a sure covenant, and write it; our leaders, our Levites, and our priests seal it.

Nehemiah 10, tells us all of those who signed the covenant.

Ezekiel 33 tells us in the last few verses, that God's people love to hear religion, but they will not do it. Their heart is not in it, they will not understand it, and follow it.

**Ezekiel 33:33** "And when this comes to pass—surely it will come—then they will know that a prophet has been among them".

The past indicates that the only way for God to get the attention of His people is to take away the environment and the prosperity that produced the independent, self-sufficient, "I don't need God" attitude. From what we read in Scripture, this is accomplished by placing His people into captivity, as slaves to a conquering nation. With helplessness and hopelessness as their life, God's people finally turn to the only source of true help available. God loves them greatly, and He will not put them away.

I have a few scriptures that I would like to turn to, with regard to physical Israel, and then we will get to us.

**Jeremiah 31:1-7** At the same time," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people." Thus says the LORD: "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness—Israel, when I went to give him rest." The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice. You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food. For there shall be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.'" For thus says the LORD: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!'

It is going to be a wonderful time for Israel.

**Jeremiah 50:4-7** In those days and in that time," says the LORD, "The children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together; with continual weeping they shall come, and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces toward it, saying, 'Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD In a perpetual covenant

that will not be forgotten.' "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; they have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place. All who found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, 'We have not offended, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

**Isaiah 25:6-8** And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.

One of the first steps that God takes is to remove the veil that covers their thinking. For the first time in the history of mankind, all have the chance of seeing, and understanding, what God is about, and His wonderful gospel.

Zephaniah 3:9 tells us that there will be one language, to erase the confusion since the tower of Babel. Mankind will at last all be on the same page. How will the language come? I think it will come all at once. Considering how God confounded the language in Genesis 11, and how everyone instantly understood each other's language in Acts 2, it would seem that this change will be immediate, that all might understand together. We have thousands of languages and dialects. A common language will unite the world to receive what Jesus has in store for them.

**Isaiah 51:3** For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

God is going to start to change things from the war-torn world.

**Isaiah 35:1-10** The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Isaiah 11:1-12** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. 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 who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

**Isaiah 11:16** There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

It is going to be a great time for Israel, brethren, and they do not even have a clue that this is going to take place.

Now, we see a contrast. Israel always resisted God, and now we see that they change their heart and their attitude.

**Isaiah 12:1-6** 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, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'" Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And in that day you will say: "Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among 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!"

They realize that God is for them, and that He is the source of all things.

**Isaiah 60:1-6** Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. "Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be

turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.

It talks about people from foreign lands coming to take care of them in service. In all of this, Israel will not sin. They arrived at a time where they worship God, and He is the most important thing in their life. It is a touching chapter.

**Isaiah 60:10** "The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, but in My favor I have had mercy on you.

**Isaiah 60:14** Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

**Isaiah 60:18** Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.

**Isaiah 60:21** Also your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.

This is what is in store for the world out there, and they are not even aware of it.

Zechariah 8 tells us that men and women will live to a great age, enjoying the children playing in the streets. Hosea 2 states that God will answer their prayers before they are asked. Isaiah 30 says that they will see their instructors, and they will hear a voice to help them, "This is the way, walk you in it." That will be good, because there is a lot that these people have to overcome.

This will not happen instantly, but healing of the earth, teaching, and change, will begin to spread around the world.

These visions of the world tomorrow seemed so exciting in our early years, that I think that we all wanted to have our farm and just sit there. Most of us did not have much of the world's goods, so the thought of having our own land, farms, or living in a peaceful village or township, sounded truly wonderful. This even sounds more wonderful today.

**Micah 4:4** But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

Indeed, considering how much the stress, strain, and busyness has increased over these years in the church, all of this sounds like a pretty idyllic thing.

Israel, and all of mankind, has an absolutely wonderful future awaiting them that they are totally unaware of. But, brethren, how about us who have been called at this time?

**I Corinthians 2:9-12** But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all

things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

You will hear some things in this sermon today, where others read and yet they cannot understand.

**Psalm 17:15** As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

David is stating that in contrast with those in the world around him that seek worldly treasures and wealth, that he in turn will be thrilled with "the world" that God has in store for him. He, and I might add, "we," will at last see the face of the One that we have been praying to all our lives. We will, at last, be freed from the power of sin that so easily besets us. David is saying here, that he will be greatly satisfied when he awakes with God's physical and moral likeness, and so will we.

David was looking past the world that he fought and struggled in, and had his eyes on the Kingdom, and that is where our eyes had better be as well.

Just as a reminder, let us turn to Revelation 1:

**Revelation 1:10-16** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

We, brethren, are going to look much like this.

**I John 3:1-2** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Brethren, we are already considered by God to be members of His family. He is the perfect Father, and He knows how to raise each of us to the potential that He sees in each one.

Here is a comment from Albert Barnes:

There is enough here to animate us with hope, and to sustain us in the trials of life. The one thing that is clear, is that we shall be like the Son of God, but what is fully involved in this is not made known:

1. It could not be so revealed that we could understand it, for that state may be so unlike the present, no words would fully convey the conception to our minds.
2. Perhaps it may be necessary to our condition here, that no more light should be furnished in regards to the future, than to stimulate us to make efforts to reach a world where all will be light.
3. But it is clear that we shall be changed or raised from the grave in His likeness and character.

The veil has been taken away from us.

**II Corinthians 3:14-18** But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

In the *Word Study Dictionary*, the word "changed" is #3339, which literally means: "formed, or being transformed"; a change of place or condition; to form. From the word *metamorphoo* (or metamorphose, as we would say today.) The word is used to describe Jesus' transformation from an earthly form, into a supernatural form.

This suggests what the bodies of the righteous may be like, as a result of the resurrections of our bodies. It does more than suggest, it is a fact! The idea of transformation refers to an invisible process in Christians, which takes place, or begins to take place, during their lifetime in this age.

Brethren, with all the pressures, trials, and impending events on the horizon, it is comforting to know that in this life, with all of its difficulties, you and I are being formed by God to become like Him.

**John 6:44-45 (NEB)** "No man can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent Me; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets; and they shall be taught by God" Everyone who has listened to the Father and learned from Him, comes to Me.

So again, we are being taught, we are being worked with, and we are being changed.

God the Father, and Jesus Christ, have taken each one of us, and are working in our lives to perfect us individually for His purpose.

**Philippians 3:20-21** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

For our conduct, or our citizenship, the word used is *politeuma*, or what we would say today, politics. Because of our politics, because we obey God's laws, we are considered by Him as citizens of the Kingdom of God!

The apostle Paul is pointing out the fact that there are two governments that want our allegiance, Satan's and God's. But brethren, because we fight to keep God's laws, and to serve and obey God, we are set apart in His sight for a wonderful future. Because of this, we greatly look for the return of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who will change our body that is subject to weakness, illness, and death to a body fashioned like unto His glorious Body, and we too will be able to subdue all things.

Why is God working so diligently with us? Well, we have a great future.

**James 1:18** Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

I bring this up, because we have to see where we are going, and why we are here, and why we have been called. For His purposes He willed us, or brought us forth from the captivity of this world ruled by Satan, and opened our mind to the truth, that we might be the first of all mankind to belong to His family.

What is His purpose? That with love, tenderness, and understanding we might serve those coming through the tribulation. In John 14, Jesus stated that He would go and prepare a place, office, or position, for each of us.

**Revelation 20:4-6** And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over 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.

This is your future, and I pray my future too. The word "judge" certainly denotes rulership, but with that rulership comes the responsibility of managing as well. It appears that our thrones, or offices, are designed for us individually, in the areas that God has prepared for us to be involved in. We are not all going to be doing the same thing. I do not know if there will be a "joke-telling" department in the Kingdom of God. But, if there is, I know what I am going to be doing.

Brethren, those of us that fight to fulfill our calling in this difficult time will live in our new bodies, and reign with Jesus Christ for a thousand years as kings and priests on earth, as it states in Revelation 5:10. Though it may be difficult now, as we watch this world churning, God wants us to have hope in the future that He has set before us.

What gifts will God give us that we may accomplish His plan?

**Luke 19:11-19** Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants,

to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

Do you think that this is not going to happen to you? The principle here is that Jesus Christ shares the truth of the Kingdom of God with a few in every age, giving understanding to each individual according to each person's abilities. He goes to His Father until His return, where He will reward each individual based on what he accomplished with what he was given.

What I would like us to consider, is the reward that is going to be given to you, and to me.

We who were called as the base, foolish, and weak of the world, and who now look at the society around us wondering how this mess could ever be governed, will be given cities, towns, and very possibly nations, to oversee. That is what your job is going to be. That is pretty exciting.

**Revelation 2:26-29** And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Have you ever wished you had the power to crush the dishonesty, perversion, and the horrible misuse of power we see in every aspect of life today? To rid the towns and cities of fear and crime?

I won in a competition one time a trip to Singapore. In Singapore you do not find anything on the street. If you spit on the street you are fined, and if you do not flush the toilet in the hotel you are fined \$175. This is how careful they are, and the people love it. We might think that is very heavy-handed, but that is the law, and they love what it produces in their country.

In the rush of this world, do we take the time to ponder what God has in store for us?

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

Have we stopped to consider how close our relationship will be with God?

**Revelation 2:17** "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

Manna sustained life, and Jesus Christ said in John 6:33 that He is that bread that comes down from heaven. He who overcomes will partake in that manna that grants eternal life, and in participating with the fullness of Jesus Christ in all He does.

Adam Clarke comments on the "white stone":

1. It is supposed that by the white stone it is meant to be acquittal, while a black stone is pictured as the verdict of guilt.

2. Others suppose they were like the stones given in the public games. A stone was given to those who won in the public games and the stone had their name engraved on it and it entitled them to be maintained at public expense. These stones were called "*Deserves*," and there were several different types. "*Deserves convivialist*," were invitations, or tickets of admission to a public feast or banquet. The mention of the hidden manna here may seem to intimate an invitation by a special friend to a family meal. There were many other "*deserves*" that entitled one to so much grain, cattle, etc.

But the most remarkable of these instruments was "*deserve hospitals*," which were given as badges of friendship and alliance, and on which some device was engraved, as testimony, that a contract of friendship had been made between the parties. A small oblong square piece of wood, bone, stone, or ivory was taken and divided into two equal parts, on which each of the parties wrote his own name, and was interchanged it with the other party. This was carefully preserved, and handed down even to posterity in the same family, and by producing this when they traveled, it gave a mutual claim to the bearers of kind reception and hospitable entertainment at each other's houses.

But what does this mean as it pertains to overcoming and receiving the stone from Jesus Christ?

1. That the person is taken into an intimate state of friendship with Him.
2. It is a token or seal that he is accepted into the family of God, and may share in all of its benefits.
3. And by the giving of this stone, he obtains a new name as a son of God.
4. And this name of the new member of the God family, no one can understand, but he who has received the stone.
5. And as Jesus Christ rules all, he that has the stone may claim direction, instruction, support, and all the privileges that can be imagined to him that overcomes.

This is really an interesting concept, I do not know if it is exactly right, but it sounds really pretty neat.

With all these wonderful gifts, what exactly are we to accomplish in the Millennium? The overall purpose, of course, is to make physical Israel the people that God intended for them to be. In Deuteronomy 5:29, God exclaimed: "Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep My commandments always, that it might be well with them."

Brethren, we are going to be the ones that see to it that they indeed love and fear God with awe and deep respect. That they learn to keep God's commandments, thus after all these years, that it might at last be well with them, and that they might be that right example, and pattern for all the world to see and follow.

God's people were always meant to be His example to the world, of how to live and worship God, but they were never able to fulfill that role. Brethren, we must understand that we have been called not just to bring about change in Israel, but to change the whole entire world.

As I stated, we are the weak, base, and foolish of this world, and because of our condition, we could see the tremendous need we had for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And through the teaching of God the Father, and Jesus Christ, we will be able to fill the positions needed to do what no other person, group, or government has been able to accomplish throughout all of the history of mankind.

We, working in coordination with God the Father and our elder brother Jesus Christ, will bring to this world peace. They will be obedient to God's law in the letter and in the spirit. They will have brotherly love, prosperity, honesty, right morals, contented families, fair, honest, truly concerned leadership, true joy, and happiness. They will have great excitement in the life that they have been given to live and at last freedom from living Satan's way of life. They will all be truly thankful to God for the teaching that they have been given from you.

**Deuteronomy 4:5-8** Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

The nations observing the people of Israel that you have worked with and taught will be stunned at the society that is produced. They will see the joy of the people, the smoothness of how everything operates, the peace and safety, contrasting what the world has just gone through, and will truly wonder at the laws that have produced all this.

**Isaiah 2:1-4** The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; 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 anymore.

God's throne shall be permanently established and the world shall realize that hope at last, and it will be far more wonderful than they could have ever imagined. This will not happen overnight, as it has not happened that way with us. But it will happen, and without Satan on the scene to distract and influence them, they will truly work to make the needed changes in their lives.

Quite a few years ago, I gave a sermon, and I listed the causalities in the various wars. I do not remember them all, but in World War I, there were 1,700,000 soldiers killed. World War II, you probably did not realize this, 55,000,000 soldiers and civilians were killed. Korea was 59,000, and Vietnam 57,000, this was soldiers, not civilians. Now we have Iraq, and so forth. In the not too

distant future, a third of the world is going to be killed in war—that is two billion people. It is as if God is saying, "You want war? I will give you war, and finish it." This is why God is saying there will be no more war, and what a wonderful time this is going to be.

We, as their teachers, will not only be able to sympathize with their struggles to overcome, but understand the baggage that they bring with them, because of our baggage, caused by being under Satan's rule and influence.

Because of our having to overcome under the influence of Satan and His demons, we will have compassion, mercy, empathy, and understanding on those that have had to do the same.

**Hebrews 4:15-16** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We have been subject to all of the things that Jesus Christ went through, not the same way that He did. We have all had to battle with Satan in this world. This is the fight, the process that we are going through, and will continue to go through, until the return of Jesus Christ, that we might indeed develop true love and compassion for those we will be dealing with.

Have you ever stopped to consider what our overall title will be? This is going to shake you a little bit, I think.

**Obadiah 17-21** "But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau," for the LORD has spoken. The South shall possess the mountains of Esau, and the Lowland shall possess Philistia. They shall possess the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Samaria. Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath. The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the South. Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.

I would like to read you something from Keil and Delitzsch:

The exiles concluding thought that the kingdom will be Jehovah's i.e. that Jehovah will show Himself to the whole world as king of the world, and ruler in His kingdom, and will be acknowledged by the nations of the earth, either voluntarily, or by constraint, rests upon this assumption. God was indeed King already, not as the Almighty Ruler of the Universe, for this is not referred to here, but as King in Israel over which His kingdom did extend. [He goes on and then states]... Consequently the fulfillment of verses 17-21 can only belong to the Messianic times, and that in such a way that it commenced with the founding of the kingdom of Christ on the earth, advances with its extension among all nations, and will terminate in a complete fulfillment at the second coming of our Lord. Under the title "saviours", as Hen Stenberg has correctly observed,

the Saviour par excellence is concealed. This is not brought prominently out, nor is it distinctly affirmed; but is assumed as self-evident from the history of olden time, that saviours are raised up by Jehovah for His people.

God has always sent saviors to his people in the form of prophets, ministers, and leaders to turn them from wrong to right. Your title is savior.

What is being stated here is that God has always done this, and in the close of this age, we are the ones being trained to be saviors under *the* Savior, Jesus Christ finally, to save the people of God. This is no small thing, brethren, this is awesome. I think all of us picture ourselves as being changed into spirit, and becoming a member of the God family, but to individually carry the title "savior" should add considerable weight to this wonderful calling we have been given, and intensify the desire to overcome.

What are we to accomplish?

**Acts 26:14-18** "And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 'I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 'to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

We are to be a witness to the people of God that overcoming can be accomplished, and an encouragement for them to really pursue that goal. They will see that Jesus, in His great love for us, worked with us to bring us into His Kingdom as brethren, and as sons and daughters of God, and thus He in that same great love, will work with them through us, to bring them to the wonderful future that is set aside for them.

Those in the time of Paul had to face much pagan teaching that had to be corrected in their thinking, but those at the end of this age will have had to face the world-ruling beast, the mark of the beast, the whore who rode the beast, and the culmination of Satan and his demons doing all they can to destroy the people of God and all that He created. Thus the teaching, coaching, and training will have to be constant and firm.

Our job will indeed be to open their eyes to the truth, as opposed to the lies of this world, to turn them from the darkness and utter ignorance and superstition of false pagan teachings to light. And from the power of Satan's influence over them, unto the one true God, that they may repent and be forgiven, and receive admission into the family of God. What a wonderful challenge we have set before us. But what is between us and receiving this hope?

We live in a world totally deceived by Satan the devil (Revelation 12:9), and we are in a recess between world wars. Physically, times seem good. We all have homes, drive nice cars, and for the most part ,we are all doing fairly well, but we do know that certain events are looming and appear to be close.

It would appear that food supplies are becoming short, and that many are talking of disease epidemics being on the horizon. As we look around it would seem that they are already here, with our hospitals being full to the brim with every type of cancer and other diseases. We see the wealth that we value so much losing its worth, and thus we see the cost of our staples rising, and with this comes unemployment for many.

We all hear of wars and rumors of wars. We view many of the areas of the world as being on the edge, or brink of starting a chain reaction that could indeed lead to a final world wide conflict.

**Matthew 24:21-24** "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Why should you study, and why should you know what is going on? Verse 24 tells us that some great leader will have to arise doing great wonders and feats, that all religions and people will accept Him, thus producing a universal religion. Something big is going to happen in religion, this is why you have to know what you believe.

**Luke 21:10-19** Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.

Families will turn in family members. We are told here that our mindset and focus must be not to let down.

But in all this discouragement, we see a wonderful promise of hope.

**Revelation 3:10-13** "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Do I know what will happen to each group, or each one of us? There was a time when I understood everything, but that time is past, now I just know that these events will take place, but as to how they

apply to each of us, I just do not know. Some of us who are strong may have to stand up for God, and others may, as Mr. Waterhouse used to say, go to a place of final training.

The question each of us should be asking ourselves is, "What should I be doing in these uncertain times?" We are to prepare ourselves for our future responsibilities. This is what it is all about; this is why you are called.

**Deuteronomy 17:18-20** "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Considering our future hope and position, we must indeed understand the law, as this is the mind of God.

**Psalms 119:97-106** Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.

Brethren, not everyone in the family of God will be doing the same thing. Do we ever stop to consider that we are being individually groomed for a specific job that God has in mind for us? In whatever job we are given, we truly must have the basics firmly in our minds, and this is accomplished by study and by overcoming.

**II Timothy 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Adam Clarke adds to that,

Endeavour to cultivate and improve your heart and mind, that you will not be a reproach to Him that commissioned you. Learning to rightly divide the truth is learning to cut straight; rightly and skillfully teaching the word of truth; being able to properly adapt God's word to the circumstances and needs of the people.

God expects us, brethren, through study, and the applications of God's laws in our lives, to reveal the excellence of God's character in us. In short, we will, to those we deal with on a daily basis, in the way we raise our children, love our mates, do our jobs, keep our homes, deal with our fellow man, and in all that we do to be a citizen before God, be the salt of the earth and light of the world. Brethren, if we follow God, our light cannot be hidden.

These are the two things that we have to do now, and they are all found in: Deuteronomy 11:13, 22; 13:3, Joshua 22:5; 23:11. These all state that we are to love God with our whole being, and cleave to Him. Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; and Luke 10:27 tell us that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.

**Those are the first, and the highest, of our marching orders.**

We are to work at being kind and forgiving of others.

**Ephesians 4:31-32** Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Christ was kind and loving to us, and we are to reflect Him in all that we do. We should work not to have bitterness of spirit, passing judgment on others in condemnation. We are to be kind toward each other, and the sense of the word kind here, is to have good manners toward each other, having true empathy for those in trials, and a heart of compassion and patience. And we are to forgive from the heart, as it states at the end of Matthew 18.

**Matthew 18:35** So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

In short, we have to be what Jesus Christ is looking for in Matthew 25, and truly care for those in our church family, and those outside the family as we can help them.

**Matthew 25:31-40** When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

**Matthew 10:41-42** He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

I went to the Upper Crust restaurant here in Columbia, and the lady in there said, "Your people are the most wonderful people, and I have never seen a sour puss. We are really glad that you come every year." You have set a marvelous example.

II Timothy 2:24-26 tells us that the servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle unto all men, be able to teach, be patient, and in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; that perhaps God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Has God been patient with us? Yes, He has.

We all have the job of obtaining self-control in an environment where Satan and his cohorts are pulling out all the stops to make you and me lose that self-control.

But, despite the trials that do seem to be coming on this country and the world, we have a truly wonderful hope that we can trust and count on.

**Romans 8:16-25** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Things will change, brethren, the moment that Jesus Christ returns, and we will be changed too.

Faith is the things hoped for, it is the foundation. We are kept by hope, sustained by hope, by hope we live, and by hope we are preserved.

The vision of the future in store for us motivates us to endure, and to persevere in our calling.

It will be God's people, called to be first fruits, or saviors, to set the character and standards of God throughout all the world. That character will permeate every mind, and will produce what has never been accomplished since the creation of man, and that is righteousness, peace, love for one's fellow man, and wonderful happiness, and much more.

So, brethren, though we do not know all that is on the horizon, let us be encouraged, trust in Jesus Christ, knowing that upon fulfilling our calling, a wonderful reward awaits us.

**I Peter 1:2-5** Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I am going to paraphrase I Peter 1:13, "Roll up your sleeves, prepare your mind for action, be self controlled, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."