

The Handwriting Is On The Wall (1994)

Foretelling the Future

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We are going to begin the Feast of Tabernacles by reading Daniel 5. This is a section of Scripture that everyone is familiar with. You might not recognize the numbers right off the top of your head, but as soon as you see the passage, you are going to recognize the context of what is going on.

Daniel 5:5 In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Daniel 5:25 "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."

I am sure the interpretation you all know quite well.

Now, this occasion, here in the Daniel 5, has given rise to a cliché that has become part of the English language. I am not sure, but perhaps it is a part of other Western languages as well. We call a situation in which everybody is able to see that a disaster is approaching—a bankruptcy; a divorce. And so they say, "The handwriting is on the wall," because all the signs seem to be there pointing in one direction that we are about to have a devastation in the circumstance that we were observing.

Is there any doubt in your mind that the handwriting is on the wall for the nations of Israel? Indeed, we might say for the whole world, for surely we are doing things that are no less pious than what Belshazzar was doing. All he was doing was treating the utensils from the Temple in a very common, profane way. And he, of course, was accused by the angel—through Daniel—who wrote on the wall, that Belshazzar had forgotten the dealings that God had with his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, and that it is something he should have remembered. If he had remembered, then maybe Belshazzar would not have acted in the way that he had, because he would have remembered that

Nebuchadnezzar had been dealt with by God in a way that was really very good—putting him in power; giving him a kingdom over which he had absolute power and authority.

We are not quite in that situation. But the countries of Western Europe and North America, we are in such a position now, that I think that every single one of us can say that the handwriting is on the wall. Things are coming to a conclusion.

Now, I do not think that there is anybody in this room who has any doubts that the prophecies of the Bible are coming to pass at an ever-increasing pace. If you ever wondered whether we are living in the time prophesied by the Bible, and whether we are actually witnessing the increase of the things prophesied being fulfilled, then perhaps maybe I can give you something to help you understand how the fulfillment of prophesy is being increased. And I think, if you are thinking, that these two statistics that I am going to give you are staggering!

Matthew 24:7 “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.”

There are 21 words in that verse, and four areas of life—war, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes. Some of the information I am going to give you is due to closer scrutiny, better reporting, better tabulating of the occurrences that are taking place. In spite of that, I feel justified in suggesting that perhaps God is responsible for the better reporting in order that the world be witnessed to, even by its own. At the same time, those of us who are saints, we will be supplied with the motivation to strive more energetically for the Kingdom of God, and to endure the difficulties and trials of living through this period of time.

We are just going to consider two areas—earthquakes and war. I do not want to get bogged down, so I will not give you a lot of statistical details, but I think that what I am going to give you is telling indeed.

In regard to earthquakes, we are only going to consider one narrow area of them, those which are 6.5 magnitude or greater. Now, a 6.5 magnitude

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earthquake is enough to give you a pretty strong jolt. It will generally, especially if you are near the epicenter, knock houses down, apartment buildings down, they will collapse on themselves, and lives will likely be lost.

The only earthquake that Evelyn and I ever went through of that magnitude was the 1971 Sylmar Quake, which was 6.5, or 6.6. We lived in Orange County about 50 miles away from the epicenter, which was in the San Fernando Valley. Even there 50 miles away, it was enough to scare me so that I never forgot. Even in little 3 magnitude shocks, my heart begins to race a bit faster.

If any of you can imagine pulling a nail out of a dry board, you hear the creaking sound. Can you imagine hundreds of boards squeaking like that?—that is the picture I have in my mind of our house shaking back and forth with all those boards squeaking; seeing Sharon's crib bouncing across the room. This quake knocked down the Olive View Hospital in Sylmar; all told 65 people or so lost their lives—all from a 6.5 magnitude earthquake.

Between the years 1900 and 1969, seven full decades, there were 48 magnitude 6.5 earthquakes or larger worldwide. That is a little over six quakes of this size per decade. Between 1970, and 1989—two decades—there were 33 in that twenty years, which makes 17 per decade. The rate between 1969 and 1989 has already tripled (the previous stat).

January 1990 to July 1990—only six months—there were 10 in that very short period of time. If it continued at that rate, there would be 20 per year, or 200 per decade.

Let me add one more: From July 1990 until October 1992—hold on to your hats—there were 133 magnitude 6.5 earthquakes, five per month, 60 per year, or 600 per decade; a 1000% increase since the early part of this century. Are things happening? Are earthquakes increasing? Are they in different places?

What about war? We will consider this briefly.

Since 1945, only 49 years ago (from 1994), which encompasses the lives of most of the people in here, there have been between 150 and 300 wars. The reason for the wide variation is what one would count or define as a war. But, at a minimum of 150, and we will say a maximum of 300—an average of 3 to 6 wars per year, during which an average of 41,000 people are killed every month. And over this 49-year period, that adds up to 24,108,000 killed, 60% of which were hapless civilians caught between the crossfire of the warring factions.

That does not even take into consideration the 37 million human beings in the US whose lives were violently snuffed out through abortion while still in their mother's womb.

That does not consider those who were killed on the streets, or in their homes as a result of murder.

It is any wonder that God says to make a chain—meaning to make a chain of slavery, so that people can be chained together, “For the land is full of bloody crimes.”

Is the handwriting on the wall that something is going to happen that is even worse than what we are living through?

Now you know that your life is being affected by these things. Maybe on a daily basis to a far greater extent by the things involving war and murder, so that you know that it is far different now than it was when those of us who are 50 or 60 years of age and older were children. There are many places in areas around our homes where we do not want to live, we do not want to walk, except in the daytime, and we do not want our children to go in those areas.

So, our lives are being affected. And slowly but surely those of us who are free are becoming the ones who are imprisoned within our homes or a very small area of our community, where we feel safe to be able to go out.

So, “Make a chain,” God says, “for the land is full of bloody crimes.”

You know, brethren, we are not the only ones who are aware that this is going on. There are a lot of people who are in positions of power, and they recognize that we have got a situation developing that is untenable, and that if it continues in this way, life is not going to be able to be lived anywhere near what we might consider to be a normal basis. And these people are not sitting still. They are using their power, they are using their authority to do something about controlling circumstances so that there will be what they feel is a measure of liberty for people.

Turn to Genesis once again. The solution they have come up with is one that is as old as the hills, we might say. It is as old as just a few hundred years after the Flood when Nimrod began to do much the same thing. His excuse was because there were wild animals out there. The Bible uses wild animals as a symbol for wild men. There are people who are beasts. There is one who is coming who is going to The Beast.

Genesis 11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

So they decided to gather everybody together under one government. And so we find,

Genesis 11:4-9 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Now these people who are sitting in places of influence, understand that there does not seem to be any indication at all that anybody is going to have any hope of changing the direction of the way things are going unless they do it. So the solution is an old one, a world government exercising control over all nations; it is happening.

Any of you watching what is going on, you can see our liberties here in the United States being chipped away. What is the excuse? In almost every case, “Well, it’s for our benefit, so that we will be safer from the “beasts” out on the streets.”

So, those who are in positions of political, economic, military, and educational power are moving the world in a direction that you know is going to end with one human being at the very top.

But, does a super government of men (who have the same nature as all other men), guarantee that life is going to be better simply because the government is bigger, and exercises more control than any other government did before them? Their reasoning is absolutely stupid. It is based entirely on the evil pride of those who are moving and manipulating things in that direction. These people simply think that they are better, and they know better how to do things better than others.

Now, since you cannot seem to take care of yourself, the way they would like you to take care, they are going to do it for you. And if you do not do it, then things that do not conform (shall I use the word, paradigm?) to the paradigm that they have in mind has to go. Christianity does not fit the paradigm because Christians answer to somebody greater than they, and Christians will not conform to their way. So, Christians are going to be very difficult to control unless they are dead—unless they are held captive somewhere.

So along with Christianity is going to be many of your personal freedoms as an American, along with the standard of living that you have been able to enjoy because of God's faithfulness in keeping His promises to Abraham, until finally you will not be able to buy, or sell, or hold a job, unless you conform to their “better” ideas.

I do not know whether the name Vaclav Havel means anything to you, but he is the president of the Czech Republic. And even before he became president, he was a man of renown in the literary world.

Well, Vaclav Havel gave a speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia July 4, 1994, receiving a reward by some committee, and he made some very interesting comments. I am going to read portions of his speech to you, because I feel that it is very significant.

I think that there are good reasons for suggesting that the modern age has come to an end. Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period; when it seems that something is on the way out, something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying, and exhausting itself, while something else still indistinct was arising from the rubble.

I will tell you right now that what he sees rising is what is commonly known as the New World Order; what we know as the Beast Power. He is concerned as a man of sharp perception. I hope that by the end of my reading his quotes you will understand what he is concerned about—the loss of spiritual values—the loss of what the Western world considers being values worth living by.

You see, without directly saying it, he is talking about the Ten Commandments—the laws and principles of the Bible. He recognizes that much of Western civilization has been founded and built upon these principles and laws that are in God's Word.

Periods of history when values undergo a fundamental shift . . .

—catch that word “values.” What is happening? They are undergoing a fundamental shift.

. . . are certainly not unprecedented. The distinguishing features of such transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures, and parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds.

He is concerned that these things that were formerly distinct are now being blended together. What is going to arise out of that blend? He does not know.

You can see it. You can see it happening in the United States. I cannot speak as authoritatively for Canada, but the United States is being invaded by eastern religions, and what used to be a clearly distinctive Christianity is now becoming blended with oriental ideas, and concepts (a new age religion is arising), the blending of cultures and spiritual values.

“What is going to arise out of that?” That is what he is asking. Is it going to be any good?

Now, people who breed horses, dogs, or whatever—it is part of their fundamental operating procedures that you do not get something better when you blend things like that.

Are the ways of God going to be syncretized with the ways of Satan? It seems to me that I have read something about that in the book of James. “Can you get pure water, and bitter water out of the same faucet?” You get an evil mixture. What kind of values will people have in that kind of society? It is not going to be good.

Mr. Havel is concerned about what is called here in the United States, multiculturalism. He says,

I see it as a rather typical expression of this multicultural era—a signal that an amalgamation of cultures is taking place. [So it is not only values, it is also cultures.] I see it as proof that something is happening—something is being born—that we are in a phase when one age is succeeding another, when everything is possible.

By the time you get to the end of the article, the thing he sees as possible is not too good. That is his concern. Anything is possible. Which direction is it going to go—for better, or worse?

This man knows the history of mankind, and he is worried that it is going to be worse. What comes out of the other end of the tube is not going to be as good as what went in.

This is related to the crisis or the transformation of science as the basis for the modern conception of the world; the dizzying development of this science with its unconditional faith in objective reality [See? God does not fit into this because He is not an objective reality to science. What is he saying here? Science has gotten us as far as it can go. And it is not a god that you want to lean on.] and its complete dependency on general and rationally knowable laws led to the birth of modern technological civilization—the first civilization in the history of mankind that spans the entire globe, and firmly binds together all human societies, submitting them to a common global destiny.

It was this science that enabled man for the first time to see earth from space with his own eyes, that is, to see it as another star in the sky. And at the same time, however, the relationship to the world that modern science fostered and shaped, now appears to have exhausted its potential, it is increasingly clear that strangely the relationship is missing something.

Is there anything missing in science? Does anybody have an answer to that? What do you think it is? God! Modern science fails to connect with the most intrinsic nature of reality and with natural human experience. And so he says, what is happening is producing a paradoxical situation.

And thus, we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. We enjoy all the achievements of modern civilization that have made our physical existence on this earth easier in so many important ways, yet we do not know exactly what to do with ourselves.

Where to turn? He mentioned, “common global destiny.” Science has brought us to the place where all of mankind is being ripped along in the same direction. And so, he says.

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The world of our experience seems chaotic, disconnected, and confusing. There appear to be no integrating forces, no unified meaning, no true understanding of phenomena in our experience of the world. Experts can explain anything in the objective world to us, and yet we understand our own lives less and less. In short, we live in a post-modern world, where almost everything is possible, and nothing is certain.

Science cannot deliver to us absolute values by which we might live. It can deliver to us absolute destruction by which we can all die. It has reached the end of its rope.

Is the handwriting on the wall?

See? Men of perception can see this.

This man is admitting that despite his intellect, he is extremely pessimistic about the direction.

I will read one more portion. He eventually gets to the place where he begins talking about the Declaration of Independence, and the inalienable rights that the Declaration confers on us, because the framers recognized that those rights came from God. So he concludes his speech:

The Declaration of Independence (adopted 218 years ago in this building) states that the Creator God gave man the right to liberty. It seems man can realize that liberty only if he does not forget the One who endowed him with it.

This is a very fine, perceptive article regarding what is going on.

Let us return to the Bible. Turn to I Corinthians 2.

I Corinthians 2:9-10 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.

And so, Vaclav Havel can see that science, though it can deal in the absolutes of the physical world, it does not deal in the unseen reality of God, because it is too weak; it does not have perception; this is not its area.

What we are looking at, here, is a situation in which we have men in positions of power all over this world, who are not converted, who do not have the Spirit of God. This helps you and me to understand that as far as this world is concerned, there is no hope, because unless one has the Spirit of God, they cannot perceive what it is that God has laid out for mankind.

So these men, though they may be very intelligent, and even have some spiritual insight, it is not a true spiritual insight. Then, as a result of not having a true spiritual insight, they are condemned to go in the direction of the spirit with which they are in contact.

I Corinthians 2:11-12 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.

If you do not have the Spirit, you cannot know the things that are freely given by God.

Brethren, the handwriting is on the wall!

If any of you have any idea at all of somehow or another making it in the world, that your fortune is going to come from there, that your future lies there, that there is some hope that somehow or another man will muddle through this like they have always done—they are not going to muddle through this. Because even with that little insight I gave you at the beginning of the sermon of how prophecies and the fulfillment of them are being intensified, and increased at a tremendous rate, we have only looked at two things! There are hundreds of prophecies about hundreds of things. We are drawing to that conclusion. How quick it is when it is going to come, I do not know. We can only watch what is going on and be motivated because we see what is occurring.

I Corinthians 2:13-14 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

Vaclav Havel hopes that the framers of the new world order will not forget the spiritual aspect in their determination to forge one world. And believe me, they will not forget. You know from the prophecies of the Bible that religion is going to play a major role in the formation of that government. But unfortunately, it is not the right religion—it is not the right way. The handwriting is on the wall, everywhere we look. We are in more serious times than have ever been in the history of mankind.

I wrote myself a note: A person having only the spirit in man is absolutely held in bondage to it. That is the meaning of this passage of I Corinthians 2. He is absolutely held in bondage to it, and all that influences it. You can add to this,

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Turn to Acts 3.

Acts 3:19-21 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Times of refreshing are coming. But they will come from, or be the result of, the presence of the Lord, and all that represents. It will not come about as a result of the manipulations and machinations and power and control of man at the behest of Satan the Devil.

But there is going to be a time coming when co-existence with one another will be possible; it will be the order of the day; cooperation will take place among nations. But before then, there is every reason to believe that mankind is going to be in for a very rough go of it.

Turn to Jeremiah 30.

Jeremiah 30:23-24 Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goes forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind; it will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the LORD will not return until He has done it, and until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days you will consider it.

That is where we are now. And again, the brief statistics I gave you at the beginning, you ought to be able to see that the whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth. It has not built up yet to its full capacity, but hopefully we will not be around when that occurs. But it is coming. You can be sure! And, it is a lot closer than it used to be.

Jeremiah 31:1-5 "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 lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt [Why? Because everything is smashed!], O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines [They must have been stripped away! Of course, all the festivities that went with it are gone too.], 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."

If you look on the other side of the coin, the reason he is saying this is because now there is not anything growing on the hillsides of Samaria. They have been devastated.

Jeremiah 31:6 “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.'”

Again the other side of the coin, they are not going up to Zion.

Jeremiah 31:7-9 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!' Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the one who labors with child, together; a great throng shall return there. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.”

If we would continue reading, we would see the prophecy that is given alternates back and forth between great heights of joy, and deep misery and distress on the other. It shows the exuberant joy and rejoicing in which the Israelites can hardly contain themselves; on the other hand, it pictures the Israelites crying, smitten very deeply with sadness.

It shows that they found, as it states here, grace in the wilderness of their captivity. And as we see them here, they are being drawn to God. And so, there are tears of repentance, combined with tears of hope and joy. All of this is seen against the backdrop of the captivity that they are emerging from.

Turn to Jeremiah 24.

Jeremiah 24:6-7 “For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. [This is the verse I want to focus on.] Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.”

God says in another place that He is going to make an everlasting covenant with them. That is the same covenant that He has made with you and me—the New Covenant. And He says that He will put the fear of Himself in their hearts so that they will not depart from Him. This has a direct connection to you and me right now.

Do you know what it says in Deuteronomy 14:23? This is the passage in which God is telling us about the second tithe, and what it is to be used for. He is telling us about keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Why does He tell us to keep that tithe? Why does He tell us to keep the Feast? He says that so we might learn to fear Him. God has given us His Spirit so that we can learn to fear Him. That is the only reason you are here. You have learned to fear Him.

If God had not given you grace, in your own particular wilderness, wherever it happened to be, you would not be sitting here now, and you would not be looking forward to exuberant joy to the return of Jesus Christ and being able to spend all eternity with Him. On the other hand, looking forward with sadness about what is going to have to happen in order to bring the rest of the people of Israel, and eventually all the world to the place where they are sitting at a Feast of Tabernacles because they, too, fear God—they respond to that fear in keeping His commands.

Now, at times, it looks as though God is virtually everything in regard to our salvation—almost, but not quite. Man has a small but very essential part in bringing about the completion of God's purpose. This has a great deal to do with how good of a Feast of Tabernacles this is going to be for you, and for us. Turn to Ezekiel 36.

Ezekiel 36:24-26 “For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

One of the major things that God does, even before the Millennium begins, is to get rid of that destroying spirit whose foul attitudes pervade the hearts of

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mankind today, and produces the enervating, enslaving, pressure-packed cultures that cause our need for a refreshing. The major solution that will enable man to walk in God's way is to give man a Spirit that will enable him to fear God, and to keep His commands.

That is the problem.

I will prove this to you in Deuteronomy 29. Remember what it said there in Ezekiel 36, "I will give you a new spirit."

Deuteronomy 29:1-3 These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb. Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day."

Mankind does not have the Spirit of God. He is in a position where he is unable to fully implement the vast powers that God endowed to us naturally, and physically. And because he does not have that Spirit, mankind is easily skewed off in a direction that takes him away from God; taking him away from the way of life that he would love to have; the kind of life he can conceive that he would love to have; to see himself and all his children when they are prosperous, and people are living in harmony; there is no contention, but cooperation; beautiful and wonderful crops; all nations prospering. He can conceive it. But he cannot do it, because he is too influenced to go in the wrong direction.

Christ was with them in the cloud. He provided them with victories. He gave them the very best laws, and the best leaders, but they did not have the Spirit of God; therefore, they could not use it to control themselves, and obey God.

Despite all their natural abilities, and living under the government of God, it was not enough! There is a missing link that we have to have.

Now you found grace in God's eyes, and I do not know why. I do not know why I have either. But He has yanked us out of the wilderness of this world, and set us on a path toward His Kingdom; He has granted us repentance; He has given us His Spirit. Our part is to make use of what He has given to us. That is why He has done what He did.

So, though our part is small, it is absolutely essential. Though our part is small, if we do not control ourselves, if we do not choose to make the right choices, even though they are available to us, if we do not exercise faith and obedience, we will not make it either.

The choice is ours, even as the choice is going to be the Israelite's choice when they come back out of their captivity, cleaning them up, granting them repentance, and giving them His Spirit. They are still going to be faced with making choices. Though it may be easier because the general population will also be in much the same way, they will have to choose between alternatives.

Paul sums up, briefly, concisely, why Israel failed. It is found in Hebrews 4: 1-2. The basic reason is they did not exercise their faith in God. Physically, they had everything they needed to make the right choices. But without the Spirit of God (that one ingredient that God withheld from them, but which you and I now have), they could not do it. God did it that way so that you and I would understand that.

Those Israelites were in no way inferior to you and me, physically. They were every bit as intelligent, and maybe more so. They were every bit as strong physically, and probably more so. And they utterly failed because they did not have the Spirit of God. Now, God has eliminated that in the New Covenant; a covenant with better promises.

So, you can see the pressure is on you and me, now. This is it. We might even say the handwriting is on the wall for us, too. I do not mean to make that oppressive, but I do mean to make it serious. We are having our judgment—the judgment is now on the household of God.

Turn to Isaiah 32.

Isaiah 32:9-11 Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech. In a year and some days you will be troubled, you complacent women; for the vintage will fail, the gathering will not come. Tremble, you women who are at ease; be troubled, you complacent ones; strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird sackcloth on your waists.

Isaiah 32:15-18 Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

I wanted you to see what God says is the effect of receiving His Spirit in people who will use it. The wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and it is accounted as a forest. Does that not sound good? Justice will dwell in the wilderness. Righteousness remains in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness—keeping God's commands—will be peace. The effect of righteousness will be quietness and assurance forever. And My people will dwell in peaceful habitations, in secure dwellings, and quiet resting places.

The commentaries say that this was likely something uttered at a harvest festival—Feast of Tabernacles? That is very possible as Isaiah watched the people's heedless gaiety. Think about that in relation to the Feast of Tabernacles. Why are we here? Is it a time of heedless gaiety? Does God want us to enjoy it? You bet He does. But does He want it to be heedless? Absolutely not!

His intent for the Feast of Tabernacles is very serious, indeed! He wants it to produce the right things. He convoked it in order for His people to learn to fear Him. He convoked it in order that His people would leave here filled

The Handwriting Is on the Wall (1994) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<https://www.cgg.org>)

with a driving desire to submit and conform to His way of life, because out of that righteousness, which is not only imputed, it is achieved by people who are using the Spirit of God. The effect of righteousness is peace.

We have the opportunity, if we make the right choices, if we choose the right alternatives, if we are using the Spirit of God, if we are willing to believe what God says, we can make this an awesome, wonderful, happy, enjoyable, peaceful, harmonious, and tremendously prosperous spiritual feast at the same time.

What comes out of that effect of God's Spirit?

Out comes a right, true foretaste of the World Tomorrow. And when I say the World Tomorrow, I am not talking about physical Israel, or anyone else.

I am talking about the Kingdom of God. God convoked this, not so we get a little foretaste of what people are going to live like in the Millennium. He wants people to have a foretaste of what it is going to be like in His Family. We can create little areas of prosperity for short periods of time, "Well, we're just as rich as we will be in the Millennium. Big deal."

If this is going to be of any benefit at all, it is going to be because we have a foretaste of the *Kingdom of God*. And it will be that way if we are minding our P's and Q's, exercising the Spirit of God in love and righteousness for one another.

Turn to John 8 to get a principle.

John 8:32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The Jews thought that they had never been in bondage, and Jesus explained to them, that they were in bondage to sin, and Satan. And then,

John 8:43 "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word."

He means that they did not have an ear for it. They did not have the Spirit of God, and it just did not impact upon their minds in the right way. They could hear the words, and might even have a measure of understanding of those words, but they did not really understand them—they did not see within them, and their purpose in preparing them for the Kingdom of God. That escaped them entirely.

John 8:44-47 “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [nature] resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

That is all I wanted from here, just to present the contrast. Jesus was surely saying that there was a difference between those who have the Spirit of God, and those who do not. The ones who have the Spirit of God hear things with a perception, with an understanding, and with an insight. Those words have impact on their lives in a way that others who do not have the Spirit of God hearing the same words, has no impact at all.

That is a gift of God. It is part of His grace to you and me in order to prepare us.

I am bringing this up in this context in order that we might understand that He wants us to make use of what we already know, and what we already hear.

The same principle that is going to make life in the Millennium and in the Kingdom of God the way that they are going to be, can also be put into effect right here (at the Feast of Tabernacles).

Let us conclude in Hebrews 4.

Hebrews 4:10-11 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Paul is writing that we can actually begin to have a foretaste of the rest that is coming. His rest is the Kingdom of God; not just the Millennium. It is that “times of refreshment.” And so, we can have a small foretaste of it. We cannot enter into its fullness because that is not going to occur until Jesus Christ returns.

We can exercise our faith now, yield to His Word, and use the gifts that He has made available to us. And if we do, that foretaste will be produced.

He tells us in John 10 that He came so that we could have life and have it more abundantly. There is no reason we cannot exercise ourselves to make every effort to do that here so that we can ensure that we will leave the Feast of Tabernacles having experienced a small foretaste of what it is going to be like in the Kingdom of God.

It can be done. God does not give us impossible things to do. If He says that we can have that foretaste, we can already enter into it, to a limited degree, we can do it. And if we do, we are going to go home knowing that we have had the best feast we ever had.

And so that responsibility is on us. Let us try to make sure that we do what we can to make this one super-sensational spiritual Feast.