

## **The Needed Dimension**

**Cooperation and Love with God and Man**

**John W. Ritenbaugh**

**Given 16-Oct-95; Sermon #FT95-08-PM**

If you have been following the theme of my previous sermons, you will see that there is a clear thread tying them into a whole. The first message on the opening night was intended to give us a sense of urgency of the times as it is seen in just one tiny segment of this vast world, this Babylon the Great that is churning away out there, and we have to go back into it in just a short period of time.

The second message was intended to give us an idea of where we might fit as a group into the larger, greater church of God world. This also tends to indicate that the prophecies are indeed being fulfilled, because the seven churches of the end-time book, the book of Revelation, clearly appeared to be forming.

There is something that I think I need to clarify in regard to this sermon, I had enough feedback to know that somehow or another I jumped to something that I did not make very clear. It involves my saying, after I showed you there is a historical pattern: that the church has always followed the movements of the children of Israel, So when the church fled to Pella, it followed some movements of people fleeing to get away from Jerusalem because Titus had the area surrounded.

Then the church gradually drifted up into Asia Minor, and remember the persecutions always preceded the jump, and when persecution arose there the church fled into the Balkan area. A substantial number of Israelite's were there. And persecution arose and it fled into the Alpine area, then again there was substantial numbers of Israelite's who has already passed through there and established families and home bases from which to work. Then persecution arose there and again the church jumped into southern France, Italy, and on into Britain, and other parts of northwestern Europe where a number of Israelite's already were.

Then persecution arose again, and the church jumped into the United States, and we already know that the pilgrims and Puritans and people like that fled Europe in order to get away from religious persecution.

Then I said the pattern is already established and the church is going to jump again into another area. I jumped all the way to Jerusalem without explaining that what I meant was that Israel is going to go into captivity, they are going to be spread all over the world, and then God is going to begin to gather them out of their captivity. Where is He going to take them? He is going to take them to Israel, Jerusalem. Who is going to be there to meet them? You.

That is what I meant. By that time we will be in the Kingdom of God. We will be truly born into that Family, that is the next stage of God's work. God's purpose is being worked out, so the world is working its place to where it is going to again produce persecution for the church, then God is going to cause it to flee, to jump, and when we jump it is going to be into wonderful, serious conversion of the children of Israel, because that is the next stage.

My third message was given in hope that we would understand that we are each a vital part of the body, being prepared for God's Kingdom, and our responsibility in it is not at all unimportant. The government of God works at the lowest, simplest level. It is the individual's responsibility to restrain himself, to live, and work within the limits of the authority given in love and cooperation both with God and our fellow man here, and His purpose, building a stable fellowship and in so doing the work of the church.

Love produces cooperation, and cooperation produces progress, whereas competition invariably produces division and more. Keep your eyes open because, if you see competition and division in some of these groups that are out there, church of God groups, you know they have not quite gotten the picture yet. They are not turning themselves to cooperate with one another, even within their own groups.

The nations are not cooperating with each other because individuals are not cooperating with each other. There is only so much of any given item to go around, and the desire to have these things produces competition for them so that they cannot be at one.

There is a tremendous amount of ignorance driving the world, and the ignorance is not only in the little people, but also in the great. From the biblical perspective the whole world is reeling in confusion all the while it is fighting over the things that each desires.

There is no doubt that the world needs God's Kingdom on this earth, it needs the rule of Jesus Christ; but there is still yet more that the world needs in addition. And this day, the Last Great Day, marks the vital necessity if all of those who are in their graves are going to be saved. It is a necessity that even those of us who know sometimes overlook. We overlook its importance until we are reminded. Then it is so clear.

What hope and what peace these days bring to us! Everyone here is gushing at what we have just experienced. You are filled with joy, you surely rejoiced in it. If there was a way to indicate how much hope you have now, and how much of your faith has been regenerated, it would probably be spouting out the top, and yet these very things these days are sometimes snootily, sometimes casually, sometimes sarcastically, rejected as either Jewish, or done away. Yet we have just seen in our own experience the need of practicing them.

Bob Bricker said to me the other day, we learn what we live. Just a little cliché', a little turn on things, and that is why God has us do these things. That is why He has us get rid of leaven, that is why He has us fast on the Day of Atonement, that is why He has us come here and enjoy eight days together like this. Because we learn while we live it, and if we do not do something there is a pretty good chance it is not going to ever become a part of our life, our character, what we are.

**Matthew 17:1-4** Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

They got just a little opportunity to experience the world tomorrow, and boy was it good! So good that Peter was just enthused, let us make tabernacles. He knew what it meant. He knew—they maybe did not understand it fully—that they had been projected forward in time, when the Kingdom of God would actually be on earth, and he said, Wow! This is great.

We do not get to experience it quite to that extent, but I think that you and your life now have a witness of what it can be like, and you know what? It can even be better next year because we grow in between time.

These men were not only witnesses, they were bystanders, watching the action. We are not only witnesses of His goodness, but also participants in producing its goodness through the exercise of keeping the Feast. How much we need that witness and the experience of the goodness of the Feast to encourage us when we go back to the world.

Our whole year is organized around the Feast of Tabernacles, at least in a general anyway. Maybe we can broaden that and say that our whole year is organized around the festivals of God, and the Feast of Tabernacles in particular. It is the high point of the year, and what an impact these eight days can have on our life and what a greater impact its fulfillment is going to have on the billions that follow us.

**Leviticus 23:34-36** “Speak to the children of Israel, saying,: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.’”

**Leviticus 23:39** ‘Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath rest.’

Connect this with John 7:37-39 (you do not have to turn to it, because Harold [Way] went through it this morning). Jesus spoke on the Last Great Day of the Feast. This is what hit me: this is the Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles. In one sense the Feast of Tabernacles has not ended.

Did you notice in the book of Leviticus chapter 23, that there are seven festivals? The Last Great Day is not a festival, it is not listed as a festival. The festivals are: Passover, two of them in the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Last Great Day is not a festival.

On the other hand there are seven holy days, Passover is not a holy day. There are two holy days in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day. God's special days during the year begin with a festival that is not a holy day, and end with a holy day that is not a festival.

Passover is attached to the Days of Unleavened Bread. It is a festival, but it is not a holy day. You are allowed to work on Passover, but it leads directly into the Days of Unleavened Bread, and without Passover the Days of Unleavened Bread really does not make sense.

On the other hand, Tabernacles, though it is officially designated as only seven days long, has an eighth day attached to it. That, as we just saw in John, it is actually considered by those people then as part of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Passover concentrates on blood, redemption, and justification. The Last Great Day concentrates on water. John 7:37, "Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living waters." It concentrates on water, sanctification, and glorification of billions of people. The plan begins in blood and redemption, and it ends with water and glorification. I have not figured out yet why it is exactly that way, it is just interesting that that is the way it is.

Carry through this thought that the Last Great Day, even though it is a Holy day and even though it is separate, it is inextricably bound to the Feast of Tabernacles. Even as Passover is inextricably bound to the Days of Unleavened Bread.

**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. The horrible world that John just said we are going to go back to. God is talking about a time when the burdens are going to be lifted, there is going to be a time of refreshing, it is going to be a relief from the pressure of curses brought on by Satan and sin. Because Christ is here! If He is here God’s government is here.

Restitution equates to one of two things: either the restoring or establishing of all that God has prophesied through the prophets, it can mean either the restoring of something taken away, or it can also mean the establishment of something new. I think in reality both are included. The translators (at least the King James has) chose to translate it in the sense of restoration, giving the sense of something that was lost being taken away. I think that is correct, because the government of God is going to be restored to the earth, because it was certainly taken away, or at least withdrawn.

Regardless, it indicates a lifting of burdens. Burdens of anger, anxiety, fear, pain, and injustice, and hopelessness. Burdens of ignorance, poverty, war, famine, disease, divorce. Are those burdens going to cease being lifted when the Feast of Tabernacles ends? Of course not. More burdens are going to be lifted during the Last Great Day than will ever be lifted during the Millennium simply because so many more people are being dealt with. There are so many more burdens, so much more hope that needs to be restored during the Last Great Day.

Are you beginning to see why the Last Great Day is attached to the Feast of Tabernacles? It is the crown, the capstone, it finishes off what God is doing among men, only it is expanded out multiple billions of times more than ever in the Feast of Tabernacles. The time when Israel and some of the other people of other nations are going to be offered salvation.

I mentioned that Christ will be here, God's government will be here, but we also know that Satan will not be here. That wonderful combination will greatly increase people's chance for living a peaceful and abundant, productive, happy life in this world. That is not all that is needed. Revelation 20 also shows that toward the end of that 1,000 years Satan is released. Once he is put back into the mix, war breaks out, even though Christ is here, even though the government of God is ruling the earth. You just change the equation and war breaks out again. Why?

We will concentrate on its solution. Once Satan's spirit is reintroduced into the world, things begin to go to pot, even though the government of God is ruling. People are still going to be susceptible to the persuasions of that foul spirit that is against God. Evidence of that spirit will be shown in the wars that begin to take place.

**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.

**Jeremiah 31:1-10** "At the same time," says the Lord, "I will be the God of all 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, 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 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!’

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 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. “Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’

We could keep on going through there, but I think what you can relate to here is that we are dealing with Israel beginning near the time of Christ’s return. As you can see, if we would read the whole twenty verses, the prophecy alternates between images of a people smitten with deep sadness and yet, at the same time, rejoicing with exuberant joy that they can hardly contain.

It is picturing Israelite's reaction to the calling of God, the end of their captivity, and the beginning of bringing them back into the land of Israel. So what happens here, we are seeing a prophecy of them finding grace in the wilderness of their captivity, and they are being drawn to God. They are having their true national identity revealed to them, and the awesome hope that lies before them. It is part of their purpose in the plan of God.

What I want you to think about is this: many, many times I have said to you, God operates in patterns so that we can have our faith increased because we have seen how God reacts in the past, and how He continually reacts in the same way. He changes not! He establishes these patterns so that we can have faith, so we can be ready in some cases.



Does that sound just like us? Except that our captivity did not take place as a result of a national calamity. Did we come to understand that we were captives to Satan and this world, that we were held captive in bondage to sin, even though we were not literally taken to a land that is ours. Yet we began to hear the truth of God, we began to have our national identity revealed to us. God led us to repentance, there were tears of joy and hope flowing against the background of our emerging into an understanding of who we are, where we are, where we are going, and looking forward into going into the Land, our inheritance that God has for us.

**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. 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.

Here is why this is occurring, “I will give them a heart to know Me.” This is why we see what happened in those previous chapters in Jeremiah 30 and 31. That is why there is alternating periods of deep repentance, of sorrow, and also great joy and hope, because God is revealing Himself and beginning to give them a heart through repentance to know Him.

God is giving them eyes of faith to see and ears of understanding, so that they can apply their minds and their lives in moral, ethical, and spiritual ways that they could not do before.

**Jeremiah 32:37-39** Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.

Do you understand this? This has already happened to you. I want you to see, because this pattern keeps getting bigger and wider as we go through the years. First it is individuals, you and me. It began after Christ’s resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit, but it is continuing through the centuries

and now we are a part of it. We are just about on the edge where it is going to explode into a whole nation being converted.

The same pattern that God has followed with you and me on an individual basis is going to explode into a national conversion. Then when we get to the Last Great Day, it is going to explode into the conversion of the whole world. The same pattern is going to be followed.

**Jeremiah 32:40-44** ‘And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good, but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’ “For thus says the Lord: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. And the fields will be bought in this land of which you say, “It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldean's.” Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the place around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,’ says the Lord.”

This occurred in a small way to the people who returned, the Jews, from Babylon to Judah following their seventy years in captivity. If you noticed as we were reading through there, God says, “I am the God of Israel.” not just Judah. This is an end time prophecy, a prophecy that is just on the verge of being fulfilled. It includes all of Israel. It has not happened yet, but we are looking at something that is yet to occur in just a few years.

The beginning of the next larger spiritual harvest in God’s plan is just about to take place. So in order to secure it He makes an everlasting covenant with them. He puts His fear in them so that they will not depart from Him.

It is essential to have the fear of God. This Feast is dedicated to that because the fear of God is the beginning. It may begin with no small amount of terror. But it ends with a deep respect, awe, and appreciation that we do not want to disappoint Him even in the smallest things, because we respect Him

so highly. The fear of God has a direct bearing on faith and love. In fact, we might go so far as to say that it is the foundation of both of them. God says so clearly it is the beginning.

Keeping the holy days and tithing is like taking a required course in school. It is not an option for those of us who know better. It is almost like tithing is the tuition, our payment, to learn part of the curriculum of the overall purpose of learning to fear God. As we learn to fear God, we come to have faith in Him, we come to love Him, and each other.

**Ezekiel 36:24-32** “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 [Passover begins with blood, the Last Great Day begins with water], 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. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land [eternally!] that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

I will deliver you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. [Has He done any of that here?] Not for your sake do I do this” says the Lord God, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!” Thus says the Lord God: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.”

You can see here that one of the first things that God does as the Millennium begins is to get rid of that destroying spirit whose foul attitudes pervades the

hearts and minds of humanity today. It produces this enervating and enslaving, and destroying spirits, the foul attitudes that pervade our hearts so that we are not able to fear Him, not able to have faith in Him, not able to love Him. When Satan is gone out of our lives in the way he was never gone before, then we can begin to have burdens released from us.

God begins to change our hearts, that is what He is going to do for these people as well. The new heart enables God to motivate Israel to cooperate, and thus walk in God's law, and obedience results in an environment of peace and prosperity.

**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."

**Deuteronomy 29:5-9** "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or similar drink; that you may know that I am the Lord your God. And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them. We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do."

This is a flashback. We need to look at it in that light and think about its application to us. He tells us to keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper. For you and me, it is the spiritual prosperity that we look for. We know all that occurred to Israel following their departure from the wilderness, this first time. Israel came out of Egypt, they went into the wilderness, spent forty years there then went into their land. Did being removed from their bondage and simply placed into another part of the earth ensure that they would have peace, prosperity, a millennial condition? No.

Does having prosperity mean having more money, ensure having a good life? No. There are very many wealthy people who have miserable lives. Money does not ensure a good life, neither does where you live ensure a good life. In one sense you could live in paradise, like Adam and Eve. It did not Ensure them a good life.

Does having ensured peace give people liberty? Does even having Christ around ensure any of these good things? This is one reason why God is going to allow Satan loose, so that we understand we can look forward to this; that even having God on earth, the government of God there, even the prosperity of the Millennium, even having ensured peace because Christ is ruling over us, as soon as the foul spirit is let loose, people begin go react to tune in on it.

The whole equation has to be met in order to produce a millennial atmosphere, the kind of things that we were looking at there in the book of Jeremiah and in other places. You can come here to the Feast of Tabernacles with a lot of money in your pocket and have a miserable time. We can be Edenic conditions at the Feast of Tabernacles, that does not ensure that we will have peace there, nor ensure that we will have a good time.

There is a factor that God cannot supply. We have full power and full authority to make or break it. God does what He can do. God supplies all the necessary ingredients but even He cannot produce it unless we use our free moral agency in the way that we should. Humility is a choice, it says it clearly in the books of James and I Peter. Unless we humble ourselves before God and choose to submit to Him, all of God's efforts go for naught.

What is it that will produce the Millennium? All of the things that we read about, plus the people yielding to God, humbling themselves before Him. They are going to have the same kind of choices that we have. Unless they choose to submit to God, there will be no Millennium produced. We would never have had the kind of Feast that we had if you have not chosen to make it that way. You chose to cooperate, you chose to pray about it, you chose to be up, to be positive in your approach. You chose to be tolerant and to overlook a lot of little things that might have aggravated us into battles with one another. You chose to be kind, generous, compassionate, share with one another. That is what it takes and that is what God is working toward, where

He can reveal Himself to people after He has manipulated situations so that they will repent, where they will surrender to Him, and humble themselves before Him, and He can give them His Spirit, and they can use that mighty tool to overcome the pull of Satan's spirit that has been in our lives from the time we were born.

That is what is going to make a Millennium and make the Last Great Day, that Great White Throne Judgment, and that is what is going to make God open up that Book of Life and begin entering names in. The pattern is already set.

We know how to make a good Feast; we are responsible now. There is no reason why we cannot always have good Feasts. God proved to us that it can be done. We can quit competing, and we can give ourselves to cooperating with one another and we will become one. It may be hard to do, but God's government is so simple. It is not the ministry's responsibility to *make* you this way. It is the ministry's responsibility to *teach* you this way. It is your responsibility to do it. When every part of the body is functioning the way it should because each person is choosing to live that way, it is going to be awesome.

**I Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

God was not unfair to Israel. If we would have read one more verse there in Deuteronomy 29, verse 4, it says God has not given you a heart that you should understand, and that you might yield to Him. He was not unfair to them, it was part of His purpose to do it that way, because in His wisdom, His love for those who would come along later, He had to provide a witness. There had to be an infallible example to show that there is only one way that this could be accomplished and that is a loving cooperation between Him and us.

And there is a vital element that all of us need before this can take place, He has to give us His Holy Spirit. If He does not give us His Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome the spirit of Satan, nothing happens. But before He

can give us His Spirit, He has to work circumstances so that we will repent, because He will not give His Spirit to someone who will not obey Him. So we have to surrender with all of our heart, we have to have the vision of what He is trying to do so that we will have the twin motivators of the fact that we love Him and we surrender to Him, coupled with faith in what He is doing, and we will give ourselves over to doing it.

He has given us free moral agency so that we can choose to do that. We can choose like Adam and Eve to either be under Satan or under Him. He has given us an extra advantage that He did not give to Adam and Eve. He did not give them His Spirit. So again, our privilege becomes our responsibility. Our responsibility is greater than it was with them, and now we have eternal life on the line, and this is our time to yield to Him.

God was not unfair, He did not give them more than they were able to handle, He was not going to judge them on the same level that He is judging us. Do You know what we are being judged on, what the standard is? He expects us to live as men *should*. He does not expect us to live like He does because we do not have the fullness of the Spirit. He does expect us to strive with all of our might. He expects us to live the way mankind should with the Spirit of God.

He judged those people, not on the same basis that we are being judged; to much is given much is required. They were given less, they were not given His Spirit, they were not given the advantages that we have. He did not require as much of them as He did of us, and they are going to come up in that second resurrection, and they are going to know that their lives were not lived in vain, and they are going to know that they provided a wonderful teaching example in pattern for you and me.

They played their part. God has every right to use us in any way that He sees fit. God made a powerful point through them for our benefit so that the pattern is established that we can see what we need. What we need is everything that we can get from God so that we can put it into practice in our lives.

The basic reason that Israel failed is given in Hebrews 4:1-2. The basic reason is because they did not believe God. They did not have faith. They

lived by sight. They did not have the Spirit to really live by faith so they could not relate to what they were going through. They could not relate to what the nation was going through, they could not relate to why they had famines, economic problems, violence in the street, and so on. We can relate to those things and the only reason we can relate to them properly and not simply be aware that they are there, the world is aware that they are there but they cannot relate to it. You and I can relate it to God's purpose, you and I can truly relate it to sin, you and I can relate it to Satan the Devil. So God has given us an advantage there. We can make proper relationships about what is going on in the world, because we can see these things being fulfilled. We can live by faith.

Because of the Israelite's condition, they could not translate what they were experiencing into a cooperative way of life that would produce mankind's fondest hopes and dreams. They always had the idea of letting someone else do it, let someone else take care of it. We have to understand that it is our responsibility to take care of our part, and then anywhere else that we can assist, fine. God puts a priority there. The brethren come first, then to the world.

In I Corinthians 2:9-16 Paul shows very clearly that a person without the Spirit of God is absolutely held in bondage, because God has to reveal these things. He can do that. You can combine that with,

**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 [totally impossible].

Without the Spirit of God to displace Satan's spirit, mankind cannot submit to the law of God. We have privileges that are awesome. The world knows of God, but as God's witnesses in so many places is they do not know Him. There is a difference. As Earl [Henn] was saying in his sermon, men can prove that God exists, but that does not mean that they know Him. They know *about* Him; they know *of* Him.

They can read His Word but most of the time they are going to misinterpret it, or they will misinterpret something correctly but they will not connect properly to something else. They keep coming up with the wrong answers.



You and I can read those commentaries and we can see that they have a great deal of knowledge about God. But because they do not know God they do not put things in their correct sequence, and they keep coming up with the wrong final answer. This is why they believe that there will be a rapture, why they believe that they have immortal souls. They can read the same scriptures that we do and they misinterpret them. It is because they do not know God, they only know *about* Him. And because they have not been given the Spirit of God, those things have not been revealed to them.

Paul shows in relation to his countrymen in Romans 10:1-3, they had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge. When it came to real truth, they were ignorant of God, even though they had a zeal for God.

We can see this in this nation churches are all over the place, yet, God says in the book of Hosea,

**Hosea 4:1** there is no knowledge of God in the land.

That is an astounding statement, mind boggling. We know Him, we do not just know about Him, we *know* Him. Do you know why you know Him?

**Psalms 111:10** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

There is a chain of things connected to us really knowing God, but the step that enables us to know more than just know about Him is that we obey Him. We try to live like He does. And because we keep His commandments, we begin to understand Him. We begin to understand how He lives.

An example is right now. The Feast of Tabernacles that we had. You experienced here at the Feast of Tabernacles just a tiny foretaste of the way God lives. How would you like to live that way all the time? Have a body that never wears out, never gets tired, has perfect eyesight, ears that work all the time, all the other good things that He will give us when He glorifies us. But He will not glorify us until we are learning how to live life as He lives, and we will make ourselves do it because we had a taste of it, we understand a little bit of it.

I will tell you what is happening in the WCG. When we stop obeying God the process reverses. We begin to lose our understanding. Think of this in relationship to Revelation 3:16 in the description of the Laodicean church. Do you know what Laodicean means? It means judgment of the people. What was the judgment of the Laodicean, of their spiritual condition? Their judgment was, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." What was God's judgment of the people? "You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." God's judgment was exceedingly different from their judgment.

Do you understand what happened to them? They had lost their understanding so gradually they did not even realize they were blind. They lost it because they stopped obeying God. We see it happening right before our eyes. You know that nobody who has the understanding that you have would say God's law is done away, would change the Feast of Tabernacles into a festival of faith, and from what we are hearing going to be held next year in July or August. The understanding is evaporating, and it will not be long before they will not know God at all and that prophesy about returning to its vomit will come true.

The faith once delivered has been revealed to us. I think that with us, we are seeing a fulfillment of what is written to the church in Ephesus. We are regaining our first love. It does not have to stop there. But we have repented.

**Isaiah 30:1-5** "Woe to the rebellious children" says the Lord, "who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be your humiliation. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of a people who could not benefit them, or be help of benefit, but a shame and also a reproach."

The time is coming, perhaps even now is, when men and women within the church of God will cease putting their reliance and short sighted hopes in the

incomplete visions of men. The time is coming when they will trust God. Those in the church may have to go through a tribulation in order to do that. Those who are not in the church we know are surely going to go through the tribulation in order to come to the place where they will trust God.

Much of that same pattern is going to be repeated in the Great White Throne Judgment. Those people will have the background of their experiences when they did not seek the counsel of God but rather sought the counsel of men. The time is going to come when those who sought alliances among nations, rather than trusting God to provide for them and protect them are going to see that those things did not work, and they are going to repent. They too are going to be added to the Family of God.

They are going to go through the same kind of experiences that we have had to go through. The calling of God leading to repentance, understanding of who we are racially, ethnically, where we fit in the flow of history, the times before and the times after they lived, and where they are now in relation to those things and relation to God's purpose. We have all these things revealed to us. We know where our ancestors have come from for the most part. We know who we are now because God has revealed it. Now we know that we are the heirs of salvation, we are the inheritors of the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They too are going to have to come to that.

The time is coming when they are going to have to put off the old man and put on the new man. They are going to be faced with whether they are going to be humble before God, whether they are going to choose to yield to Him, and apply in their life the things of God, just as you and I have had to do.

They are going to have to come to the place where they are free to choose, to allow Him to govern them, and not make the same mistakes as our common ancestors Adam and Eve did. God chose what is going to make all of this possible, the major element, the missing dimension, the ingredient that everyone needs, is the Spirit of God. That which functions to change our heart, to change our nature, to change our character, to change us to God. It is this Spirit that begins the process of producing in us the characteristics of the God Family.

**Ezekiel 37:11** Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’

We are looking here at the resurrection that is going to take place at the beginning of the Great White Throne Judgment. These people will come out of the grave with the minds that they had before they went into the grave. They come out of the grave as anxious as when they died, as terrified as they died, as burdened as they died, except that God has healed their bodies, but their minds are not healed yet.

**Ezekiel 37:12-14** Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of ‘Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.

It is obvious from what it says here they did not know God before. What we are seeing here is typical of the whole world, all the Gentiles nations being offered the same thing as those Israelites who come up out of their graves at that time. They too are going to have the opportunity.

**John 17:3** “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

This verse gives us a wedge of understanding so that we can know that the Bible means more than endless life when it speaks of eternal life. Eternal life includes how one lives.

To receive eternal life and not live as God lives would be a curse, because we would be eternally miserable. Eternal life is not just endless life—eternal life is quality of life. It is not until one receives the Spirit of God that we are

able to relate to this quality, to be able to live it, because as long as we are dominated by the other spirit, we will never be able to experience living in that manner because it is enmity against God and it is not subject to His law.

So when we have God's Spirit it enables us to believe Him, to trust Him, and as we do He begins to become a more real personality, we begin to see Him as deeply involved in our lives, very much caring how our life is lived. And even more importantly, how it ends. As we live the way He lives, we begin experiencing the same things in principle that our Elder Brother Jesus Christ experienced. It begins to give us comprehension and understanding of Him. What is happening is, we are coming to the knowledge *of* Christ, not the knowledge *about* Christ.

It is those who grow in this knowledge and overcome the pulls of our former life, lived by Satan's dictates, who know God.

**II Peter 3:18** Grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Not knowledge about Him, but knowledge of Him. *His knowledge*. It is knowledge of a way of life lived. So, we know Him by our experiences of living on a human level, as He did. When we do this we cannot help but be in His image, Then God will recognize His own by their spirit and how they live. This process is shortly going to expand into all of Israel, some of the Gentiles nations as well, then in about another 1,000 years an even greater expansion. We and they will truly be sons of God, because we will bear His characteristics.

**II Corinthians 4:13-18** And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak. Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving living to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

What it is going to take to make the Millennium and the Last Great Day, is the process through which God is leading us. He reveals Himself, He grants us repentance, He gives us His Spirit, He frees us to be able to make the choice necessary to be obedient to Him. As we live life this way, we begin to take on His characteristics, and not only that, we really begin to know Him, understand Him, we begin to see the quality of life that He lives. As we live it, we want it more and more. And we become renewed by the combination of His Spirit and our willing and loving obedience to Him, and love of one another.