

FEAST OF TABERNACLES - 2004

Welcome To The Feast

Fred Coulter - September 29, 2004

And greetings brethren. Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles, the year 2004. And in coming to the feast many of us have been going to the feast for years, and years, and years, and years. And I know for me, this is going to be my forty-fourth feast. And so I'm really looking forward to it. You know, in all through the years God gives us, and teaches us, and gives us understanding. And every Feast of Tabernacles (as a matter of fact with all the feasts) what I try to do is to teach what the feast is, and each year have it a little bit different than the year before, and a little bit different than the year before, and so that there be very little repeats, although we cover much of the same material. It's much like Jesus said concerning a scribe. He said: "Therefore every scribe which is instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, which brings forth out of his treasure things new and things old" (Matt. 13:52, paraphrased). And so as we go down through time and through the things that we have learned, and growing in grace and knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, that we learn new things concerning the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now what I try and do every year also, is to have as many days devoted to teaching about the feast itself. And in doing that we have been able to see that the Feast of Tabernacles has a fantastic meaning, and portrays the plan of God, and the kingdom of God, and the rule of Christ in so many aspects as it not only affects the world, as it affects us, it affects the church, and everything that is done. So the Feast of Tabernacles really is a tremendous feast for us and one that we look forward to. And so in keeping the feast let's first of all understand that God wants us to learn. And He's going to teach us. And He teaches us from His Word.

Now let's come back here to Isaiah 28 and let's see what God has said concerning how we learn from His Word. And it's quite an amazing thing that God has done, because by the same method that He teaches us, He also closes the eyes of those who are in the world. And what is the difference that we hear the Scriptures and we hear the Word of God, and those who are in the world hear it, and we get two completely different understandings from it? Because a lot of people, when you start keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, and even when they find out that you do year after year after year, they say, "Well, are you Jewish?" And you tell them, "Well no, I'm not Jewish." "Well then what are you?" "I am Christian." "Well, why are you keeping these days? Don't you know we don't have to keep them any longer?" And that applies especially to those who are in the religions of this world because they've been taught to only open their minds to certain things, and close their minds to many things. Well, what God wants us to do is to understand His Word. So here in Isaiah 28, here's what we have. And this also builds up toward our reward, to what we are going to do, toward our jobs in the kingdom of God when we are ruling and reigning with Christ.

Isaiah 28:5: "In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people..." Now we are the remnant of the

church of God. And wherever the church of God has been scattered today you can say we are pretty much the remnant. Now what God is going to do in the future, how many more years we have to go, how God is going to do things down the road, we don't know. So we have to walk in faith and trust God and let Him lead us to do the things that He wants us to do. And we hope and pray that all the churches of God will yield to God so that He can use them; as well as all of the ministers of God, that God can use them. And so this is something that we need to realize because we are all included in this in the "residue of His people."

"...And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment [so we need to learn judgment, we need to learn truth, we need to learn understanding], and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate" (Isa. 28:5-6). And of course, ours is a spiritual battle. See, because today we are in the midst of a great spiritual warfare. Not only in the world, but also in our very lives and things that we live and go through. And so it's very important that when we come together for the holy days and the feasts of God that we are strengthened with His Word, that we learn, and relearn things that we've learned in the past, and learn new things as we go down the road in the future.

Now then, He says of those who are not the residue of His people, verse 7: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way..." Now this can apply to some who have been in the church of God too. And what is the wine, and what is the strong drink? Well, that's the wine of fornication from mother Babylon as we find in Revelation 17. And all the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. And so in stealing the Words of God and putting some here and some there, they actually distort and twist the things of God to their own liking. So this causes them that they will not understand. This is what God says here continuing: "...the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." And so as you look out and see what is happening in the world of religion and the churches and what is taking place with them, this is exactly what is happening. And we are coming to a time where then it's going to be awfully hard to know and understand the truth.

You know, years ago we used to say, "Don't believe me, believe your Bible. You just go get your Bible and take it off the shelf, and dust it off, and open it up and see whether it is or not, and prove what is in the Word of God whether it is so. And if it is – follow it." Well, today we can no longer say that straight out that way, though that is true. But what has to happen is we have to tell them which Bibles are the Bibles of God, because as we have seen, so many people have taken the Word of God – the New Testament, the Old Testament, and they have created fiction out of it by changing the words, and wrong translations, and things like this. So as a result verse 8 just fits right in with what we see going on in the world and with the Word of God. "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean" (verse 8).

Now in this environment and this kind of thing in the world, and also somewhat in the churches of God (some more than other in degree), what is God going to do? Well,

He says in verse 9: “Whom shall He teach knowledge?” [with this kind of atmosphere out there and the things that we’ve just read here] “...And whom shall He make to understand doctrine?” Because doctrine is very important, knowledge is very important. See, we have to have the knowledge of the truth, the doctrines of Christ, the teachings of Christ, the understanding of the Word of God. And we are going to see there are keys in understanding it. And that’s what makes the Feast of Tabernacles and all the feasts of God so important and profound because it brings us the truth and the depth and the knowledge and the understanding of the Word of God, which we need.

So He answers the question:, “...[to] *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts” (verse 9). In other words, a person has to reach a certain point of growth and understanding in the Word of God. When they first begin, they begin with the milk of the word. And that’s what Peter says: “...Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby...” (I Peter 2:2). And then there comes a time when the people of God who have been drawn from the breast and weaned from the milk, are able then to begin to understand the truth of God and the strong meat of God, because you see as Paul said, that milk is for those who are just beginning. Strong meat belongs to those who have had their senses exercised to discern good and evil. And their senses exercised so that they know how to study the Bible, that they know how to put it together, that they know what a powerful tool that it is that God has given, and to let the words of God speak to them, to let the words of God teach them, you see.

So here’s how He does it. Verse 10: “For precept *must be* upon precept...” And as you go through the Bible (and especially in the book of Psalms and in the Prophets) you’re going to find there will be one verse talking about the current thing that is going on at the time that the Scripture was being written; and then you’re going to see a prophecy projecting forward to the kingdom of God; and then you’re going to see another one projecting into the life of Jesus Christ. And so it will come maybe one verse here, then right after that another verse, and that’s why it’s “...precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little...” And that’s how we are able to piece together the Word of God and understand it and go from Scripture to Scripture and tie it in so that we get the full picture and the full meaning of the Word of God.

Now verse 11: “...For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people.” We will understand. They won’t understand. Verse 12: “To whom He said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing...” So God’s Word is out there. He would give them rest. He would give them refreshing and grant them repentance. You know, as Jesus said, “that our eyes are open that we see.” But for them - they don’t see. So it becomes: the same way that God opens our eyes to understand the truth, the same method closes their eyes because they are not willing to do what God says. Now notice the next sentence here: “...yet they would not hear [they wanted their own ways]. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; ... that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken” (verses 11-12). So that confirms what Jesus said there in Matthew 13. So this is really a tremendous thing for us to understand and to realize.

Now let's look at the key as to how God makes that division. And how through the same process we understand but the world doesn't understand. Let's come to Psalm 111. And it's really quite a simple thing. It is not complicated. It is not hard to understand, and it is based upon a very, very simple thing that God always requires.

Let's begin here, Psalm 111:1: "Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart..." Now this is talking about those of us who are converted, understand the Word of God, love God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and being. That's part of it. That's a major part of it. "...In the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation." That's where that's going to be praised. "The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." So you have to have pleasure in the Word of God, and the works of God. "His work *is* honourable and glorious: and His righteousness endureth for ever" (Psa. 111:1-3). So the Word of God is so unique, inspired by the mind of God that these things we can learn, and learn, and learn, and relearn, and grow in grace and knowledge, be prepared for the kingdom of God. And many of us who have been in the church for a long, long time – we know that this past year that we've had some saints die, which means that they've past their final exam. They died in the faith. Now when the resurrection comes for them, that will be graduation. So for those of us who are still here, we have to keep on going so we can pass our final exam, as it were. And this is all part of it.

"He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered [part of the works that He made and created – the heavens and the earth, and the Sabbath and the holy days to be remembered]: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him..." So there's part of it – you've got to fear God. We've seen you have to love God. Well, you can love God and fear Him at the same time. Because the true love of God will give you the understanding and awe of the greatness of God so there will be the right fear. Not the fear of torment, but the fear of awe and wonder and worship of God. "...He will ever be mindful of His covenant." He's not going to forget us. He's not going to give up on us, but as it says here, verse 6: "He hath shewed His people the power of His works, that He may give them the heritage of the heathen" (verses 4-6). So that we understand that we are going to inherit the rulership of this world with Jesus Christ.

"The works of His hands *are* verity and judgment; all His commandments *are* sure" (verse 7). And you see, when you go back to the book of Revelation it talks about the remnant that Satan comes after: "Here are they that have the testimony of Jesus Christ and keep the commandments of God." That's Revelation 12:17 (paraphrased). Then Revelation 14:12 (paraphrased) says: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that have the faith of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments." And so this is another of the tremendous keys: not only loving God and fearing Him, but having the faith of Jesus Christ and keeping His commandments, because we know they are sure.

Now notice verse 8, "They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness." So much for doing away with the law and commandments of God, right?

Yes, indeed. “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* His name.” Now here’s the key – right here. It talks about the fear of the Lord again. “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom...” That’s why we are to grow in grace and knowledge and the love of God, never losing the fear of God. But that’s where people begin to repent. That’s the beginning of wisdom. Now notice beyond that then: “...a good understanding have all they that do *His commandments...*” (verses 8-10). There is the key. As we’ve said in the past: the way you understand about the Sabbath is to keep the Sabbath. The way you understand about the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread like Paul commanded the Gentiles in Corinth. The way that we understand Pentecost is to keep it, and to keep it on the right day. The way we understand Trumpets and Atonement is to keep them. The way we understand the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day is to keep them. See because in keeping the commandments of God then we have understanding and the blessing of God.

Now let’s come down here to the next psalm. Psalm 112:1: “Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in His commandments.” So there it is. There is a tremendous blessing, see. “His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed” (Psa. 112:1-2). Now we can take that and we can say, “Ok, this is a truth of God that applies at all times, to all people who are willing to do this.”

Let’s go back and you can take that and you can apply that to Abraham, right? Yes, he feared God, he loved Him, he kept His commandments. And that’s why the blessing then was passed on to Isaac. You go back and study about the life of Isaac. You have the same thing here, don’t you? Then you go back and you study the kings. There are the good kings, there are the evil kings. And those who didn’t delight in God’s way – what happened? Well, they had the other promises of God come upon them – the curses. And so those are active and those are living as well. So it’s really tremendous what it tells us here.

Let’s come over here to Psalm 113. Again: “Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD’S name *is* to be praised. The LORD *is* high above all nations, *and* His glory above the heavens. Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of His people” (Psa. 113:1-8). And that’s our destiny. And we have been picked up out of the dust and out of the dunghill, haven’t we? Lest we get lifted up and think that we are some great things, because we are not, you see. Because the truth is: whether we live we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die we are the Lord’s, and this is what is important. And this is how then we can learn a lot and grow in grace and knowledge during this Feast of Tabernacles. And that’s what the apostle Peter said. He said, “we are to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

And that's what we are going to do during this Feast of Tabernacles. We are going to understand: What is God's plan for us and for the world? How are we going to rule and reign? What are the things that we need to do? What are the lessons that we need to teach the people during the millennium? How are we going to help them understand how they can grow in grace and knowledge? And how are we going to help them learn the Word of God? So this is all part of the great Feast of Tabernacles and what we are to learn. So we are going to learn some things old – relearn those. We're going to learn some things new. And as we go through with line upon line, and precept upon precept, what's going to happen? We are going to have greater insight and greater understanding of the Word of God and what He's doing, and what He wants of us, how He's going to bless us, how He's going to bless the world, how God is going to eventually solve all the problems of the world and all of mankind.

Now let's come to the New Testament and see what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures for us. Let's come to II Corinthians 4 and 5, and let's understand the parallel and what God is doing, and how He's doing it in our lives, and what the Feast of Tabernacles means to us. It has a meaning beyond just living in a booth, or living in a tent. But it has to do with our very lives. And it has to do with our future and our spiritual well-being, and then entrance into the kingdom of God.

Now let's pick it up here in II Corinthians 4:13. "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God" (II Cor. 4:13-15). See, so everything that is done is done to help the brethren, to serve the brethren that we all grow in grace and knowledge because notice what Paul said here: that He will "present us with you", talking to the brethren. And that's what's so profound. And you know, I think it's important that we understand that as we all grow in grace and knowledge together, and as we all understand the Word of God together there is a tremendous blessing that God gives. And I know part of what Paul would be doing here and want us to do is what Jesus said – it's sufficient that the disciple be as the teacher. So whatever teaching is done needs to be in the same way that the apostle Paul has shown so that it is going to be to uplift, to teach, to educate, to prepare, and to grow in grace and knowledge. And that's why during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles when we are all together and we have the sermons, and we have the fellowship, and we have the things here, it's a great, great opportunity that God has given us to fellowship with Him, and with Jesus Christ, and with the brethren, and understanding where we are going, and where we are headed.

Now Paul says here, verse 16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is [being] renewed day by day." And so let's, during this Feast of Tabernacles, be renewed day by day. Take something that you know that you need to overcome and ask God to help you with it. Let your mind be renewed

day by day, by keeping your mind on the things of God, and the Word of God, and the lessons that we learn during the Feast of Tabernacles.

“For our light affliction [and of course he counted all the things that he went through, all the troubles and difficulties], which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory...” (verse 17). So likewise with us. What we need to do when we come to the Feast of Tabernacles is take all the difficulties and trials and things that we’ve gone through physically, mentally, spiritually and so forth, and set them aside and look at them as a light affliction. Look at them as something that God has given to us that we can grow and overcome. And use this time during the Feast of Tabernacles to increase in knowledge, to grow in grace, to grow in love and all of those things.

Now here’s the reason. If you look at what is, if you concentrate on just the physical things around you then it’s going to pull you down. But here Paul gives the focus that we need to have, and this is what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about. “...While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal” (verse 18). And this comes by the revelation of God’s Spirit, by His Word, by His Truth as we grow and study and so forth.

And then it gives the desire that the apostle Paul had, which we find in chapter five. He says: “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved...” (II Cor. 5:1). Because right now our bodies are a temple, or a tabernacle, of the Holy Spirit. And this physical body is going to come to an end and it will be dissolved. But we don’t have to have that kind of fear that people have in the world because we know that we have the hope of the resurrection. And we know that we have the promise of glory with Jesus Christ. And we know that He’s called us to a great and fantastic and tremendous purpose, you see – a building of God, a house. Now remember Jesus said: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also...” (John 14:2-3). And that’s what he’s looking forward to here.

Verse 2: “For in this we groan, earnestly...” Yes, it is a struggle as Jesus said. We have to struggle. “...Desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven [because Christ is going to bring that at the resurrection]: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” No, because we want the righteousness of the saints, don’t we? We want the garments of the wedding feast, don’t we? We want the garments of the bride, don’t we? Yes. “For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened...” So sometimes life is a burden. And of course you read about what the apostle Paul went through. He went through so much that he finally came to the point he says, “We rejoice in tribulation.” Why? Because he saw in faith, in his minds eye and the promises of God, of being in the kingdom of God. “...Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (verses 2-4). So that’s the whole thing that we are looking forward to, isn’t it? And then to serve and rule and reign with Jesus Christ. That’s the promise that He has given.

Now let's come back here to Psalm 133. Let's see an aspect of the feast that is so important for us to understand and realize, which is this. Now there are many. What I would like us to do is concentrate on the love of God. And that means that you are going to have to deliberately think about some of the things that you need to grow in love, and the love of God toward God, first of all (God the Father and Jesus Christ), and then toward the brethren. Because that becomes very, very important. And what I want you to do then is to put aside any strife. Make the feast happy and joyful, and the Spirit of God flowing in us, and leave the strife alone. And if there are some people who have some doctrines they are not sure about – hold on to them. If there are some brethren who come and they want to bring strange things, whatever they may be – set them aside so that we have love, and joy, and unity, and serving God so we can have a wonderful and marvelous feast. Now next, let's have the kind of fellowship that God wants us to have. And remember first of all as we know, our fellowship is with God the Father and Jesus Christ first, then with each other.

Now let's come here to Psalm 133, and let's see if we can do this. Let's take this as a challenge during this Feast of Tabernacles: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!" That can be done with the love of God. That can be done with serving and helping. That can be done through prayer and yielding to God and with the Spirit of God. He said: "*It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments..." (Psa. 133:1-2). In other words the tremendous anointing that came to Aaron. Now it's liking this anointing to how great and precious it is for the right kind of fellowship and for all the brethren to dwell together in unity. So let's see if we can do that.

And do this: if there's someone at the feast who is attending with you that you've had a little dispute concerning ... take the time, go together, get things resolved, love each other, and have a wonderful feast. Let's not have a feast where someone is over here on this side of the room, and someone is over here in that side of the room, and you won't even cross the room to meet each other. Let's not have that. Let's have it like it is here.

So that means that we need to be sharing. And during this feast share time with other people. And most important of all: have friends, and new friends. Don't just get together and fellowship with the brethren that every feast you always get together with them and fellowship with them. Take it as a deliberate challenge and find someone that you have never fellowshiped with, have never spent any time with, and consider the widows and the widowers, and those who may have physical impairments or difficulties. Don't just consider the things which please you, because part of the feast is, as Jesus said: "When you make a feast, don't call your friends, and don't call the rich people who may recompense to you. But call the poor, the cripple, the halted, the lame and then you shall have joy because God will bless you" (Luke 14:12-14, paraphrased). So let's make that a part of the feast this time.

So let's take that as a challenge. And let's keep in mind (and we will go to Revelation 21 and we'll end here) the whole purpose of our being here and the whole purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles is to picture when we will be living with God. And how can we live with God in unity for all eternity if we can't learn to live in love and unity here among ourselves, especially when we have come together for the whole Feast of Tabernacles?

Keep this in mind. Revelation 21:3: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men [and that's the man kind – men and women who have been made perfect and resurrected], and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, *and be* their God." And so that's what we need to look to.

So welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles – 2004. Have a wonderful feast. Fellowship, enjoy the food, enjoy each other, spend time with each other, and make new friends and make this the best feast that God can bless you with to date.

(End of Tape)

Feast of Tabernacles – Welcome – 2004	
Scriptural References	
1) Matthew 13:52	8) Psalm 113:1-8
2) Isaiah 28:5-12	9) II Corinthians 4:13-18
3) I Peter 2:2	10) II Corinthians 5:1-4
4) Psalm 111:1-10	11) John 14:2-3
5) Revelation 12:17	12) Psalm 133:1-2
6) Revelation 14:12	13) Luke 14:12-14
7) Psalm 112:1-2	14) Revelation 21:3

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