

We Are the Temple of God

(Day 1—Feast of Tabernacles)

Fred R. Coulter—September 23, 2010

Greetings everyone! Welcome to the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. I hope you had a good evening last night.

As we do with all the Holy Days, let's come to Lev. 23 and we find the instructions and commands for all the Feasts together in this one chapter. Now, in the Bible, we're going to see it doesn't tell us too much about the Feast of Tabernacles, but the prophetic fulfillment and meaning of it is throughout the whole Bible.

Leviticus 23:33: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day *shall be* a Holy convocation. You shall do no servile work *therein*"'" (vs 33-35)

That is whatever work you do for a living; you don't do it. But because it is a Feast, whatever is necessary for the meals for the Feast and so forth it is perfectly fine to do.

Verse 36: "Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD...."

These are listed in Num. 28 & 29 concerning all the official temple ritual offerings that were given by the priests and the Levites.

"...On the eighth day shall be a Holy convocation to you. And you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly. And you shall do no servile work *therein*. **These are the Feasts of the LORD**..." (vs 36-37).

This is a summary of all of the Feasts. Granted, John talks about 'Feast of the Jews' referring to the Passover and later to the Feast of Tabernacles. But what John is telling us there is that the Jews were keeping the Feasts of the Lord *their way, rather than God's way!* That's kind of the secret message that John had. It doesn't mean that it's for the Jews only. Yet, today the Jews say, 'The Sabbath and Holy Days are only for us.' That's not true; **these are God's days!** We know from Zech. 14 that when Christ returns and sets up the Kingdom of God—which we'll talk about today—*all nations* are going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse 37: "These are the Feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations **to offer an offering** made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a

sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything on its day... [according to the instructions that God gave to Moses to give to the priests and the Levites] ...**besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD**" (vs 37-38).

All of these things are important. Notice that there is gift giving; there are vows; freewill offerings, in addition to the official ones that the priests and Levites would offer.

Deuteronomy 16:16^[transcriber's correction]: "Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place, which He shall choose: in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before the LORD empty, every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God, which He has given you" (vs 16-17). *We know that the blessings that God gives us are:*

- the understanding of His Word
- how to live by His Word
- the understanding of the New Testament
- the understanding of many prophecies relating to the end-time

Then look at the blessings in your life

- ✓ physically
- ✓ spiritually
- ✓ mentally
- ✓ emotionally

All of those things are part of what we need to consider for the offerings that we bring to God!

We're not to bring, as it says in Mal 1, the 'little pittance' that's left over. We're not to bring the blind and lame—***meaning that you're not to bring an offering that is really not from the heart,*** because it has to be a perfect heart before God in giving.

Paul also says that God is able to make 'all grace abound toward you.' In all things you will have 'sufficiency; and that agrees with Mal. 3, that **IF** we bring the offerings to God the way that He wants us to bring them—with a right heart, a right attitude, serving and loving Him—***He will bless us!*** The ultimate and great blessing is going to take place at the first resurrection.

So, with all of these things in mind, we'll take a pause and we'll take up the offering.

(pause for offering)

In all the history of Israel they had their ups, their downs; worshipping false gods. When you come to understand the Truth, what was the sin of Israel repeatedly? *Sun-worship! To Baal!* So, the real truth of the matter is, Israel sinned by keeping the holidays of the world—which God says He hates (Amos 5)—and they had their own Sabbath.

Even if they kept the seventh-day Sabbath, they polluted the Sabbath so it really wasn't, spiritually, worth hardly anything. We'll also see for the Feast of Tabernacles, that there are only two occasions that are mentioned that really significantly impacted the children of Israel in keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. I'm sure there are other lesser times when they kept the Feast of Tabernacles and so forth.

Now, here's the reason for the Feast of Tabernacles that God gave to the children of Israel, which is different than what applies to us in the New Covenant today.

Leviticus 23:39: "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a Feast to the LORD seven days. On the first day *shall be* a Sabbath... [that's today] ...and on the eighth day *shall be* a Sabbath."

Now, when we get to the Last Great Day—which will end everything concerning the Feast—we will find very important to understand that though this day is barely mentioned, when we get to the book of Revelation it just opens up and expands the rest of the Bible as to what God is going to do. All of these days are important.

Note our books:

- *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?*
- *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days*

So, we do as the Bible teaches us, to put together 'a little here, a little there; line upon line; precept upon precept' so we can understand the whole picture.

We need to realize something very tremendous and fantastic: In all the history of Israel and the Church, *in this age God has blessed us with more understanding of the meaning of the Feasts and subsequent prophecies that relate to it than at any other time in the history of the Church.* We need to be very grateful and thankful for that.

- that's not because we're something
- that's not because we're greater than any

of the others that have come before us

No, because Jesus said that 'we work in the field that others have labored in.' We come into their labor; we come into their work; and we build upon it, and that's what God wants us to do.

So likewise with the Feast of Tabernacles, we're going to see for Israel it started out to remind them that when they were in the wilderness they had no permanent home. They lived in tents and booths. They were to make booths to remind them that they were slaves in Egypt. So let's go forward with this.

Verse 40: "And you shall take the boughs of beautiful trees for yourselves on the first day, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days."

What happens when you break a branch off? Just like it says in John 15, *it withers!* There's a lesson in doing that, and we're going to see in the New Testament there is a greater lesson for us. The lesson is:

- life is temporary
- life is short
- life without God will die

That's the lesson! You can put it spiritually, physically, however you want to draw the lessons with it.

Verse 41: "And you shall keep it a Feast to the LORD seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall keep it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths seven days. All that are born Israelites shall dwell in booths" (vs 41-42).

Today in Jerusalem they've always had flat-roofed houses, and they have little balconies and little porches along with it. In Jerusalem they do setup temporary booths. People live in their homes, but they eat in these booths. Here's the reason for it:

Verse 43: "So that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. *I am* the LORD your God."

There's another lesson here for us. God is the One Who gives the land to the nations. God is the One Who gives us a permanent place to live. With the children of Israel back then—and also today—it's also incumbent upon serving God and doing what God wants that we will stay in the land. There was one time when things looked nearly perfect, and that was at the time of the dedication of the temple with Solomon.

Let's see where they dedicated the temple as we saw there; that that had to be on the Feast of Trumpets, and what God did to put His presence there. At the time—the only time it had ever been in all the history of Israel—when all twelve tribes were together the temple was built and one king was over them: Solomon the son of David. That's when God gave rest from all the enemies round about. So, they dedicated the temple.

Let's see what happened when they all gathered together, brought the Ark up; and this took place on the Feast of Trumpets, as we will see by the chronology given to us in 2-Chron. 8.

After they brought in everything that was to be brought in, they made the sacrifices for the Ark, they placed it in the Holy of Holies, and when it was placed there the only thing that could be seen were the staves that were sticking out at the end. But they were not seen outside. When this was written, it says that 'they are there to this day.' So, whoever wrote this—recounting this history—they were there.

2-Chronicles 5:10: "Nothing *was* in the Ark except the two tables which Moses put *in it* at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt."

There were also a couple of other things that were accompanying it:

1. the omer of manna
2. the budded rod of Aaron

To show that the Aaronic priesthood had the blessing of the priesthood!

- no other family
- no other men
- no other ones

For God to show His presence and His power and His blessing upon the children of Israel to start out with the Temple of God—no wars! no enemies!—a king whose name 'Solomon' means *peace*.

- peace with God
- peace with your enemies
- peace with everyone

God's blessing came and His presence was put into the temple! Let's see how spectacular that was:

Verse 11: "And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the Holy *place* (for all the priests present were sanctified, and did not wait by course), and the Levitical singers—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being clothed in white linen, and having*

*cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets... [notice this spectacular event that took place]: ...It came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, 'For He is good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever,' that the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the House of the LORD" (vs 11-13).*

God was showing He was pleased; He put His presence just like He did when Moses dedicated the tabernacle, the same thing occurred to show His presence! Hopefully the children of Israel:

- would love God, would obey God
- would serve Him *in the letter of the Law* as God intended

Here we have the whole purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles, God coming to be with His people on Trumpets, and then *dwelling with them!* That's what it started out as in Exo. 25. Go clear back to the Garden of Eden—that's how it started—with Adam and Eve. Then you go forward to Rev. 22 and all of God's people living with God. Here was a type of it. The only time in all of the history of Israel that it was like this.

It was so great, v 14: "...that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the House of God!"

Yes, quite a thing! Then Solomon's long prayer. Quite a prayer:

2-Chronicles 6:1: "Then Solomon said, 'The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. Now I have built a house for You to live in, and a place for Your dwelling forever.' And the king turned around and blessed the whole congregation of Israel. And all the congregation of Israel stood. And he said, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel Who has with His hands fulfilled that which He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, "From the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt I have not chosen any city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, so that My name might be there. Nor have I chosen any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem, so that My name might be there, and now I have chosen David to be over My people Israel. And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel"'" (vs 1-7).

He goes on and repeats the history, everything that there was. Then he prays for a special blessing and God intervening on this dedication.

2-Chron. 7—this is a signal event and this is a portent of what's going to happen when we see the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles being fulfilled by the coming of the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ the Son of David sitting as King bringing peace to the whole world. This is going to be quite a thing, and this is a type of it.

2-Chronicles 7:1: And when Solomon had made an end of praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. And the glory of the LORD filled the house.... [quite a spectacular sight] ...And the priests could not enter into the House of the LORD because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed *their* faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying, 'For *He is* good, for His mercy *endures* forever.' And the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. And the king and all the people dedicated the House of God" (vs 1-5).

So, they kept the dedication of the Feast for the temple seven days.

Verse 8: "And at the same time Solomon kept the Feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt. And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the Feast seven days" (vs 8-9).

What you have is this: From Trumpets the first seven days, you have a dedication of the temple and the altar. Timeout, seven, eight, nine, ten is the Day of Atonement; then to the 15th day of the 1st month, then they had the Feast of Tabernacles. This was really a protracted time. Never before this kind of dedication and praise to God—God with His people and the people with God—"**...for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the Feast seven days.**"

Notice how we have the timing here, v 10: "And on the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shown to David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

That was quite a thing! Quite a dedication! Never in the whole history of Israel had there been this kind of Feast of Tabernacles kept.

Let's see how that the people there, when they came back out of the captivity from Babylon, kept the Feast of Tabernacles. When they were reading through the Bible—they began on the 1st day of the 7th month—and telling the people about the Feast and so forth, then they came to the place where they were to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. They didn't even know about it. People had lost all the knowledge, so they all decided 'we're going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.'

Let's see how this took place; Nehemiah 8:14: "And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the Feast of the seventh month, and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, 'Go forth to the mountain and bring olive branches and oil tree branches and myrtle branches and palm branches, and branches of thick trees to make booths, as *it is* written.' And the people went out and brought *them* and made themselves booths, each one upon his roof... [just like we talked about with their houses] ...and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the Water Gate, and in the street of the Gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of those who had come again out of the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths, for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day, the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness" (vs 14-17).

So, they had a tremendous Feast! Likewise with us. Makes you wonder how many churches there would be in the world and what denomination would be reading in Lev. 23 and, 'Hey, we need to keep the Feast of Tabernacles' and then all of a sudden from the pulpit preach and tell all the congregants, 'Look, we're going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.' I wonder what their reaction would be? That would be something!

We also know that Jesus kept the Feast of Tabernacles and that's quite a thing (John 7). We know that Jesus kept all the Feasts of God, all the time, but in John 7 we find something that is very interesting. Many lessons for us in John 7 & 8—I'm not going to go through all of them, but just to show that Jesus kept the Feast of Tabernacles. Some people misread this and think He really didn't mean to keep it and that John, in writing this, said the 'Jew's Feast of Tabernacles was near'; that it was only for the Jews. Of course, anything that's for the Jews, Christians shouldn't do today. At least, that's what they're told.

John 7:1: “After these things, Jesus was sojourning in Galilee, for He did not desire to travel in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was near. For this reason, His brothers said to Him, ‘Leave this place and go into Judea, so that Your disciples may see the works that You are doing; because no one does anything in secret, but seeks to be *seen* in public. If You do these things, reveal Yourself to the world.’.... [so His brothers *at that time* didn’t believe in Him]: ...For neither did His brothers believe in Him” (vs 1-5).

That’s quite a thing! Even in His own family no one believed Him. Mary kept a lot of the things concerning His conception and birth and growing up in her heart wondering what all these things would be. She didn’t understand. Isn’t that amazing?

Verse 6: “Therefore, Jesus said to them, ‘My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify concerning it, **that its works are evil**” (vs 6-7).

It’s the same thing today. When people preach that your ‘religious works’ are evil and all of the good things that you are doing are ‘sin’ and effrontery to God—your Sunday, your Christmas, your Easter, your Halloween—all of those things that the whole world is wrapped up in, ***God says is sin!*** They sure hate you for it! So here’s His instruction to them:

Verse 8: “You go up to this Feast. I am not going up to this Feast **now**...”

Very important to understand because some people read this and say, ‘you go up to this Feast, I’m not going up to this Feast.’ They leave off the rest of it and say, ‘you doing have to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.’ ***No so!***

“...for My time has not yet been fulfilled.’ And after saying these things to them, He remained in Galilee. But after His brothers had gone up, **then Jesus also went up to the Feast**, not openly, but as it were in secret” (vs 8-10).

So, He wanted to go up to the Feast and then show Himself at the appropriate time during the Feast.

Then we’ll see some of the things that He taught; some of the things that He said. Then we’ll see how things go in giving us an understanding of how this is fulfilled prophetically and where we fit into it. He didn’t go up openly, ***but secretly***:

Verse 11: “As a result, the Jews were seeking Him at the Feast, and said, ‘Where is He?’

Now there was much debating about Him among the people. Some said, ‘He is a good man.’ But others said, ‘No, but He is deceiving the people’” (vs 11-12).

That’s the way it’s been for the Church of God ever since!

Verse 13: “However, no one spoke publicly about Him for fear of the Jews.... [Spies! Retaliation!] ...But then, about the middle of the Feast, Jesus went up into the temple and was teaching. And the Jews were amazed, saying, ‘How does this man know letters, having never been schooled?’” (vs 13-15).

Neither were the apostles, because their schools were contaminated with the teachings of men—rejecting the teachings of God. That’s why we have an Appendix G—**Jesus Was Taught Directly by God the Father** (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*). He never went to any of the Jewish schools. He never went to Hillel-I; just think what would happen to the rabbi who had taught Him those things if He learned from a rabbi. Well, they’d go in and lop his head off, too.

Verse 16: “Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His Who sent Me....’”

Now we get into New Testament teaching; into the purpose of why we’re here and where we’re going in the Feast that we are keeping. We are to ***‘prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.’*** We are to understand the teachings of God. Here’s a key; you need to apply this in your life: ***If there are things you don’t understand, pray about it; ask for understanding.*** But here is the only way that there is going to be understanding of the Word of God. Today the Churches of God are filled with so many strange doctrines—here and there—and everyone wanting to become important. Here’s the way you do it:

Verse 17: ““If anyone **desires to do His will**, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self.”

Jesus said, ‘I can do nothing of my own self’ (John 5). Not from human endeavor, and this is what it has to be for all ministers and teachers and all of us. We don’t do it from our own devices, our own thoughts, our own ways. Look at the punishment that God brought upon the Churches of God because they did that, and because they went to the ‘Christian’ organizations of this world and said, ‘How do you understand the Bible,’ and then false doctrines started to come in. What was it that they failed to do? ***To do the will of God!*** That’s why we keep the Feast of Tabernacles. That’s why we do the things that we do.

What is one of the first things that we pray in the daily prayer: ‘Our Father Who is heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ Here it is right here. If you want to know and understand the Bible **do the will of God**; it’s contained in the Bible. That’s why it’s there!

Verse 17: “If anyone desires to do His will, he [you] shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self. **The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory...**” (vs 17-18).

There is a good ‘checkpoint’ for any minister. Is he promoting himself? Some have said, ‘I’m one of the two witnesses and my wife is the other one.’ One has said, ‘I’m *that Prophet*’ when it refers to Jesus Christ. Others have said, ‘I am God’s only apostle on earth.’ Others have promoted themselves saying, ‘I’m Elijah!’ ‘I’m John the Baptist.’ **NO!**

“...The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory...” (v 18).

So, one of the things we want to do in everything that we do every Sabbath and every day of our life and in all of the Feasts and Holy Days of God:

“...but He Who seeks the glory of Him Who sent Him is true... [Christ is speaking of Himself] ...and there is no unrighteousness in Him” (v 18). *That’s what He taught during the Feast of Tabernacles!*

Verse 19 tells you why John wrote in v 2 that the ‘Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was near.’

Verse 19 *Jesus said*: “**Did not Moses give you the Law, and not one of you is practicing the Law?** Why do you seek to kill Me?”

They had the framework, they had the day, they had the calendar, but everything else their hearts were far removed from God. They weren’t doing the will of God!

So likewise today, we need to take that lesson to ourselves every day. In our daily prayer, the first thing we ask is: ‘**Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**’ Anyone transgressing in heaven? *No way!* On earth begins with you as you’re praying to do the will of God, and then collectively all of us when we assemble together. When we are doing the work of the ministry and reaching out and preaching, then we will be doing the will of God, not our way!

The Protestants think that if they have the churches filled with people, somehow that’s a

blessing from God. Really? *I don’t think so!* The ‘churched’ and the ‘unchurched’; never hear them talk about the ‘converted’ and the ‘unconverted.’ That’s why we need to do the will of God.

(break)

Now, let’s apply what we have learned and what Jesus taught, and how—in the New Testament—it’s not a matter of that we’re dwelling in the land and we’re dwelling booths, but that **God is dwelling in us**. His desire from the very beginning with Adam and Eve was to dwell with His people. Today, through God’s calling individuals:

- leading them to repentance
- leading them to baptism
- leading them to understanding that they need to keep the Word of God
- opening up their understanding through Sabbath-keeping and Holy Day-keeping

Now we come to the essence and the most important part that applies to us in observing the Feast of Tabernacles and how it’s being fulfilled in our lives today. Then we will take a look later during the Feast, beginning tomorrow, how it applies to us and to the world.

- God is organized
- God has a plan
- He has a system

That system is that before the return of Jesus Christ He has prepared all of those who are going to work with Christ and reign with Him. All will be resurrected together and ‘changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’

The *mystery* that the world can’t understand is found here in John 15. Let’s see how it is and how this applies and how it works in our lives today, and what God is doing. It’s a very special and tremendous thing, brethren. ***The greatest thing in our lives is to have the Spirit of God, and to use the Spirit of God to grow in grace and knowledge!*** All of those things are necessary in order to fulfill the Feast of Tabernacles for the world. God always starts with one and builds from there.

We’re told in John 14 that the Father and the Son will make Their abode within us. Jesus expands upon it in:

John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.”

Some people translate that ‘farmer’; but *husbandman* really means that you’re married to the land. You work with the land, develop the land, develop the crop so that it brings forth the best. ***This is what God is doing with us!*** Notice, it’s the Father

Who is doing it—Christ *in us*, the Father *in us*—but it is the Father that is doing the work. Christ is there to assist. Isn't that an amazing thing?

Verse 2: "He takes away every branch in Me *that does not bear fruit...*"

The Father is glorified **when we bear fruit**. We're going to see how that applies to our lives and how that applies to the Feast of Tabernacles and the Kingdom of God.

"...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit" (v 2).

Notice that He *cleanses, washes, purifies!* When David repented of his affair with Bathsheba, he said, 'Create in me, O God, a clean heart.' **God is the One Who is cleansing!** It is a process. This is why we grow in grace and knowledge and understanding. This is why we have the process as noted by the Feast of Unleavened Bread of getting sin out of our lives, with our active participation in putting it out:

- in controlling our minds
- controlling our thoughts
- bringing every thought into 'captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ'

That's our part! Then together with the Father cleansing us, we have the cleansing, or 'the washing of the water by the Word' so:

- that we are *developed*
- that we *grow*
- that we *come to maturity*
- and we are *ready for the harvest*

Go back to Rev. 14 where it says 'the crop was ready' came to harvest. Here's why He does that. This explains why we have trials and tribulations and difficulties, because through it the Father is cleansing us individually in our lives; collectively together in the Church, the various Churches of God.

"...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, **in order that it may bear more fruit**" (v 2)

That's why we have the trials and difficulties, that we bear *more* fruit. That fruit is:

- the *character* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *Truth* of God
- the *wisdom* that comes from God

Growing and changing every day, every week, every month, every year as we progress toward the resurrection!

Verse 3: "You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you."

Remember what I said about the 'washing of the water by the Word'? This is why:

- we are to *study*
- we are to *pray*
- we are to *yield* ourselves to God

So that we become His children, His sons and daughters! We are going to rule and reign with Christ, as we already understand, and we'll cover that in-depth here.

Verse 4—*this is a key important thing:* "**Dwell in Me, and I in you...**"

God wants to dwell with His people! Now, with His Holy Spirit, *He dwells in us!*

"...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you bear fruit unless you are dwelling in Me" (v 4). *Always remember that!*

- **It has to be Christ IN us!**
- **It has to be the Father IN us!**

That, as we have pointed out, is the real work of God!

Verse 5: "I am the vine, and you are the branches.... [no one is going to get over Christ] ...The one who is dwelling in Me..." *As we read these verses:*

- I want you to think about *your life*
- I want you to think about *what you are doing*
- I want you to think about *your spiritual standing with God*

Because you know it in the deep inner recesses of your heart!

"...unless you're dwelling in Me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. **The one who is dwelling in Me and I in him, bears much fruit...** [that's what we have to be doing] ...because **apart from Me you can do nothing**" (v 5).

There is no way that any human being, through any work of any kind, can give himself eternal life; **it's the gift of God!** We know the conditions of receiving it.

Verse 6—*here's a warning:* "If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up..."

Have we not seen that time and time again with elders, ministers, deacons, brethren? They get

off and they start following the things that they should not follow and they get themselves in deep, deep trouble.

Let's see why that happens, and if they are not dwelling in Christ, then there's going to come a trial to get rid of them. The trial will come in two phases:

1. Will we repent?
2. ***IF*** we don't repent ***THEN*** we're confronted with a series of choices, which will then either lead us to repentance at a little later date, and bring us back; or take us away!

Here's what happens; and it happens because of the vanity and the selfishness and trying to do these things initiated by the self rather than by the Spirit of God. Forgetting the lesson that Jesus said, 'I, of My own self can do nothing.' Well, if He could do nothing of His own self, *how much less us!*

Here's what happens. This is why we have the Word of God. This is why we know it is the God-breathed Truth of God to give us the understanding of what we need. That's a tremendous and wonderful thing for us to realize and understand, brethren.

Paul charged Timothy, because Paul knew at this time the coming of Christ was way off. He didn't know how far. Likewise today, we can see events that are transpiring and so forth and we still don't know when Christ is going to return.

Just take a look at what has happened in Europe. Everyone has thought Europe, that's where it's going to be, 'Oh yes, the Euro, that's the greatest thing that has ever happened. *Nearly collapsed!* What does that tell us?

- that tells us there is a lot more time than we think between now and the return of Christ
- that tells us we'd better be doing what Jesus said when He went up to the temple during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Mary and Joseph couldn't find Him

They found Him in the temple. He said, ***'Didn't you know that I have to be about My Father's business?'***

So likewise with us in our lives; ***we need to be about our Father's business in everything that we do!*** Here is a fault of human nature: *Everyone waits to the last minute!* If you don't have to do it today, you'll do it tomorrow. If you don't have to do it tomorrow, then you put it off to the next day. You can tie that in with the Parable of Ten Virgins. So,

Paul was teaching Timothy at this point:

- what he needed to do as a minister
- how he needed to feed the flock
- take care of the brethren
- watch out for himself
- watch out for his ministry
- watch out what he was teaching
- don't get all caught up in trying to make all kinds of money

Paul gave Timothy this charge concerning his preaching and teaching:

2-Timothy 4:1: "I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: **Preach the Word!**...." (vs 1-2).

Preach the Word of God, the Truth of God! That's why I have my 'cowbell'! I don't have it here today because I'm not going to give my *opinions*, but when I do I ring the cowbell, so everyone will know that that's not the dogmatic Word of God. It's okay to have ideas, but don't get carried away with the ideas. Just because it sounds interesting, don't think that it is the Truth. There may be some true things about it, it doesn't mean that it's the Truth of God. That's the whole point! "...**Preach the Word!**...."

Protestantism is all coming apart because they're preaching *humanism!* They're not preaching *repentance and baptism and turning to God!* And once you lose that, and once you lose sight of the model prayer of having our sins forgiven daily and forgiving others, people begin to lose where they're going.

Verse 2: "Preach the Word! Be urgent in season... [showing they were keeping the Holy Days] ...and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine...."

These cycles repeat within the Churches of God. We're seeing this happening today, right before our very eyes! That's why it's the *living* Word of God. Always applies at all times, in all circumstances, everywhere, in everybody's lives:

- within the Church as it applies to us
- within the ministry as it applies to the ministry
- within the world as it applies to the world

Never fails!

God's Word is always actively moving, going on, and as a matter of fact, God is actively judging the whole world through His Word. That's

why we are to preach it! That's why these things are to bring us the conviction, the rebuke, the encouragement

"...with all patients and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine..." (vs 2-3). *Isn't that amazing?*

I talked to a man who was an elder in an independent church. He said, 'Fred, you don't know what's happening in 'independent land' down here. They're all going bonkers.' I said it's because they're getting their minds off Christ and God the Father. So, they have all these weird and strange and unreal doctrine.

The time will "...come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts... [Where does the *self* come from? *From the lust within!*] ...they shall accumulate to themselves a *great number of teachers, having ears itching to hear what satisfies their cravings...*" (v 3).

When they do that, titillating new doctrines, interesting things come along.

I just got a paper from a man who says that there are only seven days of Unleavened Bread and so he cuts short the Feast of Unleavened Bread one day so he can include the Passover in it, because he sees that the Passover is an unleavened bread day, without understanding the Truth that Passover is one day of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is seven days more. And on and on and on I could go with the things I've seen through the years. Here's what happens when all of this takes place:

Verse 4: "And **they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth...** [you watch, it's happening] ...and they shall be turned aside unto myths.... [What did Peter say concerning myths?] ...But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry" (vs 4-5).

Let's see what Peter wrote about myths, fables, stories, interesting little tidbits that people tell.

2-Peter 1:16: "For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority...* [they sound good, they look good] ...when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory; because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when *the* voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.' And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain" (vs 16-18).

So what he's saying now is what the apostles have written and the Word of God. That's what we are to preach today.

The living words of God, written by the servants of God—beginning with Moses, and all the prophets and priests down through time, to do the Old Testament; the writings of the apostles for the New Testament—***are all living words!*** Jesus said, 'The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are Life.' That's why we are to preach the Word. Not fairytales, not nice little stories, not nice little human things that come along. They're interesting, but notice:

Verse 19: "We also possess **the confirmed prophetic Word...**"

That means the 'confirmed' inspired Word of God. That's why Paul said, 'Preach the Word! In season and out of season.'

"...to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns... [return of Christ] ...and *the* morning star arises in your hearts" (v 19)—*the resurrection!*

In the meantime, the Word of God is to lead us like that 'light shining in a dark place.' That's why it's to be taught.

Verse 20: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation; because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 20-21).

That's what we need to understand. That's why we need to stay close to God. That's why Jesus is writing here that if you are not *dwelling* in Him, you're going to be cut off as a branch, and you're going to be thrown into the fire. This is how we do it today, brethren: ***Stay close to the Word of God!*** This is why we do the things that we do. This is why we are not exalting ourselves. It is to preach the Word of God:

- to exalt *you*
- to exalt *the Word of God*
- to exalt *God the Father and Jesus Christ*
- to finish His Work and plan for *you*

John 15:6: "If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up..."

That's the whole lesson of making the booths in the Old Testament. If you're not attached to God, you're going to wither and die! You'll have your lifecycle whatever that may be, however long or short that may be. ***But you don't have God!***

“...and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned” (v 6).

Here is the great thing concerning the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles personally. So, if we ask the question—each one of us individually:

- Why am I here?
- Why do I keep the Feast of Tabernacles?

Here it is:

Verse 7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words... [that’s why Paul told Timothy to ‘Preach the Word!’] ...**dwell in you**...” *Notice how it works today with the Spirit of God! Live in you.*

We need to learn to **think** with the Word of God; **think** with the principles that are there; **view** things through the eyes or the lens of Scripture so that we can see things clearly and understand where we’re going, what we’re doing.

“...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you” (v 7).

That’s another thing we need. We need answers to prayers. Remember this: **God has promised that He will answer**—and every prayer will be answered **God’s way!** Sometimes we ask for things that we ought not ask, and He doesn’t give it to us because we shouldn’t ask for it. You look back over the course of your life, and all the prayers that you have prayed—in good times and in bad times and times—when you really feel inspired and on top of it, and other times when you’re down and depressed and wonder what on earth is going on. But always remember this: As long as you’re dwelling in Christ He’ll work it out, He’ll answer the prayer.

How many prayers has God answered because you’re dwelling in Him? *Think about that!* Now, by time this Feast is over I’m going to be 50-years from baptism. I can look back and see a lot of prayers were answered, and in many ways, not as I thought they would be answered. But nevertheless, God answered them, and in a better way. So, always keep that in mind.

Here’s something else that we need to understand, v 8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples.”

We’re to work; we’re to develop. This is a cooperative effort with:

- God’s Spirit in us
- God dwelling in us
- Christ dwelling in us

that we are the Temple of God! Let’s see some other Scriptures that bear on this.

Let’s see what it is, living in this world, what we need to do and how we need to do it, because:

- Satan is there
- the world is there
- human nature is there
- lust and temptation is there

A lot of things are going to sound good. We’re going to have difficult propositions brought to us. We’re going to have to decide:

- Are we going to love God and obey Him?
- Just exactly what are we going to do?

This is what we need to look at because there are so many areas that when people are not staying right with God they get into the gray areas and they begin to fudge a little bit and begin to do things and to stretch things out and to begin to allow sin to come into their lives.

2-Corinthians 6:14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.... [in any case, in any way] ...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial?... [the corrupt, perverted teachers of this world] ...Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a Temple of God and idols? For **you are a Temple of the living God**...” (vs 14-16).

Notice the difference compared to what it was when the temple was dedicated when Solomon was there. God put His presence into the temple. **Now God puts His presence in us!** “...**you are a Temple of the living God**...” That’s why God doesn’t want us to have to be partaker of these things. In whatever way it is. In the world there are many things:

- the society around us
- television
- music
- entertainment
- media
- magazines
- newspapers
- books

We have more to fight than any other time in the history of the Church. And Satan has all these helpers there. So this is why we need to be more fully dedicated to God, ***realizing that God is dwelling in us!***

“...For you are a Temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: **I will dwell in them and walk**

in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (v 16). *That is the key of the meaning the Feast of Tabernacles for us!*

Verse 17: “Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord... [put all of that away] ...‘and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (vs 17-18).

2-Corinthians 7:1: “Now then, beloved, since we have these promises, we should purge ourselves from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the* spirit, perfecting Holiness in *the* fear of God.”

That’s what God wants us to do. *Yes, indeed!* That’s our work! That’s our part!

Let’s see what Paul also talks about, that *we are a Temple of the living God* and *what we are to do!* He talks about how they were carnal-minded. He talks about how there were divisions among them, and you look at the Churches of God today. Is that not the reason why? *Yes, indeed!* Then he talks about Apollos and about Paul.

1-Corinthians 3:5: “Who then is Paul? And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (vs 5-6).

Any preaching and teaching that helps you that we do, that I do, that the elders do—which helps you to grow and overcome—that’s all the work of God. That’s our part. That’s what we are to do. We’re commanded to preach the Word.

Verse 7: “Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is* God Who gives the increase.... [says it again!] ...Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but **each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor**” (vs 7-8). *That applies to each one of us individually and all the elders and ministers!*

Verse 8: “For we are God’s fellow workers... [that’s what we are; we’re not to be exalted] ...*and* you are God’s husbandry... [just like it says in John 15; the Father is the *husbandman*] ...*even* God’s building. As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*. For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ” (vs 8-11). *And we might add on to that: **the true Gospel!***

- there are other Jesus’ out there

- there are other gospels
- there are other things that are being preached

in the name of Christ!

Verse 12: “Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones...” *That’s what we need to be doing!*

- having the strength
- having the character
- having the love

building these things day-by-day

- ✓ Christ in us
- ✓ we in Christ
- ✓ the Father in us
- ✓ we in the Father

Then working together, doing all of these things

- to serve and love and please God
- to grow in grace and knowledge
- to grow and develop
- to be cleansed
- to be made perfect
- to be made Holy

All of those things is what the Christian life is all about, and the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles for us, ***with God dwelling in us and we’re dwelling in God.***

IF you don’t build that ***THEN*** you build “...wood, hay *or* stubble, the work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare it...” (vs 12-13).

That’s why we have trials. It’s like anything else, if you want to build up your muscles, you have to have resistance and you have to work. You can’t sit and look at pictures of muscles and say, ‘Boy, I want muscles like that’ and just sit back and dream and all of a sudden the muscles start coming out. No, you’ve got to work! You’ve got to develop! Same way spiritually.

“...because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire. Don’t you understand... [Paul wants to encourage them so that they know] ...that **you are God’s Temple**, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?” (vs 13-16).

How should that make us respond? *With love, with faith, with hope!* That God would do such a marvelous thing for us! That each one of us become a mini-temple or tabernacle for God to dwell in to accomplish His work in us! Such a tremendous

work! And the world doesn't even know it, because it's a *mystery* of God, the *secret* of God that He has brought you into relationship with, to share this knowledge and His Spirit and to prepare you for the Kingdom of God.

Then he gives a warning, v 17: "If anyone defiles the Temple of God, God shall destroy him because the Temple of God is Holy, **which temple you are**":

- living and dwelling in Christ
- living and dwelling in love
- living and dwelling in faith
- living and dwelling in hope

I guarantee you, brethren, we're going to see—and it always happens after the Feast of Tabernacles—you look back at every bad economic thing that has taken place and it always happens after the Feast of Tabernacles. We're going to see some things come up after the Feast that are going to be absolutely mind-boggling! So we need to be prepared. We need to have the Spirit of God within us. We need to understand how we need to live our lives. Why we're here! Where we're going!

John 15:8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; **live in My love**" (vs 8-9).

How important it is to love one another; to love God because God has loved us, and has done all of this tremendous thing of His work, of Christ, of His plan, of coming and calling and leading us, brethren.

Verse 10: "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love."

Remember what it says there to the Church of Philadelphia: ***'Because you have kept the patience of My Word, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan to come and worship before your feet, to know that I have loved you.'*** That's what it needs to be. We love God; the Father loves us!

Verse 11: "These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full."

So, brethren, with this Feast of Tabernacles that we are keeping:

- let's keep it to the full
- let's keep it with knowledge and wisdom and understanding

But most of all

- let's keep it in love knowing that God the Father and Jesus Christ dwell in us by Their Spirit
- we are a mini-temple or mini-tabernacle of God
- we are His dwelling place

As we keep the Feast of Tabernacles, let's keep this in mind and continue to have a wonderful Feast!

Scriptural References:

- Leviticus 23:33-38
- Deuteronomy 16:16-17
- Leviticus 23:39-43
- 2 Chronicles 5:10-14
- 2 Chronicles 6:1-7
- 2 Chronicles 7:1-5, 8-10
- Nehemiah 8:14-17
- John 7:1-19
- John 15:1-6
- 2 Timothy 4:1-5
- 2 Peter 1:16-21
- John 15:6-7
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 2 Corinthians 7:1
- 1 Corinthians 3:5-17
- John 15:8-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 28, 29
- Zechariah 14
- Malachi 1; 3
- Amos 5
- 2 Chronicles 8
- Exodus 25
- Revelation 22
- John 5
- John 14
- Revelation 14

Also referenced: Books:

- *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* by Fred R. Coulter
- **Appendix G—Jesus Was Taught Directly by God the Father** (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*)

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