

## Who Will Be There?

(Day 3—Feast of Tabernacles)

Fred R. Coulter—September 25, 2010

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles. Let's think about the Bible for a minute, the Old Testament and New Testament and the unity of the Scripture. You can't put it in a linear way as in a chart—either horizontally or vertically—but let's think of it as a sphere.

In a sphere you can have an infinite number of lines coming through this sphere with an infinite number of connections, which bring the wholeness and the unity of the Bible. That's what we're seeing with this Feast of Tabernacles. We're looking at the New Testament. We're looking at the Old Testament and we are putting the Scriptures together to see the pattern and the message that God has for us, because this is His plan.

Paul calls it the *secret* or the *mystery of God!* Jesus says that 'the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to us to know.' But like everything else—just like the Proverb says we have to *apply ourselves* to understand. ***'It is the glory of God to hide something, but the honor of the king to discover it.'*** That's exactly how the Bible has been inspired and made and put together, especially in the end-times, because we're told that in the end-times 'the wise will understand.'

What we need to really be thankful for and realize is that whatever understanding we have concerning the Word of God comes from God. Yes, we have to apply ourselves, but it's not because of any intelligence that we have, but because of God's Spirit, and the unity of Scripture—Old and New Testament—to where now we have the fullness and the complete Bible. So, we have an opportunity to really understand the Word of God as never has been understood in the history of the Bible and Church of God and all of those who came before us.

Let's see what Peter said. This is quite a thing when you come to understand it. Not only the salvation that Peter is talking about, but also all the prophecies and notice what he says here; notice what he acknowledges:

1-Peter 1:10: "Concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired."

Just exactly like Daniel did when he finished writing the book of Daniel. He said, 'O Lord, what does all of this mean?' And he was told ***'it's closed and sealed till the time of the end!'*** Even though

they inquired; even though Isaiah did; Jeremiah did; all of the other prophets—especially Isaiah—because he brought so many Scriptures concerning the Kingdom of God that we can understand why the disciples asked Jesus, 'Are you now going to restore the Kingdom to Israel at this time?' and He told him, ***'it's not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has put under His own authority.'***

Verse 11: "Searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and **these glories that would follow**"—*which are*:

- some of the miracles
- some of the understanding concerning the Kingdom of God
- the greatest glory that's going to happen is the return of Christ and setting up the Kingdom of God on this earth

Have you ever thought of it that way? *We have been blessed!* We need to really be thankful to God, and really realize that all of this comes from God. Just like it was given to them by God. But they didn't have enough for the full understanding. It's been given to us by God, through them, so that at the end-time we can put it all together and we can understand it.

Let's see why the understanding of the knowledge of the Kingdom of God is contained in the Old and the New Testament. It tells us:

- what it's going to be like
- who will be there
- who will not be there
- what we will be doing
- how we will be doing it
- what the Government of God is going to be like on the earth

The prophecy of Christ was that the government would be *on His shoulders!* Let's see what Peter says:

Acts 3:18: "But what God had before announced by *the* mouth of all His prophets... [that's the Kingdom of God, salvation of mankind] ...*that* Christ should suffer, He has accordingly fulfilled."

Everything else from that part has been fulfilled and we're getting closer and closer to the time of the rest of it. Just think how many

prophecies are going to come together to fulfill what God's plan is.

Verse 19: "Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out, so that *the* times of refreshing may come from *the* presence of the Lord; and *that* He may send Him Who was before proclaimed to you Jesus Christ Whom *the* heaven must indeed receive until *the* times of restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by *the* mouth of all His Holy prophets since the world began" (vs 19-21).

Isn't that something! Every time that you read of the Prophets in the Old Testament—even going clear back to Gen. 3:15—there is something concerning the Kingdom of God. Of course, that Kingdom cannot come until God's plan, through His Church, is completed here on the earth.

So, as we begin to examine what it's going to be like when the Kingdom of God is set up, let's come back to Zech. 14, and then we'll look in Isaiah, because it's important for us to understand what condition will the earth be in.

We get an inkling of through the book of Revelation, and all the things that are going to happen back there. But what we're going to do is see *how* the Old Testament and the New Testament work together to show us how it's all going to take place. As we are going to see, this earth is going to be almost totally plowed like field, turned upside down, valleys lifted up, mountains brought down. It's going to be quite a thing! When that happens, when Christ returns, it's just like He ascended from the Mt. of Olives and went up into the heavens to be accepted of God the Father.

Zechariah 14:4: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall split in two, from the east and to the west, and make a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

Everybody's going to run for their lives it says! When we, with Jesus Christ, step on the earth.

Verse 5: "And you shall flee to the valley of My mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with You.**" *Another thing to add in and talk about Pentecost and the Sea of Glass!*

Verse 8: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them shall go toward the eastern sea, and half of

them toward the western sea. In summer and in winter it shall be. And **the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name shall be one**" (vs 8-9). *We're going to have to start straightening out the earth!*

Let's see the events that are going to leave this earth virtually upside down! I don't know if that indicates that the poles are going to switch and the whole earth be turned over; I don't know whether that is going to happen! But nevertheless, let's understand that there are not going to be very many people left! We're going to have to start again. It's going to be a clean slate. We're going to have to start helping rebuild the world. Of course, that's one of our instructions that's going to be when we're on the Sea of Glass and find out what we're going to do.

Isaiah 24:1: "Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters its inhabitants. And as *it is* with the people, so it shall be with the priest; as with the slave, so with the master; as with the handmaid, so it is with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. **The earth shall be completely laid waste and utterly stripped; for the LORD has spoken this word.** The earth mourns *and* languishes; the world withers *and* languishes; the proud people of the earth wither. And the earth is defiled under its people; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and have broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and they who dwell in it are desolate; therefore the people of the earth are burned, and **few men are left**" (vs 1-6).

That's the condition. We're going to start out as ruling and reigning as kings and priests with Jesus Christ. We've got a lot of work ahead of us. Let's also see something that's important for us to realize. Let's ask the question, because we didn't quite finish it on day two: **Who will be there?** Remember Peter said, 'spoken by the mouth of all the prophets since the world began.'

Let's come back here to Luke 13 and let's see what Jesus says concerning who's going to be there and also who's not going to be there.

Luke 13:23<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>—*this tells us the real story:* "...Then He [Christ] said to them, 'Strive with *your* whole being to enter in through the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, will seek to enter in, but shall not be able. Once the Master of the house has risen up and has shut the door... [found in the book of Revelation] ...and you... [scribes and Pharisees and other people out there] ...begin to stand outside

the door and knock, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us”; then shall He answer *and* say to you, “I do not know you *or* where you are from.” And you shall begin to say, “We ate and drank in Your presence, and You have taught in our streets.” (vs 23-26).

‘We saw You, Jesus.’ That’s something! It talks about the Kingdom of God.

Verse 27: “And He shall say, ‘I tell you, I do not know you *or* where you are from. Depart from Me, all *you* workers of unrighteousness.’”

Think about that! When we reflect on what was the main ‘religious’ problem during the days of Jesus, it was between the scribes and Pharisees and the rabbis and their traditional teachings, compared to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Bible. That is saying that all of their traditions and all of the things that they did, and all of their sins combined made them ‘workers of unrighteousness.’ Yet, they thought ‘we saw Jesus so we’ll be there.’ *No way!*

Verse 28: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see...”

At the Lake of Fire—as we explained in a message earlier this spring *Lazarus and the Rich Man*. They’re going to see:

“...Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, **but you yourselves are cast out**” (v 28).

That’s quite a statement, but notice what is going to happen, and this is talking about the resurrection:

Verse 29: “Then they shall come from *the* east and *the* west, and from *the* north and *the* south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. And behold, there are *the* last who shall be first, and *the* first who shall be last” (vs 29-30).

That’s just the way that God has described that it will be. So, we have to wait and see how everything’s going to go, but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets will be there. Then all the saints from the east and the west and the north and the south will all be there.

Let’s see what Abraham also knew, because Abraham knew more than what we’re told back in the Old Testament. Here’s what Paul wrote of it. Let’s see about Abraham: what he looked forward to; what he understood.

Hebrews 11:8: “**By faith** Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place which he would later receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went, **not knowing where he was going**.” *Very much like us:*

- we *walk by faith*
- we *believe in hope*
- we *live in love*

But we don’t know exactly where all of this is headed. Think about it for a minute: How many of us when we first came into the Church had any clue that it would end up the way it would end up and we are where we are today? *None of us!* Same way with Abraham. We are his children!

Verse 9: “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles...”

Part of the meaning of Feast of Tabernacles comes from the temporary dwellings that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in.

“...dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the joint heirs of the same promise; for **he was waiting for the city with the foundations of which God is the Architect and Builder**” (vs 9-10).

So, there we have Old Testament, New Testament and the final vision in the book of Revelation all tied together. That’s quite something when we understand that.

Let’s look at some other things here. Let’s see what is laid out for us in Luke 22. It talks about the Kingdom of God again and who’s going to be there, and part of what we’re going to do, and how that’s going to be. **Who else is going to be there?**

Luke 22:28: “Now, you are the ones who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a Kingdom” (vs 28-29).

So, we’re all going to have our area of authority and jurisdiction likened to a small kingdom.

Verse 30: “So that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

In the past many of us can remember how an evangelist would come around and he would assign all the jobs in the Millennium to everyone in the Old Testament, and yet, Jesus Himself did not do that, and God has not done that either. So we also have to understand that ‘*by faith*’ we’re going to receive what God wants us to receive. *That’s quite something!*

Each one of the twelve apostles will be judging—during the Millennium—one of the twelve tribes of Israel, sitting on thrones, authority from God. What else do we see later in New Jerusalem? Well, we have the foundations and the gates named

after the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. So you see the continuity and unity the of Scripture. In order to understand the Kingdom of God we need to understand the Old Testament Scriptures and the New Testament Scriptures; we need to put them together in the way that God wants us to do that.

Let's see what Psa. 49 tells us about the Kingdom of God. Not a lengthy Psalm here but it's really a good one. Here's a lesson for us.

Psalm 49:1: "Hear this, all you people; give ear, all inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the thoughts of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline my ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the lyre. Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my supplanters surrounds me? Those who trust in their wealth and in their many riches boast themselves. No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their soul is costly, and no payment is ever enough. That he should live forever and never see corruption" (vs 1-9).

We have to be eternal to enter into it. That's part of it right there. Not only that, it's talking about Christ; it's talking about our reward; talking about the things that we will then do.

Luke 19—let's see where this gives us some concrete instruction on what we will actually be doing and how our Christian life, on a daily basis, is reflected in how that's going affect our eternal reward. God is loving and kind and merciful and just.

Let's see how The Parable of the Pounds portrays to us how we need to live and how we need to be and what's going to happen. It also tells us who will be there and who will not be there. We're to strive with all of our being to enter into the Kingdom of God—*that's our part!*

God's part is to lead us with His Spirit, to teach us His Word as we study and pray, and that we maintain a relationship with God on a daily basis. We do it day after day; week after week; month after month; year after year until we either attain to the resurrection and are changed while we're still alive 'in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye' OR we die in the faith and are buried and are in our *place of safety* and miss the Great Tribulation! That might be something to think about, too.

That's why God says there, concerning the Day of the Lord and the Great Tribulation, 'woe to you who desire it.' You don't even know what it's

all about. It's a day of darkness and desolation and gloominess and death and destruction! Is that what you really desire? Well, some people will have to go through it. But I tell you, those who are faithful and attain to the grave as their *place of safety*, that's going to be quite a feat, also. God works all things out.

Luke 19:11: "Now, as they were listening to these things, He went on to speak a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately."

Oh yes, coming to Jerusalem, entering in on donkey, enter in as the King and then a glorious thing would happen: All the priests and scribes and Pharisees would accept Him as the King and He would establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Well, it's just like today, well-intended expectations were not fulfilled. Remember this also: all during the life of the apostles and their ministry and their teaching, right up until the beginning, the first part of 60<sub>S.A.D.</sub> and on down toward the destruction of Jerusalem, they all thought that the Kingdom of God was going to come with the return of Christ during their lifetime. *It didn't happen that way!* Likewise with us! How many of us thought it's going to come in our lifetime? We didn't consider everything involved. Then He gave this parable:

Verse 12: "Therefore, He said, 'A certain nobleman set out to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and to return. And after calling ten of his servants, he gave to them ten pounds, and said to them, "Trade until I come *back*." But his citizens hated him...' (vs 12-14).

That's those that were there then, and that's the same way with the 'Christian' religious organizations today; they hate Jesus Christ. 'Oh, but we love the Lord.' No you don't, because:

- you refuse to keep His laws
- you refuse to keep His Sabbaths
- you refuse to keep His Holy Days

***Therefore, you hate Him! You want the benefit and blessing without the love and obedience!*** It isn't going to happen that way!

"...and sent an ambassador after him, saying, 'We are not willing to have this man reign over us.' .... [we want pure grace; no rule] ... And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he directed that those servants to whom he had given the money be called to him, in order that he might know what each one had gained by trading. And the first one came up, saying, 'Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds'" (vs 14-16).

What does this show? This shows that if we *walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love* we are going to produce a *spiritual profit!* Our lives are going to be changed; our lives are going to be converted. Now, at the resurrection, then we're given eternal life.

Verse 17: "Then he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'"

This tells us what we're going to do. We're going to rule over the cities. Are there many positions in cities? *Many!* Take cities, counties, states—however you want to break it down—yes, indeed! So we're going to have authority to rule in the cities.

Verse 18: "And the second one came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' Then he also said to this one, 'And you be over five cities.' But another came, saying, 'Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief'" (vs 18-20).

Once saved always saved, I received it and I just kept it and I buried it and that's a wonderful thing, Lord. And here's Yours, I'm bringing it to You. "**...Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief**"

Verse 21: "For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow." *Didn't have the faith!*

- to go out and work
- to produce
- to improve
- to grow
- to change
- to develop in character

So what happened? Notice what Jesus told him:

Verse 22: "Then he said to him, "Out of your *own* mouth I will judge you..."

Always remember, be careful what you say and be careful what you ask for, because this a *living truth!*

"... 'Out of your *own* mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow. Then why didn't you deposit my money in the bank... [at least do something with it] ...so that at my coming I might have received it with interest?'" (vs 22-23). *God wants us:*

- to continually grow
- to continually overcome

- to continually develop the character of God

That's what it's all about. That's what Peter wrote about in 1-Peter 2; that we are to become partakers of the Divine nature. So, he didn't do anything about it; he didn't think it was worthwhile doing.

*Notice what happened, v 24:* "And he said to those who were standing by, 'Take the pound from him, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.' (And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds.')" (vs 24-25).

Now, for all of those of you who think that Christianity is Communism, this does away with that. He gave it to the one who had ten. Why? *Because the one who produced the most will also produce the most if it's given to him.*

Verse 26: "For I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* shall be given; but the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him.... [that sounds a little bit like some of the message to the seven churches] ...Moreover, bring my enemies, those who were not willing *for* me to reign over them, and slay *them* here before me" (vs 26-27). *That's in the Lake of Fire! So this tells you:*

- who's going to be there
- who's not going to be there
- what we are going to do
- how we are going to do it

We'll see some more of those things as we go along today and tomorrow, so we can understand what we need to do.

Brethren, think of this: We have been called to the greatest calling, not only eternal life to be in the first resurrection, but to rule and reign as kings and priests with Jesus Christ a thousand years and ***then have our part in New Jerusalem and reign on into the ages of eternity!*** Think of that!

That's what this Feast of Tabernacles is all about, that we will be living with God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the saints going clear back in time, Old Testament and New Testament all together. What a fantastic thing that is! We need to be inspired with this. We need to understand what God is telling us about it. We need to realize that we need to put forth the effort in order to do so. That's what it's telling us here.

(break)

Let's see what we need to do, brethren. We know that we have to be eternal spirit beings, raised from the dead in order to inherit the Kingdom of God.

As we learned, the Apostle Paul said, 'Flesh

and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. So, we need to see what are the quality characteristics that we need to be a king or a priest or a ruler over a city, or a country, or a region, or whatever it may be.

All we have to do is look at the world today and understand *you cannot solve spiritual problems by political means*. But here's another lesson also to learn: *The only way to solve the political problems is by spiritual means*. The only way to resolve the problem of corruption in government and in 'religion'—if I could use the term—*is spiritual! God's way!*

What was the lesson of King Nebuchadnezzar back in Dan. 4? *That God puts over the kingdoms of men rulers who are called 'the basest of men.'* All of that's going to change with the Kingdom of God and the rule of the saints. So, it's very important for us to understand what is it that we need to do to develop the character of God, to enter into the Kingdom of God and rule and reign with Jesus Christ and the saints and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets.

2-Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained the same precious faith as ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

That verse tells us an awful lot. It has to be, by obtaining the same precious faith as ours—the faith that the apostles had—which came by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. There again, Jesus is God!

Verse 2: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." *Now we have the opportunity for really to be multiplied to us!*

These next two verses contain the promises that are absolutely fantastic to understand. This is what we need to keep in the forefront of our mind as we look forward to entering into the Kingdom of God and ruling and reigning with Jesus Christ.

Verse 3: "According as His Divine power has given to us **all things that pertain to life and Godliness...**"

That's why we need to develop the Godly character. Character must come first before authority and rule. *Character must be the very character of God, which comes by the faith and righteousness of Jesus Christ in our lives!*

Notice what it does for us: "...Godliness; through the knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and most precious promises..." (vs 3-

4).

This is why we always have to continually count the cost. But in order to count the cost and know what is truly right and good, we've always got to be looking:

- toward Jesus Christ
- toward the Kingdom of God
- toward the Word of God
- being led of the Spirit of God

*So that we can change, grow and overcome!*

"...given to us all things that pertain to life and Godliness through which He has given to us the greatest and most precious promises, that through these... [what he's going to explain in just a minute] ...you may become partakers of the Divine nature..." (v 4).

What did Paul write concerning the mind and the nature? Compare that with human nature, then you compare that with the nature of God, and we are to receive the 'Divine nature' that Paul called the mind of Christ—*let this be in you, which was also in Christ*. Let it be!

- you have to want it
- you have to yearn for it
- you have to work for it
- you have to apply yourself to it

*That's what Peter is telling us here in the first chapter!*

"...having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (v 4).

- that's what conversion is to do
- that's what leading a Christian life is to do for us
  - ✓ to overcome lust
  - ✓ to overcome sin
  - ✓ to overcome the things of the pulls of human nature
  - ✓ to overcome Satan the devil and his wiles
  - ✓ to be able to realize that we are:
    - truly in training for the Kingdom of God
    - truly in training for the resurrection of Jesus Christ—for us when He returns
    - truly going to have a better resurrection and status in the Kingdom of God than all who come into the Kingdom after us
- that's why Jesus told us that we need to count the cost
- that's why He doesn't want us to play religion

- that's why He doesn't want us to turn the Church into a *social club*
- that's why He wants us to apply ourselves

And looking at the world the way that it is today, we'd better really be busy doing that—don't you think?

Verse 5: "And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence..."

That's quite the opposite of what the world believes. Remember the sermon I gave, *The Evangelical Bible—a Fast Track to Salvation?* They believe that salvation comes with just two verses, and once you have that everything is all set. *NO!*

"...having applied all diligence besides..." (v 5). *When we do that then we're to add this to it; these are:*

- the stepping-stones
- the building blocks
- the learning things that we have to have

***in order to be the true leaders in the Kingdom of God when Christ returns!*** We can look forward to the Kingdom—great, wonderful—but we must apply ourselves with all diligence to be there.

"...add **to your faith, virtue...**" (v 5). *The faith that we have is the faith of Jesus Christ that He gives to us!*

- we believe God
- we believe His Word
- we have faith that the Spirit of God is going to lead us
- we have faith that the Spirit of God is going to teach us

That when we pray we yield to God and we have that daily relationship with God through prayer and study, and that translates into how we live.

As we've said many times, ***we have to walk by faith***—not by sight—***by faith!*** We are to add to our faith, *virtue*. Now, what is *virtue*? ***Virtue is good, Godly behavior!*** Or as Jesus said, 'Let your yes be yes, and your no be no.' Of course, all of that in love! ***These building blocks of character then lead us to growing and developing the true love of God!***

"...and **to virtue, knowledge...**" (v 5). What did Peter write here at the end of 2-Peter? 'Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

- grow daily
- grow weekly
- grow monthly

- grow year-by-year

*Many of us have been in the Church many years!*

I look back and it's going to be 50 years—19<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010. The longer we've been in the Church we need to ask ourselves:

- What have we been doing?
- How do we qualify?

*Right here, here it is!*

I think that 2-Peter is very fitting for us, because this was the last of what Peter wrote to the disciples before he was martyred. He was very urgent in what he wrote here. He wanted everyone to know how absolutely basic that these things are.

"...and **to knowledge, self-control...**" (v 6)—*through the Spirit and knowledge of God—and Godly character—that:*

- you control your thoughts
- you control your appetites
- you control your life

How do you do that?

Col. 3 shows us how we have 'self-control.' It comes through the rulership of Christ *in* us; very important for us to really realize and understand.

Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts..." *That gives you self-control!*

- that helps you overcome temper
- that helps you overcome blunders
- that helps you overcome being impetuous
- that helps you overcome saying things that you ought not say

Then you have to say, 'Oh, that's just the way he is.' If that's just the way he or she is, don't you think we need to be about some self-control to change that?

Verse 15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (vs 15-16).

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you; let the peace of God dwell in you; ***this gives you self-control!*** This also helps you have *peace of mind*. When you have faith, mercy, hope, love and forgiveness—through prayer, through study, through living—then you have *peace of mind* and the Word of Christ can dwell *in* you and rule *in* you.

Verse 17: "And *in* everything—whatever

you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him.” *That tells us then how we have self-control!*

2-Peter 1<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup> also becomes a very keystone for us to understand. We need to be the seed that’s planted in the good ground, the fertile ground, so that we can bring forth the 30-fold, the 60-fold and the 100-fold. If we bring for a hundredfold, then we’re like Isaac, because the crops of Isaac produced a hundredfold.

2-Peter 1:6: “...and to self-control, endurance...”

Endurance then is really quite a thing! Endurance means that we *survive, go through trials*. Understand that at the end of the tunnel there is a blessing.

Let’s see how Paul wrote of this in Rom. 5, and let’s see why we need to have character and endurance. Paul writes of it in just a little different way, but almost the same thing. This tells us:

- why we’re here
- where we’re going
- what we’re doing
- how we’re going to attain to the Kingdom of God.
- that’s the whole purpose of all the Word of God
- that’s the whole purpose of conversion
- that’s the whole purpose of keeping the commandments of God

So, *to self-control we add endurance!* Notice how Paul wrote of it:

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith... [talking about the same thing here that Peter was talking about] ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [let the *peace of God* rule in your heart] ...Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God” (vs 1-2). *Think of that!*

Whenever you get down on yourself, discouraged and think ‘no one cares for me, no one loves me, I’m having this trial and it’s so difficult and no one can understand what I’m going through, think of this’: Get on your knees and thank God.

*God says He loves you!* I want you to dwell on that for just a minute! *The Ruler of the universe, with Jesus Christ at His right hand, loves you!* It doesn’t matter if all the rest of the world, everybody else, hates you.

- God the Father loves you

- God has called you
- God wants you to build this kind of character through His Spirit and through the grace of God

*So we have that hope!*

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...”—*because we understand what they’re all about then!* We understand what trials are for.

“...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance... [the ‘name of the game’ today, as it was back then; always is] ...and endurance brings forth character... [so that you grow and develop the Godly character that the Apostle Peter is talking about (2-Pet. 1)] ...and character brings forth hope” (v 4).

I want you to see how these things instructions on building character—so that we can be in the Kingdom of God to rule as kings and priests with Jesus Christ—all dovetail together. Again, *the unity of Scripture!* The unity of the teaching of the New Testament writing by the apostles.

Verse 5: “And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us.” *This is all a spiritual work! A spiritual exercise!*

Notice that it says that it brings forth character. What kind of character. Notice what it says here in

2-Peter 1:6: “...and to endurance, Godliness...”—*to be like God; think like God!*

How can we do that as human beings? *That’s why God made us in His image so that we can*, and through His Spirit so that it will be accomplished.

Eph, 5—notice what Paul wrote. This is really something when we understand it; when we really realize what it’s telling us! In the *King James* it says ‘be followers of God’; but the Greek means more than that—not just ‘followers’ of God. Here’s the proper translation:

Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore, be imitators of God...”

- that’s why we *study His Word*
- that’s why we want to *understand the Word of God*
- that’s why *He’s given us His Spirit*
- that’s why *the peace of God is to rule in our hearts*

- that's why *we are to have the mind of Christ*

**So we can imitate God!**

“...**as beloved children**” (v 1).

- not complainers
- not gripers
- not arguing
- not fighting

There's been enough of that in the Church down through time! Let's all become as “...beloved children” loving one another, serving one another.

Verse 2: “And **walk in love**, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” *Fantastic!*

Isn't it amazing how much that the Bible agrees with itself, though it was written by 40 different men. The reason it does is because the Spirit of God which has inspired it to be so.

2-Peter 1:6: “...**Godliness.**”

- to imitate God
- to be like God
- to develop the character of God
- to think like God, to have the mind of Christ

*Notice what this does:*

Verse 7: “And to Godliness, brotherly love...” (v 7). *Not a social club, but **brotherly love!***

How many times did Jesus tell us to ‘**Love one another as I have loved you!**’

Love one another as God has loved us. *Brotherly love!* That's to have concern, understanding, praying for, helping one another. That's what it should be when anyone comes into any of our congregations, *that they:*

- sense the *love of God*
- *hear the Truth of God*
- want the *righteousness of God*

*That's an example for them!*

How many times has it been that people walk into a Church of God and all it is just a fight and a hassle and a rant and a rave. Well, that's not building Godly character or brotherly love. Notice what happens, how these stepping-stones are. All of these steps follow in sequence one with another:

“...and **to brotherly love, the love**... [that's what it means in the Greek] ...**of God**” (v 7).

How does that agree with the Apostle John

in the Epistle of First John? *Exactly the same way!* Brethren, we ought to ‘love one another for God is love!’

- that love gives us strength
- that love gives us peace
- that love gives us a willing spirit and understanding
  - ✓ to love God
  - ✓ serve God
  - ✓ keep His commandments
  - ✓ do the things that are pleasing in His sight

Just like we have learned this year: We keep the commandments of God **through** grace! It is not *grace and love* over here and *commandment-keeping* over there. Just like I started out with the beginning of the sermon, the Word of God is like a sphere. You can run an infinite number of lines through it, and you will have an infinite number of connections in seeing how the Word of God agrees with itself and is connected together.

Let's read on for a few more verses, because it gives us some greater understanding with this:

Verse 8: “For *if* these things **exist and abound**... [*an abundance of; a multiplying of; **IF** these Godly characteristics exist*]: ...**in you**, they will cause you to be neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Always growing! Always overcoming!*

That's the whole purpose in what we're doing.

- every Sabbath we grow in grace and knowledge
- every Holy Day we grow in grace and knowledge
- every Feast of God we grow in grace and knowledge and understanding

*God is*

- molding us
- preparing us
- developing His character in us

**So that we can have the mind of Christ!** He gives a warning—just like we saw—like the ones that received the pounds or talents they didn't develop them.

Verse 9: “But the one in whom these things are not present is *spiritually* blind—so short-sighted *that* he has forgotten that he was purified from his old sins... [Isn't that amazing?] ...For this reason, brethren, **be even more diligent**... [How many times have we read ‘diligent’?] ...**to make your calling and election sure**; because **if you are doing these things, you will never fall at any time**” (vs 9-

10).

- You will never fail
- you will be in the Kingdom of God
- you will be there to serve
- you will be there to rule
- you will be there to help straighten this earth out

***and be working directly with God all beginning during the Millennium to help bring the greatest number of people into the understanding of the salvation of God and to enter into the Kingdom of God!***

That's why the Feast of Tabernacles comes after the harvest at the in-gathering at the end of the year. We'll be a part of that, brethren. Think of that! That's what God has called us to do. "**...you will never fall [fail] at any time.**"

Let's see how Paul also agrees with this. Peter and Paul weren't at odds with each other, only except when Peter made that mistake and he got all carried away with some of the things of the party of circumcision coming down from Jerusalem. And after all, he was an apostle to the circumcision, not to the Gentiles.

So, that's why Paul went to Rome and not Peter. Paul was the apostle for the Gentiles, and Peter was the apostle for the Jews and the Israelites. He would never have gone to Rome to presume to setup the papacy as people claim. Never happened!

Paul is showing how the love of God is to work in our lives and notice how this compliments and supports and adds to what Peter was writing:

1-Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient *and* is kind; love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up."

Notice what that does to the character. Is this not describing 'brotherly love' that we have to have? *Yes!*

Verse 5: "*Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth" (vs 5-6).

Notice what love also does for us and why Paul says, 'love is the greatest.' That's why Peter wrote it this way: 'from brotherly love comes THE love of God.'

Verse 7: "*Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...." (vs 7-8).

What did we read back here in 2-Peter 1:10?

*If you are doing these things 'you shall never fail at any time.'* What did Paul write? *Love never fails!* There you have it, they both agree.

"...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease; whether *there be* languages, they shall cease... [we're all going to speak a new language] ...whether *there be* knowledge... [as we know it today] ...it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come... [that's at the resurrection that's when we're going to be perfected] ...then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child" (vs 8-11).

We can look back and see in our childhood all of the foolish, stupid little things that we did. Yes, many of them!

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; **but the greatest of these is love**" (vs 12-13). *That ties in exactly with what the Apostle Peter was writing here!*

2-Peter 1:10: "...you will never fall at any time. For in this way, you will be richly granted an entrance into the Eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (vs 10-11).

That's what we want, entrance into the Kingdom of God; ***that is our inheritance!***

Verse 12: "Therefore, I will not neglect to make you always mindful of these things, although you *already* know them and have been established in the present Truth."

Now, let's look at a Psalm, which tells us how then we are to seek the tabernacle of God; and the Tabernacle of God is pictured by the Millennial reign of Christ and the saints on the earth.

Psa. 84 tells us the attitude that we need to have. This is one of my favorites. Notice how this Psa. shows us and adds to and relates very closely to the New Testament.

Psalm 84:1: "How lovely are Your tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (vs 1-2).

That ties in with what Jesus said, we have to 'hunger and thirst after righteousness'—*there it is, right there!* Then he talks a little bit more about the tabernacles of God.

Verse 3: “Yea, even the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. **Blessed are those who dwell in Your house...**” (vs 3-4).

What did Jesus say? ‘*In My Father’s house are many offices.*’ Many abodes! Many positions! You won’t have to worry about being unemployed every again once you’re in the Kingdom of God.

“...they will still be praising You. Selah” (v 4)—*stop, think and meditate on this!* Notice how that ties in with what we’ve read in the New Testament.

Verse 5: “Blessed is the man whose strength is in You; Your ways are in their hearts.”

Isn’t that what we’ve been talking about in the New Testament? *Yes!* Maybe this will help you understand the foolishness of the Protestants who say that the Old Testament has been done away and fulfilled.

Verse 6: “Who passing through the valley of weeping make it a place of springs; yea, the early rain also clothes it with blessings. They go from strength to strength, every one of them appearing in Zion before God” (vs 6-7).

These are the saints coming before God, as spirit beings! Think of that! Isn’t that going to be something?

Verse 8: “O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah... [think and meditate on that] ...Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed, for a day in Your courts is better than a thousand *elsewhere*. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness” (vs 8-10).

That’s why we are to forsake everything in the world, because God is going to give us many-fold over for all eternity.

Verse 11: “For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You” (vs 11-12).

*So this tells us*

- who’s going to be in the Kingdom of God
- what we will be doing
- how we will get there
- our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ forever!

So, remember *the unity of Scripture*, how it all fits together just like a sphere with an infinite number of lines intersecting with an infinite number of intersections, *which makes the whole Bible agree with itself.*

Scriptural references:

- 1) 1 Peter 1:10-11
- 2) Acts 3:18-21
- 3) Zechariah 14:4-5, 8-9
- 4) Isaiah 24:1-6
- 5) Luke 13:23-30
- 6) Hebrews 11:8-10
- 7) Luke 22:28-30
- 8) Psalm 49:1-9
- 9) Luke 19:11-27
- 10) 2 Peter 1:1-6
- 11) Colossians 3:15-17
- 12) 2 Peter 1:6
- 13) Romans 5:1-5
- 14) 2 Peter 1:6
- 15) Ephesians 5:1-2
- 16) 2 Peter 1:6-10
- 17) 1 Corinthians 13:4-13
- 18) 2 Peter 1:10-12
- 19) Psalm 84:1-12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 3:15
- 1 Peter 2
- Daniel 4

Also referenced: Message:

*Lazarus and the Rich Man*

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