

## Introduction—Opening Night

(Feast of Tabernacles)

Fred R. Coulter—September 26, 2007

Greetings, brethren, welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles, 2007. This is the opening of the Feast and, as you know, the Feast of Tabernacles pictures what every human being really longs for in their hearts:

- peace
- safety
- good government
- righteousness

Yet, man, cut off from God, does not know how to do it; and cannot succeed in it. That's the whole lesson that we have concerning the Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement.

God is ready now, as pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles... Of course, remember that every year we're getting closer and closer to the fulfillment of every one of these things in prophecy. Now, close for God is different than close for us. As human beings if we think five years, ten years, fifteen years, whoa, that's a long time! But for God that's less than a blink of an eye. So, we need to keep everything in perspective. It gives us an opportunity for the Feast of Tabernacles:

- to be together
- to fellowship with each other
- to love each other
- to serve each other
- to enjoy each other
- to learn and be taught of God's Word
- to be fortified with His Spirit and His Truth

God has called us with a special calling to participate in the fulfilling of the Feast of Tabernacles by bringing the Kingdom of God and Millennium on earth for a thousand years and then it pictures out into all eternity.

This is a tremendous Feast! We don't know how long—because of the political and religious situation that we see developing in America—we're going to have the freedom, the liberty, the money, the time to be able to assemble together in groups. We may end up with smaller and smaller groups and more and more people in their homes just because of the times. But nevertheless:

- we're still going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles
- we're still going to trust in God
- we're still going to look to Him
  - ✓ to help us

- ✓ to guide us
- ✓ to direct us

In spite of the fact that things in the world, as we're going to see in a bit, are completely upside down, we need to realize and understand that God is going to solve the problem **and we are the solution!** I want you to think about that.

All the disciples and apostles wanted to know when the Kingdom of God was going to come. I don't think there has been a generation of Christians from the time of the apostles down till now who did not anticipate the return of Christ. There was single times that took place, like in Europe around the year 1000.

- they had plagues
- they had earthquakes
- they had bad weather

So, they thought for sure that Christ was going to return, but He didn't do it. At various times down through history—the latest one close to our time—was in the days of William Miller in 1844 when everyone got out there and stood on rocks and had their hands raised and prayed for the return of Christ, and it never occurred.

Many people don't realize it but it was right after that that *the theory of the rapture took place*, and was fully developed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and cemented into concrete by Schofield in his Schofield Bible. Many people believed that as absolute truth, because when you read the Bible and then you read a footnote—that's there to explain something—many people don't understand that that's not the inspired Word of God. It may explain a word, it may explain something, but if it doesn't agree with the Truth of the Bible, it's not part of the Bible and don't you believe it.

Remember what the disciples anxiously asked Jesus on the 40<sup>th</sup> day, just before He ascended into heaven, 'Lord, will you, at this time, restore the Kingdom to Israel?' Of course, He says, ***'It's not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father had put in His own authority! You go do what I commanded you to do, wait in Jerusalem until you receive power!'***

That's exactly what we are to do. When we see these things that are coming, we know it's closer. We know the times are going to get difficult, but that should inspire us to:

- really draw closer to God

- be more faithful to God
- yield to God
- understand that we are an integral part of God’s plan for saving the world

That goes all the way back to Abel and all the way up to the last one who is converted before the end comes.

Acts 3:19: “Therefore, repent and be converted...” *This is the whole key for us, all the time!* That’s why:

- *daily* we are to repent of our sins
- *daily*, we are to make things right with each other
- *if you truly love God*, you will love the brethren
- *if you love the brethren*, you will treat them as Christ treats them
  - ✓ as brethren
  - ✓ love them
  - ✓ respect them
  - ✓ be converted

That’s the whole process that we are going through. We have been in an unprecedented time here in America where:

- we’ve had peace
- we’ve had freedom
- we’ve had opportunities to grow, change and overcome
- we’ve had all the Word of God
- we’ve had the understanding given to us

We live in the end-time so we know what they’re going to be. So, this ought to really just inspire us to really stay right with God.

“...in order that your sins may be blotted out, so that *the* times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (v 19). *That is conversion:*

- to change you
- to refresh you
- to grant you the Holy Spirit
- to be converted

*which comes* “...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...” (vs 19-21)—the *King James* says, ‘the restitution.’ Everything’s going to be restored, ***and we are going to be part of it!*** That’s what this Feast of Tabernacles pictures.

“...of which God has spoken by *the* mouth of all His Holy prophets since the world began” (v 21).

This is something! You think of it going all the way back to Adam and Eve, going all the way back to Abel, coming down to the time of Noah into Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the children of Israel. Then the kingdoms of Judah and Israel and all the way down to the time of Christ coming in the flesh and then the Gospel being preached and spread to the whole world and coming down to our day and beginning with the printing press with Gutenberg, the first book that was printed was the Bible.

Since then God has fulfilled the promise of the prophecy there in Mark 13, that the Gospel would be ***published*** in all the world. Today there are more Bibles than ever before. After this Feast of Tabernacles we are going to have in our hands the very first Bible that has ever been produced that has the Old Testament and New Testament combined together in their original order. So, this ought to really just help us and inspire us so that we can really get in and prepare as never before.

Now, let’s look at the world today. A lot of people think, just like they have thought with the immigration problem that they can solve it politically. Key thing to always remember: ***you can never solve a spiritual problem with a political solution!*** Never happen! There has to be repentance and a return to God. This is why the world is in the mess that it is in. And this is why the United States is coming down. The decline may be in steps and stages, but the die has been cast ***and it is going to happen!*** The reason that it is, is right here:

Isaiah 59:1: “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have come between you and your God, **and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear**” (vs 1-2).

Jeremiah was told when the people had reached such a point of sinfulness, God told him: ‘Don’t even pray for them, don’t lift up voice because **I will not hear!**’ *We’ve reached that point in modern Israel today!* They are going to go headlong into captivity. How long that will take, *we don’t know!* How many years we have so we can teach, preach and publish, *we don’t know!* But what we need to do is be busy about doing what God expects us to do.

Look at the society, v 3 “For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness.” *This is just like an encapsulation of all the governments of this world; everything that men have set their hands to do, it reduces down to this.*

Verse 4: “None calls for justice... [*true justice* with God] ...nor does anyone plead for Truth... [they want a political solution, not Truth] ...they trust in vanity and speak lies. They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.” That’s exactly what is happening; this is why. What I want to do is compare the world that we have today and the way that we see it today and just understand that we are going to correct all these things; God is going to bring the solution.

This is why if you have any doctrinal disputes of any kind, *please leave them to yourself!* Don’t destroy the Feast of Tabernacles with the brethren by your own personal vanity and selfishness. *Please put it aside!* There are bigger things that we need to look to. There are greater things that we need to do. We need to have the love of God and the love of the brethren. If you have any anger, hostility, something against your brothers or your sisters, solve it, *put it aside and make this a joyous Feast!* Don’t spread personal, pet doctrines. Please spare us! Spare all the brethren!

Verse 5: “They hatch adders’ eggs... [originating with Satan] ...and weave the spider’s web... [you just watch this election, all the way through, that’s exactly what they’re doing] ...he who eats their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper. Their webs shall not become clothing... [they’re not going to make it work] ...nor shall they cover themselves with their works; their works *are* works of iniquity, and the acts of violence *are* in their hands. **Their feet run to evil...**” (vs 5-7).

- to adultery
- to fornication
- to drugs
- to pleasure
- to excitement
- to *the basest of the reality of human behavior*

“...and they make haste to shed innocent blood... [more murders, deaths, tragedies] ...their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity... [Our thoughts need to be the thoughts of God. Our thoughts need to be on the way and plan of God and the goodness of God, the love of God, the mercy of God.] ...wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. **They have not known the way of peace;** and *there is* no justice in their ways. They have made crooked paths for themselves; **whoever goes therein shall not know peace.** Therefore, justice is far from us...” (vs 7-9).

Don’t expect the Supreme Court, or any court, to render any decision that is righteous. If it looks good, no it won’t turn out that way.

“...nor does righteousness overtake us. We

wait for light... [everybody’s hoping for good] ...but behold, darkness; for brightness, *but* we walk in deep shadows. We grope along the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes. We stumble at noonday as in the night; among those who are strong, we are like dead men” (vs 9-10). *Now, you just watch and see how this is going to take place!*

Verse 11: “We all roar like bears, and mourn grievously like doves; we look for justice, but there is none, *we look* for salvation, yet, it is far from us; for our transgressions *are* multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us; and *as for* our iniquities, we know them” (vs 11-12). *They understand, but they can’t get out of it!*

Verse 13: “In rebellion and denial of the LORD... [that’s what it’s all against] ...and turning away from our God, talking perversity and revolt, conceiving and speaking from the heart words of falsehood. And justice is driven backward, and righteousness stands afar off; **for truth has fallen in the street, and uprightness cannot enter**” (vs 13-14).

What I’d like you to do is the next time you sit down and watch the evening news, watch a couple of hours of it, open up to Isa. 59<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup> and you will see what they are talking about on the news is exactly what Isaiah 59<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup> is talking about to the nth degree. Notice where we fit into this:

Verse 15: “Yea, truth fails; and he *who* departs from evil makes himself a prey... [we become victimized] ...And the LORD saw, and it was evil in His eyes that *there was* no justice.”

God is going let America and the children of Israel go down into the depths of degradation, and into captivity and slavery. We’re going to see it happen step-by-step. **It is coming and it’s going to end up in the worst tribulation that has ever been on the earth!** So much so that Jesus said that if He didn’t return there would be ‘no flesh saved alive.’ But there is going to be some flesh saved alive, and *we* are going to help bring them salvation.

So, after the resurrection when we start coming back to the earth with Jesus Christ, *the beast* and *the false prophet* are cast into the Lake of Fire, and Satan is bound, then the Millennium begins. We’re going to be a part of it. Let’s see how, since this is the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Millennium is actually going to begin. We know we will be with Him.

Zechariah 14:4: “And His [Christ] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is

before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives...”

Isn't that interesting? What did the angel say when the disciples saw Him ascending into heaven? They said, 'You men of Galilee, why are you standing looking up into the heavens. This same Jesus will come in a like manner.' Where were they standing? *On the Mt. of Olives!* Where is He returning? *To the Mt. of Olives!* See how great prophecy is when you understand it.

“...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” (v 4).

This is going to be a momentous event and remember, *we are with Christ!*

Verse 5: “...And the LORD my God shall come, **and all the saints with You.**”

Verse 9: “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name shall be one.”

Then it shows after the plague that's going to happen for those who fight, then the first thing that God is going to institute is the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles. Satan is put away, the first thing after Christ and His saints are on the earth—and there is a period of time—the Word is going to go out: 'I want all the representatives of all the nations on earth to come up here to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.' That will be the start of the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles—and then all through the Millennium it will grow and grow in magnitude all around the world.

Verse 16: “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came up against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year... [so this will be continuous all the way through] ...to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

Remember, this is Jesus Christ returning. Since He's 'the same yesterday, today and forever,' how can people say that *today* we should not keep the Feast of Tabernacles. *An incredible thing, but people do!* They're going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. God means what He says, so He's got a few persuaders for them:

Verse 17: “And it shall be, whoever will not come up from all the families of the earth to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt that has no rain, does not come up to present themselves, *this* shall be the plague with which the LORD shall strike the nations that do not come up to

keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (vs 17-18).

*There's no such thing as that these are days for Jews and not for other people.!*

Verse 19: “This shall be Egypt's punishment, and the punishment of all the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” *This is quite a thing!*

Let's look at the condition of the earth, since we're starting the Feast of Tabernacles. Let's look at what it's going to be like at the start of the Millennium. Let's see the very first prophecy that was given that really defined the world's system; that was during the days of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar beginning with the image that he saw with the head of gold and then silver, brass, iron, and then clay and iron.

This becomes important for us to understand. When the Millennium begins there is so much destruction, death and everything all around. God is not going to come back and patch the destruction; He's going to completely rebuild from the ground up, *His way!* We are going to be the rebuilders, and the directors.

One man said to me, 'Boy, you know, I really don't want to be a king or priest.' I said, 'Don't worry, there are going to be lots of jobs for all the saints and they all don't have to be kings and priests.'

Daniel 2:44: “And in the days of these kings... [the whole end-time system] ...the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, **which shall never be destroyed**: And the kingdom shall not be left to other people...”

It's going to be given to the people of God, that's you and me, all the saints that have lived and died down through history when they're resurrected, and all that are yet to be called in this age. *Amazing!*

“...but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever... [He's going to make them all dust and powder] ...Because you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter. And the dream is certain, and **its interpretation is sure**” (vs 44-45). *The question has always been: When, Lord? Well, we're getting closer!* Let's see where he reiterates this again.

Daniel 7:25: “And he shall speak words against the Most High... [that is the final beast that is coming] ...and shall wear out the saints of the Most High...”

This has happened down through history with the whole system; but in the end it's going to happen again. There's a prophesied time of persecution and martyrdom that is coming. This means that:

- we need to get ready
- we need to be prepared *spiritually*

You're not going to be prepared by setting aside food, by building a fortress, by running to hide on top of a mountain or going down and living in a cave under the earth. *That's not how to prepare! You prepare in your heart and your mind so that your heart, mind and attitude are right!*

- we need to build the character of God
- we need to understand how we are going to rule
  - ✓ in righteousness
  - ✓ in Truth
  - ✓ in love
  - ✓ in goodness

*by the power of the Spirit of God!*

Don't worry about what happens out here in the world. Just be as careful as you can and cautious as you can, and when troubles come close always pray the prayer of Psa. 91: 'Though ten thousand fall at your right hand and a thousand at your left hand' and the plague won't come near you and the arrow won't come near you. That's up until the time that God says, 'All right, you're going to have to stand and give your life for Me.' People say, 'Oh, why does God want martyrdom?'

- Do you want the sacrifice of Christ? *Yes!*
- Did He die for you? *Yes, He did!*
- Have others died for Christ? *Yes, they have!*
- we need to buck up.
- we need to prepare our minds
- we need to be strong
- we need to know the Word of Go
- we need to know the love of God
- we need to know where we're going
- we need to know what we're doing
- we need to know what we're all about
- we need to prepare

"...and think to change the set times and the laws. And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and one-half time. But the judgment shall sit... [Christ is coming as Judge, as King, as Priest] ...and his dominion shall be taken away to be consumed and to be destroyed unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High..." (vs 25-27).

*We will rule*, in whatever capacity, in whatever job. Brethren, understand a very simple truth of this age: ***ALL governments and leaders are unfit in God's sight! They ALL, from the least to the greatest, must be replaced!*** That's why God has His Church. That's why God is doing what He's doing.

"...Whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom. And **all kingdoms shall serve and obey Him**" (v 27). *That's something! You need to think about that!*

Let's see the character that we need to have. Let's see what Jeremiah says about God. Here's the attitude that we need to have; here's what we need to develop.

Jeremiah 4:1: "'If you will return, O Israel,' says the LORD... [after they've been in captivity, they will return] ...'Return to Me. And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be removed, and will swear, "As the LORD lives," **in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness...**" (vs 1-2).

That's how we're going to rule. That's how we are going to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth, under the direction of Jesus Christ.

"...then the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him they shall glory" (v 2). *Quite an amazing thing!*

Jeremiah 9:23—here's the attitude we need to have right now: "Thus says the LORD, 'Do not let the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might; do not let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, **that he understands and knows Me...**" (vs 23-24). *That's what we need to be doing, to know God with a personal relationship:*

- through His Spirit
- through prayer
- through study
- through living
- through loving the brethren

*That they know that they 'know Me'!*

"...that I *am* the LORD, exercising loving kindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these I delight,' says the LORD" (v 24). *That's how we're going to rule! This is what we need to look forward to!*

Now, let's look at a couple of other things in the Proverbs, and see here are some of the standards that we are going to live by, and here are some of the things we need to learn today. That's why to get out with political activism, to try and do something in

this world—oh, you may do a little something—I guarantee you it's not going to amount to anything unless you do what is right. Just realize, all the goodness that people do in the world is coming to an end because of *the law of sin and death* in human nature. That's why everything becomes corrupt.

Proverbs 16:12—this is why we need to develop the righteousness of God: *"It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness..." Just apply that to the political system of any country in the world!* That's why I say they are all, from the least to the greatest, unfit to rule.

**"...for the throne is established by righteousness"** (v 12). What was it said of Jesus? *You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity!* That's what we need to do. But the consolation that we have living in a world that is this wicked, the only thing that can offset that is if we love God and love righteousness and if we realize that our lives are established by righteousness.

Proverbs 25:5—this is what we are going to do. *"Take away the wicked from before the King..."*

- no more wicked people giving counsel
- no more lobbyists
- no more corruption
- no more free trips
- no more adultery
- no more fornication
- no more homosexuality
- no more gifts for the politicians
- no more of the freebees to them

*"...and His throne shall be established in righteousness" (v 5). If we're going to rule in righteousness, that's exactly, precisely what we have to do and learn to practice now!* Here is how the Kingdom of God is going to operate on the earth:

Proverbs 14:34: *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."*

- we're going to show them the way
- we're going to show them the Truth
- we are going to bring them the righteousness of God

Think about this in your daily life. We are all kings, priests, princes, mayors, governors, board of directors in training. In our personal lives, we need to understand that we don't do this:

Proverbs 29:12: *"If a ruler hearkens to lies, all his servants are wicked." Just apply that to your own life!* If you listen and hearken unto lies in your own life, what's going to happen in your life? *Wickedness will come to you and will abound!*

Let's see the things we need to understand, where we're going, what we're doing and how it's going to be.

Proverbs 11:18: *"The wicked makes a deceitful work... [don't worry about the prosperity of the wicked out there, let them go their way because it's all going to fall in upon them] ... but one sowing righteousness has a sure reward. As righteousness tends to life, so one pursuing evil pursues it to his own death"* (vs 18-19). ***He's called us to righteousness! He's called us in training!***

Now let's just take two quick looks at the rewards that will be coming. For those of you who don't want to be kings, here's good news. Remember the parable of the five talents—the one who gained five and then the one who gained two—let's see what it says:

Matthew 25:20: *"Then the one who had received five talents came to him and brought an additional five talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered five talents to me; see, I have gained five other talents besides them.' And his lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!...'"* (vs 20-21).

Remember what it says all the way through Revelation: ***'He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'*** and ***'I will give to every man according to what his works shall be.'*** That work is training in:

- truth
- love
- righteousness
- Godly character

*"...Because you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord"* (v 21).

The parallel account in Luke 19 says that *you will be over five cities*. Likewise with the one who had two and increased by two. He said, *'Well done, good and faithful servant. Be you over two cities.'* I'm sure there are going to be some who will be over one city. I'm sure there will be some that will be on, what we would call, boards of governors. I'm sure there will be some who God is training in whatever capacity or whatever field that there is necessary to make the whole Kingdom of God work.

- there needs to be treasury
- there needs to be teaching
- there needs to be agriculture
- there needs to be transportation
- there needs to be water
- there needs to be all of the things that human beings have

He's not giving the Kingdom over to other people, ***He's giving it to us!*** So don't worry, everything's going to work out.

- you have faith in God
- you developed the character and love of God
- you develop the righteousness and Truth of God

*It's all going to work out. You're going to be in the Kingdom of God, your temporary journey in this life is going to result in great reward to you!*

This will end this message but set the stage for all the rest:

Revelation 20:4: "And I saw thrones... [we just saw how thrones are established] ...and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and those who did not worship the beast or his image, and did not receive the mark in their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Think of it this way: We are going to help God bring multiple, how many ever millions and billions that will enter in to eternal life through the Kingdom of God during the Millennium. ***We are going to help produce that!*** Think of that! The challenge is great! *It's a spiritual thing that we need to accomplish!*

Verse 5: "(But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were completed.)..." This is a parenthetical statement added in there, which John put there as a point of clarification.

"...This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and Holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection..." (vs 5-6). Amazing! A Blessing! Holy! Remember, only God is Holy, and as the children of God, we will be Holy.

"...over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (v 6).

So brethren, *this is what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about!* This is why we gather together to keep the Feast and our fellowship is with each other and with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Let's all have a wonderful and tremendous Feast and:

- share our time together
- share our things together

- spend time with each other
- count every moment precious that we're able to do this

***Because we can see on the horizon the time is coming when it will be greatly diminished!*** So, rejoice and have a wonderful Feast.

#### Scriptural References

- 1) Acts 3:19-21
- 2) Isaiah 59:1-15
- 3) Zechariah 14:4-5, 9, 16-19
- 4) Daniel 2:44-45
- 5) Daniel 7:25-27
- 6) Jeremiah 4:1-2
- 7) Jeremiah 9:23-24
- 8) Proverbs 16:12
- 9) Proverbs 25:5
- 10) Proverbs 14:34
- 11) Proverbs 29:12
- 12) Proverbs 11:18-19
- 13) Matthew 25:20-21
- 14) Revelation 20:4-6

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Mark 13
- Psalm 91
- Luke 19

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