

## God Wants to Dwell with His People

(Feast of Tabernacles—Day 1)

Fred R. Coulter—October 14, 2008

Today is a Holy Day, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles as God has commanded in Lev. 23. As you know, every year when we go through the Feast, we always start here, because here is where all the Feasts of God are laid out in their proper sequence during the course of the year.

Leviticus 23:33: “And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying, “The fifteenth day of this seventh month... [which on the calculated Hebrew calendar is today] ...*shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD” (vs 33-34).

We also know, as we read on, there’s one extra day—which is really kind of a special day, as we will see when we get to it.

Verse 35: “On the first day *shall be* a Holy convocation. You shall do no servile work *therein*. 36: Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 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 which you shall proclaim to be Holy** convocations... [this is a summary of all of them beginning with the Sabbath in v 1]...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” (vs 35-37).

You read in Num. 29 all the sacrifices that were given for the Feast of Tabernacles; that was a great and tremendous thing that happened. The sacrifices were really almost unparalleled.

Let’s notice something here, very important, v 38: “**Besides the Sabbaths of the LORD...**” Every one of the Holy Days is a Sabbath. Every weekly Sabbath is the Sabbath. Here it combines all of them together.

“...and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD. Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land... [so this is a *harvest* Feast] ...you shall keep a Feast to the LORD seven days. On the first day *shall be* a Sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a Sabbath” (vs 38-39).

Then it says what they were to do. This is what the children of Israel were to do. As we will find out, the last four Feasts of God—Trumpets,

Atonement, Tabernacles and the Last Great Day—have their fulfillment at the end of the age.

There was a temporary fulfillment of the children of Israel. It also says there in rehearsing concerning the Sabbath and keeping the Feast of Tabernacles that the children of Israel dwelt in booths while they were in the wilderness. Here’s the kind of temporary dwellings that they were to make. When they lived in Jerusalem, kept the Feast there, and all of the houses have flat roofs. So, even to this day what the Jews do is set up one of these temporary booths made out of boughs and made out of different things, and they have their meals on top of their houses during the Feast of Tabernacles, dwelling in those booths. Here is what they were to do when they came into the land:

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. 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, 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.’ And Moses declared the appointed Feasts of the LORD to the children of Israel” (vs 40-44).

In Deut. 16 we will see something concerning that. Other places call the Feast of Tabernacles the ‘Feast of Ingathering’ at the end of the year. But here in Deut. 16 we find something that we are to do whenever we come before God on a Holy Day or a Feast to present ourselves to the Lord.

Deuteronomy 16:16: “Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God...” *Those were the required times!*

If you did above the required times, you would also be there for Trumpets; you would also be there for Atonement. But because the Jews were scattered abroad, God made it mandatory that the males come during this time; because they represented the whole family.

“...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 also know the other Scriptures where God says that we are to do this *in faith*:

- give an offering in faith
- give our tithes in faith
- knowing that God will bless us
- knowing that He has given this command

He has also asked us—in Mal. 3—to *prove Him*. We can go to God and we can *test* God, because He says: ‘Prove Me herewith if I will not open the windows of heaven and you will have sufficiency in all things that you have.’

So, on the Holy Days we take up an offering to God and we use it in furthering the things that we do for the brethren to help them to do the publications and to do the Bibles that you all now have, and I hope that you’re enjoying them, and I hope that you find them very helpful in your studies and in your spiritual life as you go forward.

(pause for offering)

Let’s begin in Matt. 13, because we need to understand that God had these Feasts planned out before the foundation of the world; and that He created the sun and the moon and the stars and their interfacing with the earth as part of the whole universe. God created these times so that we may keep them. There is meaning to them; *and the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles is revealed a bit at a time!* We’re going to learn that today:

- why a Feast of Tabernacles
- why we are here
- why we are keeping it
- Why we need to keep it
- What we are to learn concerning it when we keep it

God has a very simple plan and a very simple way of teaching us. *As we do, we learn!* As we grow in knowledge and grow in love, and *as we yield ourselves to God*—especially on the Sabbath and the Holy Days—*we grow in grace and knowledge* so God will teach us. Let’s learn what the Feast of Tabernacles means..

Matthew 13:35—speaking in parables so that they wouldn’t understand, Jesus said: “So that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ‘I will open My mouth in parables; I will

utter things hidden from *the* foundation of *the* world.” *Now that’s quite a statement!*

Men think they know everything. Men think they have all the answers. *They don’t!* Men think that they can live and get along by themselves; they don’t need God. But they end up, in order to keep things at least in decency and in order, going back and they appropriate to themselves many of the commandments of God, *while at the same time they serve other gods or deny God altogether*, which is crazy.

- Why not make it simple?
- Why not believe in God?
- Why not believe in His Word?

He’s going to do something that you wouldn’t understand otherwise: *reveal to you His plan that He had from the foundation of the world!*

So, let’s go back to the beginning here, because we’re told in the book of Revelation that Jesus said, ‘I am the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last.’

We find the meaning and purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles has to do with our relationship with God; and has to do with God’s plan and purpose for us. Let’s review Gen. 2 again so we can understand something that’s very, very important, which is that we are all temporary; we’re all made of the dust of the earth. That’s all part of God’s plan because we cannot live forever in the flesh. That God made us fleshly beings *first*. Just as Paul wrote:

- that which is *physical* is *first*
- that which is *spiritual* is *second*
- the *first Adam* was made of the dust of the earth
- the *second Adam* is the Lord from heaven Who rose from the dead

So, let’s go back to the beginning, and let’s see what God did. *The very first thing that He revealed to mankind*—Adam and Eve in that particular case—*was His Sabbath Day!*

Genesis 2:1: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning* of the seventh day God finished His work, which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work, which God had created and made” (vs 1-3).

We know that God lived in the Garden of Eden. There was a special place in the Garden of Eden where God lived. He was actually dwelling

with Adam and Eve—was He not? *Yes, He was!* That becomes important when we look at the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles and the parallel of living or dwelling with God.

Verse 7: “Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became **a living being**”—Hebrew ‘nephesh’—*soul*.

‘The soul that sins shall die’ (Ezek. 18). So, the soul is not the spirit. *God puts the spirit into our mind!* The soul is the physical life through the blood that keeps us physically living. This is why even though a person may be brain-dead, they can keep them alive and keep the heart and organs going, and so forth. Though they are technically dead, they are brain-dead. In other words, when the spirit leaves the brain is dead.

“...and man became **a living being**. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The Tree of Life also was in the middle of the garden, and the Tree of *the* Knowledge of Good and Evil” (vs 7-9).

This is the beginning of the whole story, as well as the history of mankind in relationship to their Creator God.

Verse 15: “And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.... [it also means *to guard it*] ...And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of the Tree of *the* Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die’” (vs 15-17).

*Doesn’t mean instantly* that when he took the first bite he would die. ***But the whole process of death was set in motion when they did!*** This affected their relationship with God. As long as they obeyed God and loved God they lived in the Garden of Eden.

Then God created Eve, v 18: “And the LORD God said, ‘*It is* not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper compatible for him.’”

Then it explains how God created everything out of the earth for all the animals and brought them to Adam; what he would name them. Then He put a deep sleep upon Adam, took one of his ribs and made Eve and brought her to him, and apparently, God performed the marriage ceremony. Because we find here, right at the end of this:

Verse 23: “And Adam said, ‘This *is* now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...’”

That means he understood what God did, and God told him what He was going to do. So, he says, ‘Viola! Yes!’

“‘...*She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.’ For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed” (vs 23-25).

Here enters Satan the devil in the form of a serpent. We know what happened there, but let’s review it from the point of view that there are some lessons for us to learn, which is this: ***If we go our own way and reject the way of God, He is not going to let us dwell with Him!***

We will see in the New Testament it applies in even a more profound way that God is not going to give His Spirit to you if you disobey Him. If you turn and disobey Him He will take His Spirit from you.

Genesis 3:1: “Now, the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘*Is it* true that God has said, “You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?”’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, “You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die”’” (vs 1-3).

So she understood. She said, ‘God has said...’ Well, this means there was some additional instruction in addition to what He told Adam, because He told Adam this before He made Eve, and then when Eve was made He again instructed both of them.

Verse 4: “And the serpent said to the woman, ‘In dying, you shall not surely die!’”—*which is very interesting; because he admits that they’re going to die!* But he’s saying, ‘No really, you’re not going to die.’

The same lie that comes through every religion: you have an immortal soul. Also, the attitude that people have if they do things that are not correct if they transgress the Laws of God; if they do things to harm their bodies they think, ‘Oh, it won’t affect me.’ *Well, it did!* Here’s the temptation, and also a debunking of God; and Satan saying, ‘I know more than God. He’s holding back things from you; He’s not telling you things.’

“...‘you shall not surely die! For God knows...’” (vs 4-5). *Satan is speaking in the name of God!* Satan likes to pretend that he is God. As a matter of fact, he’s called ‘the god of this world’ (2-Cor. 4:4).

Verse 5: “For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil.”

That’s the only way they became like God. In eating the fruit they were *deciding for themselves* what is good and what is evil, and *rejecting the revealed knowledge of God* that He has determined:

- what is good and evil
- what is righteousness and unrighteousness
- what is sin and what is good

***No man and not Satan the devil can decide that!*** They can, and when they do there are consequences to be paid. We’re going to see the first consequences that took place because of the sin of the Adam and Eve.

Verse 6: “And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food... [lust of the eyes] ...and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired make *one* wise...”—***lusting after knowledge, lusting after something to ‘make myself more important and better in spite of what God has said and instructed me!’***

“...she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (v 6). *I don’t know what was going on in Adam’s mind* when he was sitting there watching and here’s the serpent talking to Eve and the serpent said, ‘Why don’t you eat of this, it’s good; make you like God.’ Does this also tell us that Adam and Eve understood the plan of God enough to know that they were eventually were going to become ***like God?***

This made more sense to them. Why wait for God to do it. Just eat of the fruit and it’ll happen now. Isn’t that what people want? ***Yes! Appealing to their lust!***

“...She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (v 6). *I guess he figured if she picked it he wouldn’t be responsible!* If she ate it first, and nothing happened, well then maybe it’s okay to eat it.

Verse 7: “And the eyes of both of them were opened...”—***to evil and opened to the knowledge of good and evil and to decide what is good and evil for themselves; and their minds were closed to the Truth of God.*** Your mind can be open to evil or your mind can be opened to:

- the Truth of God
- the Spirit of God
- the Word of God

*It was opened to evil!*

“...and they knew that they *were* naked...” (v 7). *Whatever they did sexually there*, because something surely sexual happened, because one of the first things that Satan always perverts is sex. We’re not told. However, since Satan is the same today as he was back then, all you need to do is look at the society and you can pretty well surmise what went on.

“...and they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” (v 7). Isn’t it interesting that in Mark 11 Jesus did what? *He cursed a fig tree!* Now there surely has got to be some connection between this account and the account in Mark 11.

Verse 8: “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...” *That’s when God would come*—God was living in the Garden, and He had a special meeting time that He would come and meet with Adam and Eve in the ‘cool of the day’—***and probably talk with them and eat with them!***

Here they were in the lovely garden and everything like that; everything that they would ever need was there. Plus God Himself was there to teach them, to help them, to train them, to give them more understanding of His plan. Apparently He gave them enough that they really wanted to be like God. It’s just like us, God gives us just enough to see ***IF we are going to believe!*** If we do, are we going to go forward with Christ? And if not, *it’s cut off!* That’s why we have the parable of the sower in Matt. 13 and Mark 4.

“...Then Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (v 8). ***No one’s going to hide from God!***

- God sees
- God knows
- no thought can be withheld
- God knew the instant they ate it

***But just like everything else, when someone sins God does not immediately come down and cut them off!***

There’s an old saying: give them enough rope and they will hang themselves. So likewise, God gives people a space of time so that they may come to their senses and repent if they would. God didn’t, when they took the first bite, come storming

down from wherever He was living in the Garden of Eden, and say: ‘DROP THAT!’ No, because He gave free moral agency. We have to choose.

They were told what was right and what was wrong, symbolized by the two trees. God came; they couldn’t hide from God. No thought can be withheld from God.

Verse 9: “And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where *are* you?’” *He knew exactly where he was, but He wanted a response from Adam!*

Verse 10: “And he said, ‘I heard You *walking* in the garden, and I was afraid because I *am* naked, and so I hid myself.’ And He said, ‘Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?’” (vs 10-11).

This is the way that human nature always is. He *didn’t say*, ‘Yes Lord, I did, I’m sorry, I sat there and watched her take it and I should have stopped her and I shouldn’t have eaten.’ No, he blames God.

Verse 12: “And the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’”

It’s not my fault, God. It’s the woman’s fault and You gave me the woman, so in a sense, God, it’s Your fault.

***No! He didn’t have to choose to do it!***

Verse 13: “And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What *is* this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ And the LORD God said to the serpent...” (vs 13-14).

Here is the first revelation of the plan of God through salvation, through Christ, that begins right here. God is showing that the powers of evil are going to come to an end through Jesus Christ. The rest of the Bible gives us the plan of God. The Feast of Tabernacles fits into the plan of God in such a way that it helps us understand what God is doing. But we also know that down through the Bible God didn’t reveal it but bit-by-bit-by-bit. Of course, without the book of Revelation, we cannot understand the full meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles picturing the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Here we have a prophecy of it—beginning with the curse of the serpent.

“...‘Because you have done this you *are* cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put

enmity between you and the woman... [there’s also a parallel between Satan and the Church here] ...and between your seed... [because there are children of the devil as well as demons] ...and her Seed...” (vs 14-15)—*which is a prophecy of Christ to come to bring forgiveness for all the sins that Satan the devil has caused, beginning with Adam and Eve.*

“...He will bruise your head... [completely annulling all the works of Satan the devil] ...and you shall bruise His heel” (vs 13–15)—*prophecy of the crucifixion!*

Verse 16: “To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception—in sorrow shall you bring forth children...’”

This doesn’t mean just the pain of having a child. But women are emotionally involved in their children, and so this means it carries down with all your children: what are they doing, where are they going, all of the sorrow that they go through—and it was manifested in a very profound way when Cain killed Abel.

“...Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you” (v 16).

I can understand that much more today when we see all of the women today being turned into hookers and harlots and going out and just becoming promiscuous with everything that comes along. Because something happens to a woman that is different with a man, that when they get involved in this they just really lose all sense and balance and understanding.

Give you one example: It was reported that a 14-year-old girl in high school or junior high, whatever it was, got pregnant. Now let’s stop and ask:

- How long had she had sex-education? *Probably from the third grade on!*
- Did she know what sex was about? *Yes!*
- Did she know where children came from? *Yes!*
- Did she know what pregnancy was about? *Yes!*

*She was taught it right there in the class!*

So, she became pregnant and was at school and went to the nurse’s office with great pain because she was ready to deliver; and she gave birth to a seven-pound boy and murdered him and drowned him in the toilet she was sitting on. The attorney says, ‘We have to understand that she was a 14-year-old girl and she really didn’t know what was going on.’ Then you look at the 17 girls that

apparently—they're denying it—had a 'pregnancy pact.' When you turn women loose, it becomes far worse for the society than anything possibly could be. The man is not left innocent. It says: 'Eve was deceived and in transgression.' But it says, 'By one man sin entered into the world' (Rom. 5). That was Adam.

Verse 17: "And to Adam He said, 'Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife...'—*instead of the voice of God!*

That's why I've said how many times: Study '**obey My voice**' all the way through the Bible and see what you come up with. You're probably going to come up with some pretty stupendous things, aren't you? *Yes!*

"...and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it!"—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life'" (v 17).

In other words, when people leave God they are miserable! Look at all the thrill-seekers today that challenge God, to go against God. What happens to them? ***They're cut off!*** They die in their teens and their twenties and their thirties—and lead miserable, upset lives. Whenever you go out through the checkout stand at a supermarket you see all the lust toward women, fixated on sex and their bodies, their emotions, their hang-ups, their live-ins and their live-outs, and their divorces and remarriages, their lesbian experiences, and older women having sex with younger men, etc. *All right there! It's all right there!* Now they don't have magazines there for men. They might have one way done in a corner. But you see, ***Satan knows when you corrupt the women, you corrupt the society!***

Now they kill their firstborn in abortion, or like this 14-year-old. Because of the model and stupidity and the emotionality of people today, they'll probably say, 'Oh well, she didn't know what she was doing.' ***Nonsense!*** God says 'life for life.' *Oh, we can't do that! That's cruel and unusual punishment!* Well, what about the cruel and unusual punishment to the seven-pound baby boy she gave birth to? Where are the priorities of people in the world?

That's why there's a Feast of Tabernacles, brethren! Because ***the world's got to be saved from this, and we're the ones to save the world under Christ!*** But:

- we need to know where it started
- we need to understand how things are

- we need to realize that unless we really devote ourselves to God ***we're not going to have part in doing that!***

Verse 17: "And to Adam He said, 'Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it!"—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life." *That's exactly what happens!*

Verse 18: "It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you..." You go out and try and have a garden—and it was worse before the Flood—thorns and thistles.

"...and *thus* you shall eat the herbs of the field; In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return" (vs 18-19). ***Cut off! That's it!***

The sentence of death was given to Adam and Eve at that time, though they lived for 800-plus years after that—Adam actually 930 years. But he died! And even Solomon said, 'What good is life if you live twice-fold a thousand years and die!?' Now, we'll talk about that a little later during the Feast, because there's some people out there today who are saying, 'With technology we can live as long as we want to.' That's going to be amazing.

Verse 20: "And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all *the* living"—*that is, human beings!*

Verse 22: "And the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to decide good and evil..." *That's the only way they became like God!*

You cannot say that the world today, with the human nature that human beings have, that they're anything like God—except that they choose their own way, which God set before them to do, and they're made in the image of God. Other than that they have nothing to do with the characteristics of God except living in sin; that's the result of it.

Every society corrupts itself. We're reaching the point of absolute corruption and rejecting of God today that we are going to face some of the most horrible times that we have ever contemplated. So, we better be ready! We better know why these things are taking place and what is happening and what is going on so that we can:

- keep our course
- keep our purpose
- keep our way with God

- keep yielded to God

*to love Him and Jesus Christ!* Let's see what happened. Here they started out:

- created by God
- made by Him
- given a language
- given understanding
- given the purpose of life
- married them
- told them they would one day be like Him

Satan comes along and convinces them that they ought to **take it now!** What happened?

Verse 23: "Therefore, the LORD God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken. And He drove out the man, and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to guard the way to the Tree of Life" (vs 23-24).

That tells us: ***As long as we are living in sin, there is no salvation!*** The New Testament tells us: ***Unless we repent and accept the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and change the way that we live, there is no salvation and you're going to be cut off from God.*** So, here they are **cut off** from God.

However, in this there's still something that shows about the Feast of Tabernacles, and it has to do with the two cherubim at the east gate of the Garden of Eden to keep the Tree of Life. Later, as we will see, in the tabernacle and the temple—and in the temple there were cherubim that overshadowed the Throne of God. Here is the first inkling of what later would become the tabernacle system and the temple system for ancient Israel.

Also, when they came to meet God, as we find in Gen. 4 with the offering and sacrifice of Abel and the one of Cain, which was rejected because it wasn't according to the instructions of God. That's where they would meet with God, at the east entrance of the Garden of Eden. There was probably an altar built there. So, we have the beginning things that God incorporated into the tabernacle and into the temple later.

But the whole story of Genesis 2 & 3 is very clear: ***You cannot dwell with God if you are going to live in sin, and it's your choice to make!*** The judgment comes upon you for good or for evil, depending on your choices.

(go to the next track)

Let's see how that because we will see God desired to dwell with Israel that that's why the tabernacle was made. But notice again, *God gives the condition!*

Deuteronomy 30:10: "If you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God to keep His commandments..." *We just saw where Adam did not obey the voice of God, but obeyed the voice of his wife to sin!*

"...and His statutes, which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul!" (v 10). Doesn't that sound very similar to what we covered last night (opening night message)? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 11: "For this commandment which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, 'Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?' Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?'" (vs 11-13).

Isn't that the way that people are today? *Here they have the Bible right in their own homes;* average in America: four for every household.

- Do they read it?
- Do they hear it?
- Do they obey it?
- **No!**

But look at mankind. What are we trying to do in the United States today? *We're trying to work out a space program so we can go in to the heavens and find out what's the purpose of life!* Spend all that money, all that research, everything that there is—and all you need is a Bible in your hands and to read the Word of God and you will know what God requires of you.

Verse 14: "But 'the Word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it.'" *That means in a language you can understand!* Can you read the Bible and understand it?

- It's not too hard to figure out ***you shall have not other gods before you!***
- It's not too hard to figure out; it's not complicated at all where God says ***you shall not make unto yourself any graven image of any likeness that's in the heaven above or the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; and don't bow down to them!***

- It's not hard to figure out ***you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, either in swearing and cursing***

Or as ministers do every Sunday by taking the name of the Lord in vain by saying 'come to church on Sunday.' Or the other religions of the world that have their gods.

- Now it's really not hard to figure out ***remember the seventh day to keep it Holy!***

The truth is, for all of those deteriorating Protestants: they know which day is the seventh day because they keep the first. None of those commandments are hard to figure out.

- ***Honor your father and mother***—is that hard to figure out? *No!* But do teenagers want to do that? *No, they do not!*
- That you should ***do no murder***—that's not hard to figure out!
- ***You shall not commit adultery***—that's not hard to figure out at all.

If you know there's male and female—or male and male and female and female—you know that's adultery. You know that that is fornication. That's not hard to figure out. But 50% of the people want to do it.

- Then God says, ***you shall not steal***. Yet, 50% of the people today, given the chance, will steal.

In some groups of people, more than fifty percent. Yea, they come into the stores in 'operation steal' and take as much you can and get out and just give the shaft to the owner and take whatever you want. 'Oh, they've got it on camera, but they can't prosecute. It's still not hard to figure out ***you shall not steal***.

- ***You shall not bear false witness***. 'Oh, but everybody lies! They're white lies. They're good lies.' Santa Claus and the Easter bunny and the gods of the world—***all lies!*** But it's not hard to figure that out, is it?
- It's not hard to figure out ***you shall not covet***. Well, maybe for some people it's hard to figure out, because they have such burning, lustful desire that they're overwhelmed in it. It says ***you shall not covet***.

Commandments of God are not hard to figure out. The Bible is in more languages than ever

before in the history of the world. There are more Bibles in the world than at any time that human beings have been on the face of the earth, and we've got the worst society that has ever been, and it's multiplying and becoming worse. That's why we have the Feast of Tabernacles. That's why the Feast of Tabernacles pictures the reign of Christ and the saints on earth, to bring the Kingdom of God on earth; and then ***we are going to make the laws of God and the Government of God and the true***—I hate to use the word 'religion' but that's the only way to describe it—***worship of God!***

Now let's see how God set it before them. He says it's not hard; v 15: "Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil." That's for every human being. I gave a sermon one time: *Your Own Garden of Eden*, which is your own little life.

Verse 16: "In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God..." *That's where we started last night!* That's the whole purpose of what we are to do.

"...to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments... [which He says are good for you. He gave them to you as a benefit, as a blessing] ...and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away... [just like Eve, just like Adam] ...so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods... [all inspired by Satan the devil] ...and serve them, I denounce to you this day..." (vs 16-18).

Just before they're going into the 'promised land.' They're all there saying:

Boy, we're going into the *promised land*. We're going to get all this wealth. We're going to get all these things, all this land. Man, we're getting out of the desert.

So, He says, 'I'm going to give you warning, you're going in there.' Just like the Garden of Eden. He gave them warning. He said

Now, I'm giving you this land. I've spied it out. I've watched over it. I'm going to fight your battles for you. I'm going to annihilate the enemy before your face, ***IF you obey Me and do as I say***.

*But He gave them warning!* Once you get into the land:

Verse 18: "I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to

possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing*. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live” (vs 18-19).

This is set before every human being. This is where we are. We need to also take notice of how we in the Churches of God are doing; because we have greater blessings and greater cursings to come upon us if we treat lightly the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the plan of God and the Word of God.

- He gives us life for what purpose?
- Why do we live?
- Why do we draw breath?

Verse 20: “That you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them.” *That also transfers to the Kingdom of God!*

Why did God do all of these things in bringing the children of Israel out? *He promised Abraham that He would!* So, it wasn’t because they were righteous, because in the book of Deuteronomy God says, ‘I almost extinguished all the children of Israel in the land of Egypt for their sins while they were in the land of Egypt. But I deferred because of My promise to Abraham.’

We need to understand that. Maybe there’s something very similar to it today, where God is deferring His hand because He’s waiting for the Churches of God to repent and get their act together and do what they need to do. All of the brethren to get their acts together and do what we need to do, all of us together. We need to understand that. We’re not going to come into the Kingdom of God and inherit it and rule this world if we cannot take care of our lives today.

Now, God brought them to Mt. Sinai, gave them all the Ten Commandments, as we have covered; and He told Moses come up here in the mountain because “I want to show you what I’m going to do here after.”

After the covenant was made, the children of Israel said, ‘Yes, all that the Lord God has said, we will do.’ God says, ‘All right, you’ve covenanted with Me, you said you would do it; now Moses, come up here and I’m going to give you further instruction.’

Exodus 24:15: “And Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. And

the glory of the LORD abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud” (vs 15-16).

Moses had to be patient. Can you imagine being up there on top of Mt. Sinai and here you can’t see anything, but there’s a cloud, it’s like a fog, all hanging around you. God said come up. On the seventh day He said, ‘Moses, come here.’

- Would you be that patient?
- Would you be that trusting?

Today, people can’t get along without their cell phones and their text messages. They would be absolutely fit to be tied sitting on top of a mountain here with nothing to do and nothing to see and no place to go. Isn’t that true? *Yes!*

Verse 17: “And the sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain to the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mountain. And Moses was in the mountain forty days and forty nights” (vs 17-18).

God was going to tell him something very special and give him some very special instructions that He was going to tell him what He was going to do. Now, let’s see what that is.

Exodus 25:1: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel that they bring Me an offering. You shall take an offering from every man that gives it willingly with his heart’” (vs 1-2). *That’s how God wants us to give to Him, willingly from the heart!*

- *He says tithe*, we tithe willingly; not grudgingly
- *He says give offerings*, we give offerings willingly
- *He says keep My commandments*, we keep His commandments willingly;

Not looking for ways around them or some loophole that will give us a way out so we can sin and get away with it. *Never happen!*

Verse 3: “And this *is* the offering, which you shall take of them...” *Then He describes what He wanted them to bring!* But nevertheless, they had to bring it willingly.

“...gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and bleached *linen*, and goats’ *hair*, and rams’ skins dyed red, and tanned leather skins, and acacia wood, oil for lighting, spices for anointing oil and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and

stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. And **let them make Me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them**” (vs 1-8). *That was the tabernacle!*

So, just as the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve started out, they dwelt with God. God lived in the Garden of Eden and was there until the Flood. After He judged the world with the Flood, then He removed and went to be in heaven and gave the administration of death to the sovereign nations of the world through the descendants of Noah.

Then some 300 years later He called Abraham and gave him the covenant promises. He promised that He would bring his descendants out from their captivity ‘*at the hand of strangers*’—after 400 and some years, which He did to the ‘*very same day*.’

Now He’s saying, ‘I want to dwell among you. **I am your God.** I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now I want you to build Me a tabernacle made of the things that I ask you to bring.’

So, they brought them. What He did, He gave all of the instructions on how to make everything in the tabernacle. These things were patterned after the things that are in heaven.

Let’s read the very first thing that he was to make—v 9: “According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle... [because that’s where He was going to dwell] ...and the pattern of all the instruments of it, even so you shall make *it*.”

Verse 10: “And they shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide and a cubit and a half high. And you shall overlay it *with* pure gold.... [symbol of absolute righteousness] ...You shall overlay it inside and out, and shall make on it a crown molding of gold all around *the top edge*. And you shall cast four rings of gold for it, and shall put *it* on its four feet. And two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. And you shall make staves of acacia wood, and overlay them *with* gold. And you shall put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, so that the ark may be carried by them. And the staves shall be in the rings of the ark. They shall not be taken from it. And you shall put into the ark the testimony, which I shall give you. And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two and a half cubits shall be the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it. And you shall make two cherubim of gold...” (vs 10-18)—*right from the Garden of Eden!*

The place where God would dwell would be

overshadowed and protected by the two cherubim. Just like in the Garden of Eden when they were kicked out, at the east entrance God set the cherubim with flaming swords to keep the way of the Tree of Life. Here we have God wanting to dwell with the people of Israel, just like He wanted to dwell with Adam and Eve. But they didn’t want to do it God’s way. So, God made a covenant with the children of Israel, after He brought them out of the land of Egypt; gave them the Ten Commandments.

They said, ‘Yes, all that God has said we will do.’ God said, ‘All right, I’ll take you up on your word. I’m going to build a tabernacle and all the implements in it.’ ***First thing He did was make a place where His presence would be in the tabernacle!*** He also demonstrated this in a very profound way that His presence was with the children of Israel. How did He demonstrate that? ***By the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night for all the forty years!*** The truth is, God did not intend them to be out there 40 years. He intended for them to be there approximately a year and a half; and then to go into the Holy Land. ***But they refused!*** When they refused and rebelled God gave them another 38 years to wander.

Now let’s look at something else that took place while Moses was on the mountain, and that is the making of the golden calf by Aaron. We won’t go through the whole account of it, but here is God up here giving to Moses. The last thing He gave was the Sabbath commandment. So let’s cover that.

Exodus 31:13: “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths...’” —*because God wanted them to be in contact with Him every Sabbath!* That’s why!

Brethren, let’s understand that the Sabbath is not just a day. The Sabbath is ***the*** special day when we fellowship with God, when God puts His presence in this day. It should be absolutely the best day of the week, so that we can be spiritually taught and energized so that we can face the battles of the world in the coming week. But also that we can grow in grace and knowledge and faith and love and hope and all the characteristics of the fruits of the Spirit. Here God is saying to Moses, to tell the children of Israel:

“...‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths for it... [and that means the Sabbath-keeping] ...*is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you’” (v 13).

Isn’t that the most important thing of their lives? ***Yes!*** God is the One Who created them, gave

them life, and is going to dwell among them; and He has the Sabbath Day and the Holy Days—it says Sabbaths; that means the Sabbath and the Holy Days—as a *special sign that they would be the people of God above all the people of the earth!* Now, that’s something! If you don’t keep the Sabbath, you don’t know Who sanctifies you.

Verse 14: “You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is Holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.... [cut off from the blessing of God] ...Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, Holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath Day, he shall surely be put to death.... [the wages of sin is death; no different back then than it is today] ...Therefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations **a perpetual covenant**.... [and this covenant runs through all other covenants.] ...It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed” (vs 14-17). *Goes back to the creation!*

Whenever you’re dealing with the plan and purpose of God, and His commandments and what He’s doing and what He requires us to do, it goes back to creation. Guess what happened? *They made the golden calf out of the gold that was to be dedicated to building the tabernacle of God and all the implements in it (Exo. 32)!*

Aaron—who was to be the high priest—made it. He acted just like Adam and Eve. When Moses came and said, ‘What have you done?’ He said ‘Well, they gave me this gold and I threw it in the fire, out leaped this calf! Moses, you were gone so long! What am I to do with these people?’

It sounds like so many excuses today, because human nature is no different. Even that didn’t keep them from going into the ‘promised land’ when they should have at the end of a year and a half. They should have gone into the ‘promised land’ during the Feast of Tabernacles to dwell in the land, in the second year. But when it came time for them to go up, they said, ‘Oh no, we won’t go up. Oh there are giants there. How can we possibly live?’ Joshua and Caleb said, ‘No! **God** is going fight for us.’ *Nevertheless, they wouldn’t listen! Typical of Israelites! Typical of human nature!*

So then, God dwelt with them. They put the tabernacle in Shiloh. That’s where it first was. **The children of Israel sinned, and God withdrew His presence from the tabernacle!** Since they didn’t

want to obey God, God was not going to be dwelling with them.

Let’s see how bad it got. We also know that these things come this way even today. When there is righteousness, *there are blessings*. When there is sin, *there are curses*. So, here we have the story of Samuel, who was dedicated to God, because God answered the prayer of Hannah. She said, ‘O Lord, if I can just have a child, I’ll dedicate him to You.’ So, she did. She brought him; presented him to Samuel.

1-Sam. 3—here’s the condition of the priesthood and the children of Israel. God promised that if the children of Israel did what they should *He would bless them*. If they didn’t, they would have curses or punishment. So, here they left off at the tabernacle in Shiloh to worship God. God was raising up Samuel. You’ve heard of the Psalm that said that ‘out of the mouths of sucklings, Lord, You have shown Your strength.’ Samuel is a good example of it.

1-Samuel 3:1: “And the child Samuel served the LORD before Eli. And the Word of the LORD was precious in those days. *There was* no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was lying down in his place and his eyes began to become dim, *that* he could not see, and the lamp of God had not yet gone out. And Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD where the Ark of God was” (vs 1-3). *Right before that!* Can you imagine that was where he was sleeping?

Verse 4: “That the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, ‘Here *am* I.’ And he ran to Eli, and said, ‘Here *am* I, for you called me.’....” (vs 4-5). *He did it twice!* Eli said, ‘Well, if you hear it again, that’s the Lord.’ And you say, ‘Lord, here I am.’

Verse 10: “And the LORD came and stood, and called as at other times, ‘Samuel, Samuel!’ Then Samuel answered, ‘Speak, for Your servant hears.’.... [when God speaks, *better listen*] ...And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Behold, I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of everyone who hears it shall tingle. In that day I will confirm to Eli all that which I have spoken concerning his house, and when I begin I will also make an end’” (vs 10-12).

God sent a warning to Eli because he was corrupt and his sons were corrupt and they were stealing the sacrifices and committing adultery right at the very door of the tabernacle that God said, ‘I will dwell in, in midst of Israel.’ The truth is, no one can mock God and get away with it. Now, while God doesn’t punish all at once, He doesn’t punish

immediately, because He gives us space for repentance and time to consider your ways. But it's going to come! Just as sure as the sun is rising and the earth is turning and the moon goes around the earth and the earth around the sun, because God said, 'By heaven and earth I swear to you...' That's what's happening here.

Verse 13: "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity, which he knows..." *He knew better!*

There seems to me there was a large Church of God one day that the so-called great apostle knew what his son was doing. He knew! And he knew way before it was exposed publicly, by the way. But because of monetary considerations and money coming in, and loss of faith if he would have completely rejected his son because of his adulteress and profligate behavior over the course of many years, the church no longer exists.

Verse 13: "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity, which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile and he did not restrain them. And, therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever" (vs 13-14). *Pretty strong words!* We don't know how old Samuel was at this point. Maybe he was like about ten or twelve at this point.

Verse 15: "And Samuel lay until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. And Eli called Samuel and said, 'Samuel, my son.' And he answered, 'Here *am* I.' And he said, 'What *is* the word which He has said to you?... [because God also warned him previously] ...Please do not hide *it* from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide a thing from me of all the words that He said to you.' And Samuel told him all the words, and hid nothing from him.... [notice the reaction] ...And he [Eli] said, 'It *is* the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him'" (vs 15-18).

Now, could he have repented? *Yes!* Could Eli have absolutely dismissed his two sons and sent them to the judges to be executed for their behavior as an effrontery right in the house of God? *Yes!* But what was his attitude? *Well*, 'It *is* the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him'

God still gave them space to repent, v 19: "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel *was* established to be a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh, for

the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD" (vs 19-21).

So that's the first place after Joshua conquered the land that the tabernacle was placed there. Later, because of the sins of the children of Israel, He scraped Shiloh just like you were scraping the top of the ground, because of the sins of the children of Israel. Well God, dwelling among His people, because He said He would, ***He only came to reveal His will to Samuel***, and let him know that He was going to judge Eli and judge the children of Israel.

Just like He had said. Just like it happened during all the days of the Judges. As soon as the generation of Joshua and the elders died out, what happened to the children of Israel? *They went after Baal and Ashtaroth and the gods around.* God sent them out into captivity. Then they repented and came back, and this went over and over again with all the different judges. You read all the book of Judges there.

So, here we have God at His tabernacle, wanting to dwell with the children of Israel, as He promised. God wants to dwell with His people that He created. ***But you can't dwell with God unless you live according to God's way and His commandments!*** Likewise for us:

***We're not going to enter into the Kingdom of God if we don't love God and serve Him, keep His commandments and desire to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:33-44
- 2) Deuteronomy 16:16-17
- 3) Matthew 13:35
- 4) Genesis 2:1-3, 7-9, 15-18, 23-25
- 5) Genesis 3:1-20, 22-24
- 6) Deuteronomy 30:10-20
- 7) Exodus 24:15-18
- 8) Exodus 25:1-18
- 9) Exodus 31:13-17
- 10) 1 Samuel 3:1-5, 10-21

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Leviticus 23:1
- Numbers 29
- Malachi 3
- Ezekiel 18
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Mark 11
- Mark 4

- Romans 5
- Genesis 4
- Exodus 32

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