

Spiritual Maturity

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 9/19/2013

As we enter the beginning of the 1000 year millennial rest we will find that the earth is becoming new place – a world that we would not recognize at all.

The theme of the Feast of Tabernacles will be the development of the entire earth – both physically and especially spiritually – during the 1000 year millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Our sermons will revolve around the expansion of the spiritual body of converted brethren – between the time at the beginning of the millennium when the face of the earth is virtually destroyed, and the time of the **Garden of Eden** like perfection of the entire earth at the end of the 1000 years and the Great White Throne Judgment period.

Here's the main thing. Culture, society, religion, and expectations are going to be on a completely different level in the millennium.

In the same way that the entire face of the earth will be renewed, transformed, and changed to be like God's Eden, Mankind's spiritual state will go from unconverted – in the immediate aftermath of the great worldwide tribulation – to the perfection of Jesus Christ.

The entire surface of the earth is going to become the veritable land of milk and honey, but in the beginning it will be a brave new world of bombed out cities – a vast scorched wasteland of rubble and decaying corpses – with thousands of surviving displaced refugees needing direction.

It is **we**, brethren, who will be there to pick up the pieces and begin to articulate to the survivors of the tribulation – the vision of the Wonderful World Tomorrow.

Our first duty to them will be to put into words that not only will the entire earth begin to blossom like the Garden of Eden – but that **Mankind** will begin to reach the potential that only God knows he can reach – and that is spiritual perfection.

For the most part the surviving displaced refugees will need to know exactly what happened. They will want to know how it all happened,... Why it all happened,... They will be looking for answers.

Their memories will be of **this world** in which we live today – interrupted by powerful forces beyond their control having led to worldwide conflagration.

Those expatriates of a destroyed world will need to be taught and served – and that is where we come in.

Jesus will be ruling from Jerusalem – and we with Him. What will be the first words from His lips? I imagine it could be "**Shalom.**" "Greetings!" "Greetings in Peace, Welcome in peace." Everyone is going to be ready for some peace.

Isaiah 65:

18 But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem **a rejoicing**, and her people **a joy**.

At the very beginning of the millennium there will be remembrance of the want, poverty, destruction, even confusion and weeping.

Isaiah 65:

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of **weeping shall be no more** heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

Our Messiah will usher in what man has been **crying out for**, for 6000 years. In the Millennium it will be a transitional period wherein mankind will be transformed from its carnal humanity into the **spiritual** children of God.

We are here at the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days – picturing the time when Jesus Christ will establish the Kingdom of God over all the earth. The number "seven" is important in the plan of God. "Seven times seven" represents **completion** and **spiritual perfection**.

God created the seven day week culminating in the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath is the seventh day. The millennium is the **seventh** one thousand year period in the Plan of God.

In the same way that the world was created in 6 days and then the Lord rested -- mankind has had 6000 years to labor under Satan's **darkness** and the Millennium will be the "Rest" period of 1000 years.

The millennium will be God's age of **enlightenment**. Not the scientific enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries that will eventually lead up to the coming destruction of the earth, but a **spiritual enlightenment**.

There will be joy in all that we do. What are your joyful moments? What moments in your life have been especially meaningful to you? I would like to share something personal with you. One of the things that remains on our bucket list of things to do is to ride in a sleigh through the hills and fields of snow – with a blanket over our lap – drawn by a horse with sleigh bells jingling – like the bells that the great Clydesdales have that pull the Budweiser wagon.

(Ring horse Bells – ching – ching – ching-a-ling, – jing – jing – jing-a-ling!!!)

At the beginning of the millennium some will not keep the Feasts. We are told in Zechariah:

Zechariah 14:

16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

Jesus is serious about mankind learning spiritual lessons!!!

Zechariah 14:

- 19** This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.
- 20** In that day shall there be upon the **bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.**

(Ring horse Bells – ching – ching – ching-a-ling, – jing – jing – jing-a-ling!!!)

Brethren, next time you hear those **bells** – do not think “Budweiser Clydesdales” – but think, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.**

Indulge me only a moment because I want to set up a scenario not unlike the proverbial desert island paradise.

Let’s say that you are traveling today and you come across a congregation where everyone is doing what they are supposed to be doing. Not one of these political corporate organizations – a church social club – but an actual congregation **of practicing Christians.** Pretend that it exists.

They do not have the usual problems we so often find associated within the Church of God. In this stereotypical perfect congregation – everyone from the youngest member to the pastor is praying and fasting and being respectful and forgiving and serving and laying down their lives to ensure that their brothers and sisters in Christ are attaining to the Kingdom of God.

Wow, just think of how a congregation like that would grow – not so much in numbers – but in **spiritual growth.**

Psalm 111:

- 10** The reverence of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: **a good understanding have all they that do His commandments:** his praise endures forever.

Just think of the understanding that congregation would have!!!

Paul would **not** say to them, “ye are yet carnal, (1 Corinthians 3:3) – ye are such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat (Hebrews 5:12-13).”

Paul would be compelled to say, “Ye are spiritually strong and mature and have need of a thick steak – that is – well developed solid doctrine – to grow spiritually in grace and knowledge and in the wisdom of God’s perfect way.”

Hebrews 5:

- 13** For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
- 14** But strong meat [beef steak] belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Here is the point that I wish to consider: In the millennium every community will be a congregation. Jesus will be ruling from Jerusalem. Satan will be bound in chains and a pit.

Revelation 20:

- 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

God's Spirit will be poured out on all men.

Joel 2:

- 28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my [Holy] **Spirit** upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Right now we are separated from God.

Isaiah 59:

- 2 Your iniquities have **separated between you and your God**, and your sins have hid his face from you, that He will not hear.

The veil – the pall that covers the world today – separating man from God – will be removed.

The **Covering Darkness** of sin will vaporize into the bright light of day.

God is going to take away the blindness and hardness of man's heart.

Picture a Feast Meal with all the best cuts of meat, veggies, and fruit and nuts galore and rich desserts with good liquors and refined liqueurs – Champagne and Burgundy, and fine wines.

Isaiah 25:

- 6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people **a feast of fat things**, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Brethren, God is speaking of the **SPIRITUAL abundance** He has in store for all.

And then one of the most magnificent things in 6000 years occurs! This is the most important Scripture in today's sermon:

Isaiah 25:

- * 7 And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the **covering cast** over all people, and the **vail** that is spread over all nations.
- 8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he **take away** [erase] from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.
- 9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 60:

- 1 Arise, shine; for **thy light is come**, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.
- 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and **His glory shall be seen upon thee**.

There is a direct line of sight between us and God.

Isaiah 60:

- 3 And the Gentiles shall come to **thy light**, and kings to the **brightness** of thy rising.

The Desert Blossoms as the Rose!**Isaiah 35:**

- 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: ...

Don't think of roses blossoming – think of **people spiritually blossoming** with God's Spirit!

They shall see the Glory of the Lord – Not Now – and the excellency of our God – when the **vail** is removed!!!

Isaiah 35:

- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened [especially – **spiritual blindness** will be removed], and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- * 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert [a clear reference to God's **Holy Spirit**].
- 7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

Isaiah 35:

- 10 And the ransomed [our children and grandchildren] of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matthew 27:

- 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up His breath.

Brethren, do we realize the wonderful significance of the **Vail being torn**? It means that we – as Christians – now have direct access to **God the Father**. **We have been reconciled back to Him**.

Matthew 27:

- 51 And, behold, the **veil of the temple was rent** in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

When Jesus died, the **veil** was torn:

Hebrews 6:

- 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the **veil**;

Hebrews 9:

3 And after the second **veil**, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Hebrews 9:

8 The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

Hebrews 10:

20 By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, **through the veil**, that is to say, his flesh;

Jesus became “Sin” – our sin – He removed our penalty for sin. The **veil was symbolic of Christ Himself** as the only way to the Father.

John 14:

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am **the way**, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

We can now enter the Holy of Holies through Jesus Christ – the veil being torn – we now have access to God the Father.

Our age today **cannot** comprehend what the millennium will be like because it will be too wonderful. Isaiah said it first:

Isaiah 64:

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what **He hath prepared** for him that waits for Him.

We find so much of the wording of the Old Testament replicated in the New Testament. We’ve read these Scriptures before – and sometimes we make the mistake of thinking, “we’ve seen it all” – when there s SO Much yet to be revealed.

Paul was paraphrasing Isaiah in:

1 Corinthians 2:

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

The world cannot know – But we, brethren, can discover wonderful revelations.

1 Corinthians 2:

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the **deep things of God**.

11 For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God [which is in him.]

God is saying that it is possible for His Children to know **so much more** than those in the world among whom we reside.

1 Corinthians 2:

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the **spirit which is of God**; that we **might know** the things that are freely given to us of God.

Because the veil has been removed for us.

The profound spiritual wisdom that we **are being given** now is for the purpose of sharing it, and using it, with all mankind in the Millennium.

We will be qualified teachers because we will have lived through Satan's reign of terror and chosen rightly.

1 Corinthians 2:

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Human nature override:

1 Corinthians 2:

14 But the **natural man** receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

The mind of the natural man is blocked.

We are called to the **better resurrection** where we have that opportunity to be there for, and teach, subsequent generations to come.

Hebrews 11:

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a **better resurrection**:

In the same way that there will be physical plenty – abundance on earth, **spiritual growth** will abound on the earth more and more.

This spiritual knowledge will be unleashed in gigantic proportions in the Millennium.

Everyone will be very special:

1 Peter 2:

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [**very special**] people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath **called you out of darkness** into his marvelous light:

That darkness is the same covering **vail** we saw in Isaiah 25:7 – that **covering cast** over all people, and the **vail** that is spread over all nations.

Genesis 3:

- 17 ...cursed is the ground...[because of sin].
18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.

Joel 2:

- 21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do **great things**.

What Great things? Can you remember how good some foods tasted when you were a child – like tomatoes?

Joel 2:

- 22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the **pastures** of the wilderness do spring forth, for the tree bears her **fruit**, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

Even the very Nature of the plants – fruit trees, veggies – will revert back to their former status – before sin! Just like the very nature of the animals and man will go back to the way they were in the Garden of Eden – before sin!

Tomatoes will taste unbelievably good – again.

Joel 2:

- 23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion [future children of Church brethren in the beginning of the millennium], and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. [God's Holy Spirit being poured out abundantly.]
24 And the floors shall be full of **wheat**, and the vats shall overflow with **wine and oil**.

There will be no famine or want as all produce will be in abundance – making up for the time lost during the tribulation and Trumpet plagues.

Joel 2:

- 25 And I will restore to you the years [of production] that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.
26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.
27 And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

The veil of sin, death and separation – removed!!!

Joel 2:

- 28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:
29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Will we work or sleep away the millennium?

Will it be every man under his vine and fig tree lazily sleeping away the millennium? Or: Will we be diligently

beating the mountains into chaff to reorganize the face of the earth – and building a brave new world?

Micah 4:

- 1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

Praising God – worshipping Him, and growing spiritually.

Micah 4:

- 2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Peace – not laziness.

Micah 4:

- 4 But they shall **sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree**; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

John 5:

- 17 But Jesus answered them, My Father **works** up to now, and I work.

God the Father works, Jesus works, and we will be working – supervising and directing real work.

Isaiah 41:

- 15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the **hills as chaff**.
- 16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

Brethren – read between the lines here. This shows God’s Spirit yielding Spiritual growth.

Isaiah 41:

- 17** When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.
- 18** I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.
- 19** I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:
- 20** That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the **LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.**

Psalm 104:

- 30** Thou send forth thy spirit, they are created: and **thou renew the face of the earth.**

It will be the restitution of all things.

Acts 3:

- 21** Whom the heaven must receive until the times of **restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Psalm 104:

- 31** The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall **rejoice in His works.**

Amos 9:

- 13** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sows seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.
- 14** And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

Ezekiel 36:

- 28** And ye shall dwell in the land [the holy land that God gave to our forefathers] that I gave to your fathers; and **ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.**

Those people of the millennium will have direct access to God as we have now. All mankind will know their God.

End: Spiritual Maturity