

God is Creating Peace

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September 28, 2024

We're about to enter the fall Holy Day season 2024, and since I'll not be able to give a sermon that will be able to be heard by everyone before the Feast, I'm going to do one today. So, we're going to interrupt the series that we've been going through and this one here is going to be one that is just interjected here in the middle. I have one more sermon to give in that last series. But in order for everyone to hear this, because Atonement is on one of the Sabbaths coming up, so there is only one other Sabbath that Australia, New Zealand, and Europe would be able to hear and that's next available sermon, I think which is the following week, next week. Anyway, if I waited any longer then they wouldn't be able to hear this one here.

This is about preparation for the Feast. I'll give the title in a moment here. But that's why I'm giving it, that we be fully focused on some things here that we really need to do. The sermon title says it all here today; it's entitled, *God is Creating Peace*. That should be our primary focus, candidly, at the Feast with one another and with the world around us.

So, we're going to begin today with a verse that we focused upon in this past February in a sermon entitled *The City of Truth*, and just before we go in to look at that particular verse, I want to read a quote of something that was said in that series: "This series is about the name God refers to concerning what He is creating in a spiritual city of Jerusalem, in Zion, which He calls the City of Truth."

So, maybe you remember that particular series we went through, and the sermon covered this particular verse, and this is what that was based upon. **Zechariah 8:3—Thus says the Eternal; I have returned unto Zion, or I will return unto Zion.** Sometimes the context of things, they add things into it because they don't really know so they strive to—I don't know how well they tried—but anyway, to quote things in a proper way or translate it in a proper way. But here it's about what God's focus is. It's about Zion, what He's creating, what His purpose and His plan is.

...and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. So, it's about a future plan that God has, especially when you look at Zechariah here and times before this. But especially looking forward to what God would be doing over the final two thousand years that leads up to Joshua's return, which we're in that period of time now.

And so, it says, "I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem." So, it's God's purpose and God's plan not just at the beginning of the first great resurrection here but in all those others that are a part of Elohim, that become part of God's Family. And so, that's God's desire. What an awesome thing when we didn't really grasp even the depth of such a verse as this, "I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem." To come to understand that God revealed to us at a Feast that His purpose and His plan is that He will always dwell in us.

We only have that partially in our lives as human beings because of sin because of quenching the spirit at times or it's something we can't have the full effect of as being begotten. But once born, it's something that will be in us in a powerful way, of something we really can't even begin to comprehend, when God is in us, dwelling in us through that power of the mind and that oneness and unity we have with God—everyone different and unique—but everyone absolutely at one, but accomplished because God's dwelling in us.

Now, I can't fully comprehend that, but we know it's true. We understand God's purpose in that and what He's going to accomplish, and it's accomplished because He will dwell in His Family forever, He and His Son. So, what an awesome thing here, "And I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem," because Jerusalem is about God's people.

And Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth. So, we begin that process of embracing it, of desiring it, of choosing it in our lives while we're in these physical bodies, once God has called us and begotten us of His holy spirit. It's our choice to be born. Once we've been called and God gives us the begetting of the holy spirit, it's up to our choices as to whether or not we're born into His Family. It truly is. It's up to us. It's by our choices and decisions that we want, we desire, we're willing to fight for God's way of life. We have chosen it, nothing else; there is only one way, and that's God's.

And Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Eternal of hosts the holy mountain. So again, God's government that will fill and fulfill His Family for it will be throughout the Family because of what God is accomplishing.

As it was also stated in that series, "The primary focus of the book of Zechariah is about God's overall plan of building His Temple." His Family. His Temple. That which is what He is going to be dwelling in forever and forever. Again, things we understand in part but don't comprehend fully yet by any measure. We can't.

So, backing up here, **Zechariah 8:1—Again the Lord of the Eternal of hosts came to me, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts; I was "jealous" or zealous for Zion with great zealousness.** Because I don't like the word "jealousy" at all when it's used toward God. Because our concept of jealousy is something very carnal, very physical, very much based on the way we think as selfish human beings. It's not a trait of God. But if we understood the origin of the word and how it was used it has more to do with zealousness, what God is zealous for.

I was zealous for Zion with great zealousness; I was zealous for her with great fury. That has to do with everything that opposes God, that which fights against God, that which fights against what He's creating, that fights against His people. God is there to take care of – again, it comes back always to the administration of judgment. God is the one who determines judgment and what judgment is and as far as mankind and what happens at various times.

That's why that one scripture we looked at recently here, "Vengeance is Mine" (or talked about), and it's not a matter of vengeance, it's a matter of judgment, the execution of judgment. Because everything that doesn't desire or will not become at one with God can't exist forever. It has to come to an end. That's God's purpose and God's plan as well.

That brings up something else at the Feast. It's like this has been a tough year for God's people, it really has been. We have so many things going on in different areas as far as the Church is getting older and the problems and difficulties that go along with that and then also all the different health situations that are popping up right and left it seems like, and different battles of various kinds that exist anyway, but things that are happening within the Church, and it's like this power.

There is power out there that fights against God's people at this time of year, but it's been for quite a while now this year. This year has been a little unique in that regard as just even trying to work with the Feast site and so forth. And just that alone is something that can teach us lessons, that you have to fight, and you can't quit fighting. Sometimes you have to dig down deep inside, but you can't quit, and you do have to fight until it's accomplished.

God is always there, and God will always bless us, and God always takes care of things, and it always works out for us regardless, but that also entails the fact that we have to do our part. We have to fight. And so, just like in things of this nature about choices that have to be made, we have to fight for this way of life. We have to just not make a basic choice, but it's one you have to fight for. That reveals what's inside of us, a willingness to fight for what God has given to us, and that takes conviction.

So, it's not just words, it's not just a thought or a nice platitude or something we read about and think we agree with or say we agree with; it's something you have to literally do in your life over and over and over again. You have to fight for this way of life. And so, that's a matter of the choices we've made then.

"Thus says the Eternal..." So, it's a matter of choices and so forth, but the zealotness of God and this matter of judgment that God gives. He fights our battles but still He fights for us, He gives us a way, He helps bring things together. But in the process, we have to fight. He doesn't just hand it to us on a silver platter and take all the obstacles away. And so, this is about that process whereby God has judgment He's going to execute in order to get rid of all obstacles that are against His Family. Because everything is about His Family that He is creating, that He's in the process of creating.

And so, that's what much of this is about here. **Thus says the Eternal of Hosts, I was zealous for Zion with great zealousness; I was zealous for her with great fury.** So, anything that opposes God. I think of the Last Great Day and what so much of that means and thinking about judgment that has been prophesied throughout scripture that's about the period we're about to enter, that mankind has to come to this kind of a point before God's government can be established on the earth, and the massiveness of the kind of judgment that God's executing at the end here. Which, Christ and the 144,000 are going to carry out a lot of that.

Mankind is going to do a huge amount on their own against one another, but there is that which God executes through His Son and the 144,000 before His government is established. And then, at the very end once again. Awesome. That is with great fury, with great power, with great might against that which has been against Him.

I think of Satan and the demonic world, finally, after how long? We don't know how long. I can't comprehend that. Billions of years? Mind-boggling. But if you think about that and the time that could be involved there from the very beginning of God starting to do these things and you think about it was all about His Family, and here we are in a small amount of time, six thousand years, seven thousand years, if you will, when it's all said and done of mankind, the life of human beings, in that vast, vast period before that that we can't comprehend, that it was all about this leading up to then the creation fully of God's Family. Awesome!

Thus says the Eternal; I am returned or I am turned back to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of the Eternal of hosts the holy mountain.

Then **verse 9** it continues into the future, what will follow in the future, and it states as a conclusion: **Thus says the Eternal of hosts; Let your hands be strong, you who hear in these days.** When are those days for us? Well, they're now. So, all of God's people if they read this you have to be strong in whatever days are before you.

Continuing on, **verse 9—Thus says the Eternal of hosts, Let your hands be strong, you who hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets.** So again, whatever is a part of God's plan that God has given to His people to grasp and comprehend, to whatever degree at any particular time it's a common message that God gives to us about being strong. We obviously have a great part in that, but to be strong you have to rely on God, you have to look to God. We have to continually cry out to God for His help because what we need most of all is the power of His holy spirit living and dwelling within us.

So, it's a matter of crying out to God and understanding that of our own we can't accomplish anything that's lasting, but with God and God's spirit we can keep fighting and we can keep doing and God will give us the victory that we need to have. That's a continual process.

So again, be strong, **let your hands be strong.** Then it goes on to say, **which are in the day of the foundation of the house of the Eternal of hosts was laid, that the temple should be built.** So again, it's about God's plan and He's going to build it. When we're given the opportunity then we can have part in that process. But again, it's all by choices all the way.

Then again in verse 15 here it says, **"So again"** here, but it's the same as we looked at earlier. It's the same word as "turn back" or "to turn back" or return. **I have returned as I have purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear.** So again, it's a matter of understanding

God's plan and purpose and to realize God has turned to us and whatever period of time it might be in that He's called someone that's their time, that's their opportunity. So, whether it was a long, long time ago in the previous first four thousand years or the period of time in the last two thousand years, it's a matter of the same thing here that is what God has purposed when He calls us, that we are to be a part of Jerusalem. That's what we've been called to be a part of, the Temple of God, if you will, Zion, all these things that have different aspects of what God is building and creating.

But again, **verse 16** now, **These are the things that you shall do: Everyone, speak truth to their neighbor.** Now, that means what? That means we're in unity of spirit within the Church, oneness of spirit. And regardless of who our neighbor is in the Church, it's one another. It's not about neighbors that you live close to in your neighborhood or whatever, it's the wrong use of the term here for us. On a spiritual plane, it's about those who are in our midst, those whom we know and have contact with. And so, we're to be truthful to one another, not to put on airs, not to be deceitful or giving half-truths about various things in life. But especially when it comes to the truth, the truth that God gives to us, we are to be at one. And whatever will not be at one? Anyway, it comes to an end eventually one way or another through choices.

"Everyone, speak truth to their neighbor." Another part of that is how you live toward someone else. It's not just a matter of being in unity and oneness and speaking the same thing – which we are to do and instructed to do over and over again in different ways in different contexts throughout the scriptures, but one of these is just by how we live. It's not a matter of just what we say, it's how we live toward one another, it's how we think toward one another, it's how we treat one another. That's whether or not we're communicating truth to one another because we're obeying what is true.

Just like with the subject of peace. Are we living it? Are we living it to one another? Because if we're not, we're in trouble because then we're not living the truth at all.

I'm not going to be speaking at the Feast in that room, which I hadn't mentioned in the announcements. We're going to be in a different hotel that has a large enough room (we've already seen it), where I can put the camera up and be able to broadcast from there and everything else is going to have to be streamed through YouTube. So, I'm sorry about that but that's a part of the battle of fighting. We're going to make this work and be happy about it, though my desire above everything else would be to be with all the brethren in an audience, and that was the desire and very much looking forward to that. So, when things don't work, you just keep working to do the best to make them work and God will work out a way. And He has, but again, it doesn't mean it's easy all the time.

Everyone, speak truth to their neighbor, judge truth and the judgment of peace in your gates. "The judgment of peace," whether we live it, how we're living it. And again, this matter of "judgment of peace" that's a sermon in itself. "The judgment of peace." It's about how we judge. It's how we think about things, especially in relationships. We are to be at peace with one another. We are to exercise

peace. We are to be peacemakers. And if we're not willing to do that, why are we in God's Church? What are we doing in God's Church?

This is very much a focal point of how we're supposed to live our lives toward each other, to resolve issues, to resolve differences, not to allow things to get in the way, not to begin thinking wrong toward others, not to begin thinking in a way that's judgmental and harsh toward others that can interfere, because those kinds of things can interfere a true relationship, a right relationship if we allow things to build up in our minds.

I think of the numbers of people that my wife and I have dealt with through many, many years now, of people who think we have something against them. They think we have something, you know, and we have something that we're holding against anything. Well, then why on earth are you listening to me then as a minister? Because if I have something against you then I above all people have a serious, serious problem and you shouldn't be listening to me as God's minister!

I have nothing against and never have had against God's people. That's a horrible state to be in. If we understand the ramifications of that we wouldn't ever do it. To hold something against someone? Who are we? I've given tons of sermons about "You are not to hold anything against anyone else! You cannot judge God's servants!" That's very simple in scripture. That's not our place. And when we start doing that we're in big trouble because we, as God says in the New Testament, we are judging ourselves then with evil, in evil because we're in deep sin if we do that, we really are.

To comprehend that spiritually is an awesome thing. To understand it is an awesome thing. It hasn't been understood real well in God's Church over the past. I hope and pray in that respect that we are grasping it in a lot deeper way now than ever before. I believe we are because of what God's been pouring out upon us.

But again, we have to be so careful in this area of judgment and how we think about one another, how we think of others, and be willing to give the benefit of the doubt. Somebody had a bad day, so they said something in a cross way toward you – if they did. And sometimes it's misinterpreted, "Well, why did you speak to me that way?"

I remember one person one time (first one that pops in my head), one time went up to my wife. I was talking to them they asked me some kind of a question and I gave them a quick answer, right to the point, didn't beat around the bush. And they asked my wife afterward, "Why was he yelling at me?" I can't win. So, I guess I could go around and speak real quiet and real mild and say the same thing but say it half-heartedly. And if I say it half-heartedly, why would you believe me if I'm not that convicted myself? But I just tell you the way it is right to the point, and this is what it is.

It reminds me of the Israelites. They couldn't hear the law. It's like, "I don't want to listen to this," because it was too much for them, what God was telling them how they had to live or what they were

supposed to live when it came to the Ten Commandments. “That’s too much!” Because that’s why they had problems. It was about the law that was being given.

So again, we have to be very careful how we judge. That’s what so much of this is about because that determines whether or not we’re going to have peace in our life, peace toward one another, peace within the Body. This is God’s great desire. He’s creating peace. That’s what this is all about. This is what we’re living. Because to have that fruit, to have the product come out of our lives through the power of God’s spirit because we’re changing and we embrace peace, we want peace, if we grasp it and comprehend it we’re going to live it toward one another. And if others or someone else doesn’t want that in their life that’s their choice, but for us, each individual, that should be what we all want. We want peace. We want to nurture peace. And when it doesn’t exist, we’ve got to do what we can to promote it. But we can’t give it to others. That’s another issue, a different matter. But you have to do your part.

So again here, **Everyone speak truth to their neighbor**, and this is in the context of what it says, **judge truth and the judgment of peace in your gates**, where you’re living or within the fellowship in essence on a spiritual plane. **Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against your neighbor**. When we grasp what this means spiritually, our neighbor, who is closest to us, that’s everyone in our fellowship. Spiritually, that’s where our neighbors are.

Now, we have neighbors in a physical plane but that’s nothing compared to what is spiritual as far as the Body and the Church is concerned.

Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against your neighbor. Why build up things of evil thinking toward someone else or someone we think bad thoughts toward them, or we judge them harshly or we’re looking for faults or whatever sometimes happens in the human mind?

...and love no false oath. For all these are the things that I hate, says the Eternal. So again, has to do with whether we’re truthful or whether we are living a lie or promoting a lie or not being truthful enough ourselves in order to have the truth live through us.

I see sometimes they have these kids' shows. I can't think of what they're called. "Funniest Animals" and "Funny things that kids do," or whatever it might be, and there are different shows like that on TV. And every once in a while, they do this thing where, I don't know whether you've seen it where a dog has gotten into something and even a dog, even an animal you can start talking to them, "Did you do this?" and they'll start looking away. And here the house is torn up, pillows are torn up, whatever it might be. It's like they know.

And how much more? And then children and they have all the stuff all over their face. "Did you get into something?" "No." "Did you get into the chocolate cookies?" "No." They just keep insisting they didn't lie. And then they say, one of them said here recently, "A burglar did it. A burglar came into the house and got into the cookies." And he said, "Well, I guess that's possible but probably not very plausible."

And you think, what a horrible thing because sometimes some people that's their battle. Sometimes it's a matter of we all have different weaknesses and sometimes there is that which people just tend to twist or distort, and if that's a battle, that's a tough battle. But everyone can conquer every kind of thing that is in us as human beings. Because we all have problems, we all have weaknesses, and that's why I've talked about the one, twos, and threes. Because what are mine may not be yours and so forth within the Body. So, we all have different things that we have to deal with and fight, but the fact is, or the need is, is that we are fighting, to be at one with God, to get rid of the sin or the wrong thinking in our minds.

And so again here, I think of this one oftentimes in a Proverb too, when it talks about, God says it in different ways at different times, but lying or being deceitful, those are the things, God makes it clear, "These things I hate." Because of what they do.

So indeed, God states that He will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem and Jerusalem is going to be called the city of truth because of what we live because we're at one with God. It comes from God. Peace comes from God. Truth comes from God. A right way of life, a right way of thinking, right relationships, it all comes from God, that one mind.

Jerusalem is the city built upon the hill called Zion. So, those areas have uniqueness in the sense of something that God has used to teach something on a spiritual plane to the Church, of what He's building, what He's constructing, all having unique meaning to it in that respect. Jerusalem has taken on the meaning of the city of peace, the city of peace because of the words that are used in it.

It has an interesting etymology to it, development over time of how the word formed and what it's come to mean. The first portion of the word is "*yeru*," meaning "flow" or even "the way." So, it's like the flowing of a river or whatever or the way of something. So, it's a word that has taken on the meaning of the way or city of peace. That's really what it's about, the way of peace. Jerusalem, it's the city of peace. It's come to take on that meaning which is proper and right in things that are said by God and on a spiritual plane.

But even more so if we grasp that it's about the way of peace, and that's what God shows us as His people, the way of peace. It's what God desires. That gets rid of all the drama. It gets rid of all evil. Peace doesn't have, can't have evil in it. It can't have drama in it. It's void of those things. That's what's unique about peace and what it can mean to us and how we're able to have it in our lives, in our minds, in our thinking toward everything, toward everyone, especially toward God and Christ and His Family and what He's creating. It's beautiful.

I'm very much looking forward to the time when I'm no longer in this, when I no longer have to deal with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" with carnal, selfish human nature. We had to be created this way for a purpose, to make those choices that we hate and loathe this kind of nature. We come to understand in time as God has taught us, it's the mind of Satan. It's the way Satan is.

That's his being, totally selfish, doesn't care about anything else, only self, what he wants, what he desires, what he thinks is right, actually, what he knows is right.

That's how far the mind goes in selfishness, one knows that they're right. That's what makes others wrong. That's what makes disagreement. But only God is right, and if we don't come into harmony and unity with everything about the ways of God, we can't have that kind of peace that's true and real. Awesome to understand such things.

So again here, the way, taken on the meaning basically of the City of Peace. But even the word "*shalem*" in Hebrew, although it's developed to take on the meaning of "peace" if you will, is derived from the word "*shalom*," meaning "complete and whole." That's what it means, "complete and whole." Indeed, when one comes to the point of being fully complete and whole in God's way, in His truth, then one will be able to be at peace. That's what it's about, becoming at one with God, if you will, in all things, complete and whole.

That's what being healed is spiritually, this mind that's able to be healed. God's helping us to become complete and whole in the mind, in the thinking. Again here, a part of the meaning of all this, to understand what it means. That's what produces peace then, when we are there.

So, we are to learn peace. As I said earlier, we are to be peacemakers and practice that in our lives. And this should especially be true in one of the most important Holy Day seasons of the year, the Feast of Tabernacles, when God pours out more of His spirit at that time than any other time. I love it. Because that's what God does. God pours out His holy spirit more at that time than at any other time. We experience it at other High Days, we experience it on holy days like this day every seventh day, we experience that which is more in a closer relationship to God on this day than the other six days of the week. That's what we should be experiencing, and primarily then how God teaches us. And then if we're able to have fellowship with one another, the blessing and the fullness of all that, that unity and oneness that comes from that.

But how much more eight days together where you're totally separated from the world for that long, where you're able every day to receive guidance, direction, correction, instruction, inspiration, favor, help from God as He feeds us and nourishes us so powerfully? And literally, a time to draw closer to God than any other time of the year. We can't have that the rest of the year. We have it at one particular time.

That's why when there is an interruption in peace in that environment it's such an evil thing. That's why it's such a bad thing, such a harsh thing if anyone comes together and they can't have peace toward one another in the Body of Christ. If we can't have it there what do we have?

And so, we should really fear not living peace toward one another, especially in that environment, and be excited in the fellowship we have. That should be a large part of our rejoicing in one another, to be excited with one another.

So, if anything happens that's negative, that's bad, even in the world, but especially within the Church, within the Body, that's when we should fear, first of all, to do something different from what God has shown us, and we have been forewarned many of times in preparation for the Feast that we need to be on guard. We need to ask God for help to be on guard, to be spiritually alert to what? To self. That we are on guard to things in the mind and our thinking toward others, to not let anything come in that would disrupt wrong thinking in the sense of our relationship and how we think toward one another.

And if there is wrong thinking in any fashion or form toward anyone, we're the ones who have to repent. We're the ones that have to go before God regardless of what somebody else has done! Do we understand that? I feel we do as a whole, but sometimes we're lacking in that, to grasp and understand that it's us regardless if someone else has sinned and done something against us, even in the Church, even if they sin.

So often, the reality is they haven't sinned, it's misinterpretation, it's bad feelings, it's something we're holding inside, and we take something the wrong way because we're already on guard about something that we're harboring against or holding against. That's the majority of things that happen. That's where these things come from sometimes. That's just most of the time, candidly.

So, we have to be on guard against what's in the mind. It's us. And if anything like that happens, who can recognize it? We should be the ones to recognize it quickly and repent before God and ask God for help to get rid of it because it's interfering in what He's creating.

He's creating something else in us, not selfishness, not harboring judgment against someone else or holding something against someone, but of repenting of that and desiring what God seeks to create inside of us in our minds, in our being. It's about being at one with Him, of practicing and living what He says we should live toward one another, which the basis about that is about peace.

That's why Jerusalem has such a great name to it, the way of, the city of peace. That's what we're to be.

Hebrews 7:1, about Melchizedek here, **For this Melchizedek, King of Salem — Jerusalem/Salem — King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him.** What an incredible thing, that even then God gave us a "type" of something to grasp and comprehend of what He was going to fulfill later on in truth forever and forever, that there would be one who would be a High Priest forever. It wouldn't be just a matter of God manifesting Himself in that form, of an individual who was to Abraham Melchizedek and being the Priest of the Most High God.

So, this is what Abraham was given to see, to see what his response, his reaction would be to the Priest of the Most High God! Because in reality, we can deal with certain things in our life and it's a matter of do we really see then God, do we really listen to God, are we listening to how God works with us?

Because we have that in the Church within the ministry, within the structure that God gives us, and so God gives us various things to see certain things and to see whether or not we are really seeing God and listening to God. He was given something on a physical plane—very much physical in what he saw—and responded positively, properly to it in a right spirit, in a right mind. And so, God gave that. What an incredible thing that God gave something so much earlier of that, of something that was going to be fulfilled in His own Son because that was the purpose of it all. Picturing that which would come in time, and so, that's what Hebrews is about.

For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation King of Righteousness... There is no one else to give it to. Who do you give your tithes to? Back then there was no Levitical system. That's even talked about in scriptures. Later on, the Levitical system in essence came out of Abraham. Abraham was first.

...first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace. So, God making it very clear what this is all about. Again, the power, the authority of a fruit, if you will, of God's spirit, of God's way is what it produces. God's desire is that we latch on to that with all of our being. We want peace.

...without father, without mother, without descent. So again here, making it very clear this was God Almighty. **...without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abides a priest continually.** So, that's what God was using and giving as a "type" if you will, of that which was to be fulfilled in Joshua, and that wouldn't take place until after he lived as Passover, died, was resurrected, then he became High Priest forever and ever. The structure of God's Family, the structure of the government within His Family, and that which was a matter of the High Priest, Melchizedek, which is what God says of His Son, Joshua. "And made like unto the Son of God abides a priest continually." In other words, "made like unto" or "rendered similar." It means "to copy or to produce a facsimile."

Isaiah 57:13. This is that which leads up to scriptures and verses we read oftentimes in the subject of fasting and what God says about it. But this is earlier here in Isaiah 57:13. So, it's showing here the nature of mankind and how mankind is, that mankind as a whole just doesn't look to God. It's a battle. It's an amazing thing. It's amazing how even within the Church sometimes people don't look to God in the simplest of things, for healing.

Isaiah 57:13—When you cry, let your companies deliver you. But the wind shall carry them all away, and vanity shall take them. So, in other words, if people trust in themselves, their own way of doing

things, their own way of working things out without God being in the picture then He says, “Go ahead, when you’re in time of trouble and you have hardship just trust in everything you’ve always trusted in. See if it delivers you. See if you can deliver yourself.” That’s basically that in a nutshell what it’s talking about.

But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land and shall inherit My holy mountain. So, if we understand this on a spiritual plane and what God is creating, to grasp and comprehend what this is about, “Shall inherit My holy mountain,” it’s about becoming a part of God’s Family, becoming a part of Elohim and possessing the inheritance that God has placed before us once we’ve been begotten of His holy spirit and then one day—if we keep fighting and keep moving forward and do the things God shows us—we’ll be there. Because the pathway is set for us, all we have to do is follow it. It’s just up to us. We just keep following it, keep fighting for it.

Verse 14—And shall say... So, this is the mind and the attitude of that which is going to be accomplished and fulfilled. It says you’re “going to possess the land and shall inherit My holy mountain and shall say...” Because especially when you talk about the first resurrection and what’s going to follow and the teaching and the guidance and the direction that’s going to be given in an incredibly powerful way on the earth.

It’s hard to imagine! Every city as a whole having place for God’s people to come together and worship, sometimes multiple places because it’s going to be everywhere, just one Church, God’s Church. God isn’t going to allow other kinds of things to come up, pop up, to exist as far as people wanting to teach something about whatever was in their past or whatever they had as a part of the system before within that period that led up to the end of six thousand years. Hinduism, you know, Buddhism, whatever it is, you know, traditional Christianity. God’s not going to allow those. They’re going to be put to a stop. They’re going to be shut up because they’re not going to be allowed. Incredible!

And they shall say, in essence, **Cast you up! Cast you up! Prepare the way.** “To turn,” or “to turn toward the way.” **...take up the stumbling block out of the way of My people.** So again, I love this because it’s like the expression that’s used when you make a road, a pathway. You have to build it up. Even going back to the time of the Romans and even before that and the things they did with rock and so forth and gravel to make a road, to make a way to travel somewhere. You have to cast it up and cast it up and build it up so it can be traveled on.

And so, to think about what’s going to be done during the Millennium, we can’t comprehend how much of this is going to be done in a very powerful way spiritually for God’s people and those who are called. But this is a part of what it’s all about because it’s about God’s way of life that’s going to flourish throughout the earth and be taught throughout the earth. Not that all will follow it. Some are going to have to die because of what they are doing in fighting against God even then.

And shall say, Cast you up! Cast you up! Prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of My people. So again, this is about Jerusalem. This is a continual building of what God is doing so it leads up to at the end of six thousand years and then directly in the Millennium and then in a very powerful way throughout the Great White Throne, work to be done, things to be taught, "This is the way."

That's why that one scripture used to bother me when this kind of fake protestant type of thing was in the future when you start to stumble and start to sin and somebody is going to be there to tap you on the shoulder and say, "No, this is the way, walk you in it," and you think, "Give me a break!" That is so protestant, so lacking in knowledge and understanding and yet that's where we were at that time because we didn't know as a Body. But the expression and thinking that way shows how far off. We just had so much more growing we needed to do, and thankfully God has given it over time throughout the period of Philadelphia and then total stagnation through Laodicea, and then once again toward the end here.

So again, this is about Jerusalem and it's more, again, in the name of a city, what it's all about, what the purpose is. It's about God's plan for mankind because of what He's creating, peace, peace. Throughout everything where anything exists, peace. In time, that's going to fill the universe. We can't comprehend those things. But to know wherever God's Family is and wherever the angelic realm is at that time working with, doing things with the guidance and direction of Elohim.

So again, this here is about the need to teach, to cast up, if you will, to lay the way, which is about peace. Jerusalem is very much about teaching peace, about casting up peace.

Let's read some other things here on this. **Verse 14** again here, **Cast you up! Cast you up! Prepare the way! Verse 18** then it says, **I have seen their ways and will heal them.** So again, it's about what has to be a part of our thinking and a part of our minds, a healing that has to take place. The word we looked at earlier, "to be made whole," "to be made complete." That's a part of the process of being healed in the mind.

And so, "I have seen their ways and will heal them." And so, this follows everything that's being said before this in the verses before. **I will lead them also.** God isn't leading the world today, but His plan is to lead, and that's going to be up to them whether or not they'll follow. But in a very powerful way God is going to work to lead mankind very powerfully so throughout the Millennium and the Great White Throne in ways that make the previous six thousand years look a whole lot different. Again, something that's hard for us to comprehend.

"I have seen their ways and will heal them." For those who want to be healed. That's a part of the context if we understand God's plan. Because you have to want it. We have learned, and God has taught us, especially in the last couple of years that not everyone is going to want this. Not in the Millennium

and especially not in the Great White Throne because of how they lived before, because of what they experienced before, and they choose that.

I have seen their ways and will heal them; I will lead them also and restore comforts unto them and to their mourners. What does that mean, “will restore comfort unto them and to their mourners”?

Mourning is used in scripture, especially when it’s spiritual, the ability to look at ourselves and want to change and to realize what we are. In a spiritual kind of context to be mournful of, to be sickened by this, what we are as carnal human beings full of selfishness, full of “lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.” That’s our thinking. That’s why we have to have God, so that can change.

It says, “I will lead them also and restore comforts unto them and to their mourners.” So, to those who will be of that spirit of a mournful spirit, which is a matter of humility, of coming to humility, of seeing the need for humility. Because you have to have that kind of thinking spiritually in order to embrace humility. It’s a matter of hating what we see when we see pride, to be mournful of it. It’s horrible. It’s sick. It’s perverted. It’s dangerous. It’s damaging. It destroys. It’s evil. And so, to mourn that kind of thing.

That’s why I said earlier I so look forward when this is no longer in my makeup, when you’re free of all that. What an awesome thing when it’s no longer a part of us, where we don’t have to bemoan what we are. Because if we don’t bemoan what we are in this age in our physical human bodies and bemoan the fact that we have selfish human nature it’s because we’re deceiving ourselves into thinking we’re not like that. No, we are selfish by nature. That’s why you have to cry out to God for help. To exercise peace, you have to cry out to God for help because that’s not a natural part of our mind. Our natural mind is to judge others, is to hold others in a place, whatever that is, against them by certain judgment in thinking that’s not right. We have to bemoan that kind of thinking in order to change. If we don’t see that we’re not going to change. So, we have to bemoan in that respect, if you will, what we are. Awesome!

I will heal them, and I will lead them also and restore comforts unto them and to their mourners. Not to those who don’t want to change. Not to those who are not willing to fight. So, if we bemoan what we are then that’s a part of the process of change, of healing, of being healed.

I create the fruit of the lips. “The fruit of the lips.” The fruit of what can come out of us that is spoken properly – to speak the truth. It’s not just a matter of words, spiritually, it’s a matter of what we live towards others. And so, to live that which is right toward others God creates that within us. We don’t have it. We don’t have the ability to do that properly and right without selfishness involved, without pride involved. Without God, we can’t do this. With God’s help, with God’s spirit, God is creating, will create this fruit of the lips that is proper, good, and right.

Peace, peace to those who are afar off. What’s that all about? It’s about God’s purpose and God’s plan through time. Because scriptures talk about those who are afar off and those who are near, and so it has to do with God’s plan of working through the ages to accomplish everything that needs to be

accomplished all the way throughout the Last Great Day. And to that which is now, whenever that now is, whether it was in the time of Christ when he spoke in these terms in that respect, or the disciples did.

So again here, **Peace, peace to those who are afar off, and to those near, says the Eternal, and I will heal them.** So, whether it be now or later on in time, to have such opportunity, to have a healing of the mind, to have this peace to become a part of us, it's a beautiful thing. Jerusalem. To understand that God is creating it. God is the one who produces it. We don't produce it. We can't. You can't produce the fruits of the spirit without the holy spirit. It's as simple as that.

Romans 3. So again, this subject of peace needs to be one of our primary focuses for this Feast season. We need to remember more than ever before judgment is upon the House of God. It's always been there, but the closer you get to the end of an age, in this particular case, to Christ's coming, the more important that becomes in our life. Because the judgment and what we're living through and what's upon us, more is given, and more is required. And hopefully, we grasp that and comprehend that in greater ways because of the sermons and that which we've been fed over the last couple of years.

Romans 3:10—As it is written, There is none righteous. Not righteous before God because of our own righteousness. So, if you look at the world it's easy to see. But even when we're called, how we are righteous becomes important. It has to do with what we believe and living by faith, and because we live it and practice what God shows us and because we believe what God says and choose to live it then God attributes that to us as righteousness. Because we're not.

We have problems. We have things we have to repent of on a continual basis week by week, Sabbath to Sabbath, in through there in that period of time, of things that come into the mind, of things we say or things we do. It's just what we are, and we have to fight the fight, which is us, primarily. We are the biggest fight.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks after God. Unless God is there, unless God has called us. That's the only way. Thank God He's called us so we can reverse this course of normal human life. That's what God has offered to us so that we can reverse that course. It's a process of healing.

They have all gone out of the way. We all have in times past until we came to baptism. Then we grasped and comprehended in a greater way the need to be forgiven of all sin and the need to continue to be forgiven of sin into the future through our Passover Joshua the Christ. "They have all gone out of the way," meaning out of God's way. See, we want our way and that's where so much of our battle is. We can fight that with God's spirit now.

They have altogether become unprofitable. The only way we're profitable is if we yield ourselves to God and God's purpose and God's plan to become Elohim once He calls us. Then we're profitable. And He loves us, and He wants us to be in that Family. Everything is about that.

There is none who does good, no, not one. Of and by ourselves it's not in us. Thank God we're a part of the Church, that we can receive help we need to reverse this course.

Their throat is an open sepulcher (a grave). That's the way we are as human beings without God's spirit. Just things fly out of our mouth. Whatever thought comes that's about our thinking, the way we see it, the way we want it, or whatever it is, and sometimes it just flies out of our mouth. Even once we're baptized, still happens. Things fly out of my mouth at times, things I have to repent of.

"Their throat is an open grave." Because it's about sin. And if things continue to come out of our mouths like that, out of our lives like that without repentance or without change... We have to be growing. If that isn't taking place then that's what's going to happen, it will be "and dust you will return forever and forever." It's death.

With their tongues, they have used deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips. We have to be able to see that in our human nature, that this is what God says we're like as carnal human beings without Him. That's why we should be motivated to want to pray every day for God's help, of His holy spirit to fight against such things. To fight against what? Evil, which is selfish human nature. That's where our battle is. The battle is in here.

How blessed are we that we see those things and are at peace with that? Truly! If we're at peace with that and recognize that's where the battle is then we know what to pray about, we know what to fight. If we don't know what to fight and we're deceiving ourselves then...?

Verse 14—Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Sometimes we can read through things like this and especially the New Testament and Paul is talking about things that happen to human beings. Not just in the world but in battles we have.

"Feet can be swift to shed innocent blood." Or "to be swift," I should say, "to shed blood." How innocent? That depends on their relationship with God and their repentance before God. But this has to do with judging and judging others and how we think about others. We should be able to see that. Because if we think wrong toward others you're not helping to promote life, you're helping to promote death.

I think of what happened in the Church that led up to the Apostasy. One of the big eye-openers for me was going through Ezekiel and learning what happened within the ministry and God's condemnation to the ministry for what they did in that particular time period. Because it was about killing God's people. You think, "Well...?"

We can understand murder and killing people on a physical plane but that which is spiritual so often just escapes people. But that's what it's about because it's far, far worse to do damage and harm and hurt to someone who has the opportunity to grow in God's spirit and have that life taken from them because of example or because of what took place. We've experienced a lot of things that have hurt people's minds,

and people are out there lost because of it now. There are people whose minds were blown that they couldn't understand how this could happen to God's Church!

The primary fault of all that lies with those who didn't continue to teach what God gave to Herbert Armstrong throughout the period of Laodicea. Murder? Killing? Shedding of blood? It's a far, far worse evil than any war that mankind has held against one another. It's far worse than the killing that has ever taken place among human beings because to take away the potential life of God from someone, that's forever. God can resurrect people when they've been murdered, killed in wars and battles and so forth.

To be a part of that on a spiritual plane, if we recognize the evil of that, of what it would mean to hurt one of God's little ones? Doesn't matter what the age is, we're all pretty little because we're all in the womb. We're not born yet.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways and the way of peace they have not known. Meaning they have not practiced it; they haven't lived it if we're talking about the Church. Now, in the Church, we have opportunity for that. But just because the world hadn't known that way... We have. We have been shown that way, the way of peace, and we are to live it, we are to be, as Christ said, to be peacemakers. That means you have to work at it, you have to make it happen. It doesn't just happen because you go ask God to help there to be peace. You have to be involved in it so often.

Sometimes we have to go back and talk to someone and say, "I'm sorry. I was wrong. I shouldn't have done that." Sometimes it's just a matter of cleaning up one's own mind and asking God for forgiveness of sin and recognizing the need for repentance. But when there's been a conflict between people then there is a time to make it right. And we can't just whisk it away and not do anything or say anything about it, we have to go to one another.

I think of some, a couple right now that I know of, that have had a conflict in the past couple of weeks, over the past several weeks. Heard the sermon I gave about preparing for the Feast and they still have a conflict because they aren't working hard enough to make it right with one another, to be able to go to one another and say, "I am sorry for what I said. I am sorry. I don't want that. I want a right relationship. I want us to have what we had before. I want to get rid of all this nonsense and I'm sorry for my part in all of this because I had direct part in all this and I'm really sorry I did what I did."

Sometimes that's almost impossible for people to do, it seems. We make other excuses and reasons of why things had to happen or why we did what we did. Sometimes we just need to be of a forgiving spirit, of a forgiving mind toward others. And sometimes, to give the benefit of the doubt to someone else. This is something that sometimes happens within the Church when I think of times when people have gotten older or whatever and sometimes people haven't understood when sometimes people have said certain things and not realizing, well, this is because it's an age factor and it's harder. There are maybe some times that people don't see things as clearly.

I think of one woman in an area one time, my wife was taking her out and she wanted to know about the Halloween decorations, wanted to get the decorations and stuff and candy for Halloween. It's like she couldn't help it. Long time member in God's Church, but she got to a point where some things were coming out of her that weren't a part of who she really was before. God isn't going to hold that against her.

You know, we have things we sometimes can't control when you get older. So, to give someone the benefit of the doubt, to say, well, maybe that's what's taking place? How do you know?

So regardless, even if there is no reason or excuse for it you still have to be of that kind of spirit toward someone, to be willing to give the benefit of the doubt. They had a hard day; they had a bad day. I've had a lot of bad days over the past year. It's just a way of life.

I can get in the car, and I can have a bad day. It drives me nuts sometimes seeing the way people drive, you know. You think, people's minds and where are they? The other day here, I think it was yesterday, a semi driving down the road, it just aggravated the tar out of me. They're on the back of this older woman in a car, and here he is pulling up on her bumper and you think, and he's going down a hill and you think, if he had to stop quickly, he'd go right over the top of the car. It's like, what is wrong with you?! Your carnality wants to pull him out of the cab and smack him, "You idiot! What is wrong with you?! You've got the power to kill here, to destroy!" Anyway, that's my carnality.

Sometimes we just get so frustrated with the world around us. It's probably one of my big areas, driving. Probably should let my wife drive from now, but then I'd have troubles with her driving. See, I still have my carnality. It'd be my carnality because she wouldn't be doing it the way I think it should be done. See? That's the way we are. So, I'd have to fight against it. Because we're carnal. That's what comes out of us. And it's like, if you don't do it my way then we have to fight against that.

We have all kinds of battles we have to fight all the time. It just never ends. Then the world and some of the politics going out there. I don't know about you, but I've thought, if there was somewhere to move to. But there isn't. The whole world is nuts! The whole world is stirred up in a spirit now.

We need to understand that. That power is gaining more power, and the crazier people become the more power they have over them. That's where we are in time. That's why these things are accelerating. And so, we live in a world where we're going to see more of that kind of thing, extreme selfishness, the kinds of things that take place that are just hard to take out of humanity itself, and so we want to see the end of this age so that we can begin to work on making things right. Because right now, it's like it's just going down, swirling down the toilet and going down.

You think, how long? Hopefully, it's not long. You see some of the things taking place over in the Middle East, things prophetic about the Middle East that you think, yeah, this is all fitting into place. Things

happening in parts of Europe that are turning attitudes of people and people toward this country and toward leaders in this country. It's scary stuff out there, it really is.

I don't know how you feel about it, but to me, this is a scary time to live through, and it's going to become a whole lot scarier before it's over with. So, that affects us sometimes and battles we have to fight. Because we can get so upset and let things affect us in our thinking of what we should be living. So, to have peace, you have to fight for it. You have to fight against self and ask God for help to deal with things in the proper way, whether it be in the world or whether it be in others, or even within the Church toward one another. But especially within the Church, we have to be of a spirit of a willingness to be forgiving in our thinking. Not holding anything against anyone. Because as soon as we do that we've sinned and there is a harsh judgment in that, truly is, that comes from God.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. Look at the world. Destruction and misery. There's a lot of misery out there. **...and the way of peace they have not known.** **There is no fear of God before their eyes.** And so, sometimes sadly on a spiritual plane, these things can trickle into the Church because this is still what we have to battle. Just because it's in the world and we see it doesn't mean it doesn't exist within the Body. And if it does in any of our lives than those are the things we have to fight against.

Romans 8:1—Now, therefore, there is no condemnation to those who are in Joshua the Christ. So, the key in all that is "in," meaning we're repenting of sin, and we are in Christ and in God the Father and we know and have that confidence they are in us because we're crying out for that help and that spirit because we're repenting of our sins.

...who do not walk after to the flesh, but after the spirit. That's how you do it. We want God's spirit. If we walk in the spirit, it means you're repenting of sins as well because that's the only way you can continue to walk in the spirit and to receive of God's spirit because you know you need that help to fight against self and because you're repenting.

For the law of the spirit of life in Joshua the Christ... It's a beautiful expression. "For the law of the spirit of life." In essence, it's in Joshua the Christ; it's in him. We have access to it through him, in him. It starts with him being our Passover. Repentance again, over and over. That's what it's all about. Then our High Priest. To go before God and ask for help and strength of His holy spirit, that they dwell within us.

...life in Joshua the Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through or because of the flesh, as better translation. Because of sin, that's why he did what he did. First of all, here it's talking about the law. Human beings can't live it. They couldn't keep the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament, the Jewish people couldn't...or Israel couldn't. Neither can we unless we have God's spirit. We're blessed to have God's spirit so we can live it in a spiritual way.

...in that it was weak through the flesh or because of the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for or again, because of sin condemned sin in the flesh. Beautiful verses.

Verse 4—that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. So again, it's the law. It's God's way. It's God's truth that's righteous. And if we choose it and seek to live it and cry out for God's help to practice it and live it toward one another then because we've done that because we believe God and we want that He attributes it to us for righteousness. Because we're going to turn right around and sin again. We have to repent again of something because we're never free of sin because we're not free of our carnality yet. It's always going to be there. So, we have to be willing and wanting to repent.

...might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. For those who are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. You know, more physically oriented. The Church, God's way of life, isn't in their mind. It has to be in us, wanting God, desiring God, wanting God's spirit in us every day of our life. Be fearful to leave and go about our work or whatever without having prayed to God for help in that day.

...but those who are of the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. That's what it produces, peace. It's a beautiful thing. The opposite of all the drama that's in the world, the way people think, almost to the point where people think they have to have drama to live. So again, there is a way that produces peace, and it requires being spiritually minded, if you will, filled with God's spirit.

Turn over to James 3. So again, we're going through these things because we're going to the Feast of Tabernacles, we're going into the Holy Day season, and it's a time that God wants us to think in a certain way. It's a time that God wants us to rejoice more than any other time of the year. More at that time! And that's spiritual; it's not just a physical thing. A physical thing is a byproduct or side product of all that that's enjoyable as well, but the primary thing is that which is spiritual. To rejoice in God, in God's calling, in the truth that we have, in all that God has given to us and all that He will give to us at that time to focus upon, and to love one another.

I would fear, this year especially, if something comes up between people and they don't nip it in the bud immediately, quickly, and deal with it in the manner that they must. This is an important time for God's Church. Truly is.

James 3:13—Who is wise and endowed or skilled with knowledge among you? Well, it's kind of a tongue-in-cheek thing in some ways because, as a whole as human beings, we tend to think we are. Just ask me what I think about something. We have our opinions about lots of things.

God says, in this sense, if it's spiritual, **Let them show out of good conversation** or good conduct in essence, that's in our life, **their works with meekness of wisdom.** Because this shows whether it comes from God or not. If it comes from us, it's of no value, truly. It's not lasting. If it comes from God and is

producing something that's changing us, that's being created, that we want to be created... We want peace to be created in this mind because it's a way of thinking, it's a way of living toward one another. It's that which God wants us to have because He is creating Elohim and that's through the process of the transformation of our thinking and of our mind which produces this product, if you will, this great product that we all want, peace, true peace.

But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not. Don't rejoice in that. What is there to be grateful for, excited about there? But to be excited about a change that we can have in our mind, to live what is right, to repent, to be right with one another, to make things right with one another, that's a good thing. Those are the things that build relationships if we exercise them. They really do. They help us to draw closer together.

Just like in a family, people have to work to create that kind of environment within a family. You have to work at it. You have to do some of these basic principles. How much more in a spiritual family?

But if you have bitter envy and strife in your hearts, glory not, and do not lie against the truth. So, the truth, if what is true is living through us and we're being truthful then it's going to produce a certain end. It has to do with a change in the thinking, in our minds, and how we act toward one another and live toward one another.

It goes on to say, **This wisdom does not from above but is earthly, sensual, and devilish.** I love the way it says that because that's what it is. If we rely on self without God's involvement, not looking to God for help, if we won't even do it in an anointing are we doing it at all spiritually in our life in other areas of our life? So, those things should be answered by people, by individuals.

So again, it says, "This wisdom descends not from above but is earthly, sensual, and devilish." If it's of self, it's devilish; it's of Satan. Because that's his mind and that's what God wants to free us from, that kind of bondage, that kind of thinking, that kind of evil.

For where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure... Free from sin, holy, set apart. We set our lives apart. We want to be set apart. We want God's spirit to dwell in us.

...then peaceable, filled with peace. It says these things over and over again in so many different ways in scripture. Filled with peace. **...gentle.** In other words, yielding. **...easy to be entreated.** Literally means, "ready to obey." Ready to obey, wanting to obey what God gives us because that's the only thing that can produce peace.

...full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality (in how we judge) **and without hypocrisy.** You know, no double standard, no pretense but genuine. **And the fruit of righteousness**—the fruit of righteousness—is **sown in peace in those who make peace.** So, something we have the choice to make, but it's with God's help. That we can never forget, but to hold that fast.

So, let's make this the best Feast ever. Not just to be a platitude or whatever the word is, something that is an expression that we might use that sounds good, but because of what we're living toward one another. A time to rejoice before God in ways that when we hear the first sermon of the Feast it's going to be about that, about how to rejoice before God, to be thankful before God, and all those things combined together that produce this peace that God is creating in us if we yield to it.