

# **The Kingdom of God vs the Millennium**

## **Feast of Tabernacles**

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As you know, we're all assembled here together this week to observe the Feast of Tabernacles, which as we know pictures the wonderful time of the Millennium, the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. And we know that this is part of the overall holy day plan that God lays out for us throughout the year. As we know, He lays out His annual festivals for us in Leviticus 23 and they give us the major events throughout God's plan of salvation for mankind. You could describe them as a roadmap because think of it like this. It's basically a roadmap showing you the journey that God is taking mankind on with an ultimate destination in mind and that ultimate destination is the Kingdom of God. That's where all of this is pointed towards.

Because think about it; what was Christ's message? It was the gospel of the Kingdom of God. That was the big picture, the ultimate destination that we're all headed towards—the Kingdom of God. And the Millennium, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles here, is what you might call one of the stops along the way on this journey towards the ultimate destination, which again is the Kingdom of God.

But the thing I'd like to address today is having grown up in the Church of God all of my life, I've seen a number of times where brethren intertwine, or you might say confuse, the boundaries between what the Millennium pictures and what the Kingdom of God is. Sometimes they interchange these two as if they were one concept and refer to the same thing. Let me demonstrate what I mean by that. A number of times throughout my lifetime—and you've probably heard similar comments yourself—brethren around this time of year will talk about The Feast of Tabernacles; "I'm looking forward to that. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Kingdom of God." Or they'll talk about "When Christ returns and comes to take over the earth, He's setting up the Kingdom of God on earth." When in reality neither one of those statements is correct because we have to understand the Millennium is pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a physical concept on a physical planet with physical human beings enjoying a very wonderful physical environment. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual concept made up of spirit beings. These two are distinctly separate and we need to understand that as wonderful as the Millennium will be, it is not the Kingdom of God; and, quite frankly, it is not worthy to be compared to the Kingdom of God if we understand what they really mean.

If you like a title for the sermon today, it is,

### The Kingdom of God vs the Millennium

What I want us to see here today is that the Millennium, again, is a wonderful time. As we're going to see, it's a very beautiful picture. It's what we're commanded to picture here in the Feast of Tabernacles throughout this week. But it is not the end destination;

it is a stop along the journey in the roadmap to the ultimate destination, which is the Kingdom of God. That's why, when you hear the gospel referred to, it's the good news of the Kingdom of God. It's not the good news of the Millennium. The Millennium is good news; it's a wonderful picture to look forward to. It's part of our future. We're commanded to take a week to look forward to it and to understand it, but it is not the ultimate picture. And that's one thing we need to understand.

To start off with, for some of you out there hearing this, you might be a little shocked to hear me say that the Feast of Tabernacles doesn't picture the Kingdom of God, because it doesn't. Let's first of all before we go any further establish that the Kingdom of God by biblical definition is a spiritual concept that physical human beings cannot be a part of. We're going to see that the Bible very explicitly says that. Let's turn first of all to 1 Corinthians 15 beginning in verse 50, and we'll start off establishing this concept before we go any further.

**1 Corinthians 15:50.** *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; ... (NKJV)*

There you have it. Physical human beings cannot be a part of this concept.

*50b) ... nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

*51) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed —*

*52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*54) So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (NKJV)*

Now notice what Paul's saying here; he's saying that the Kingdom of God is exclusively a spiritual concept. And how do we inherit the Kingdom of God? When you are changed at the resurrection into a god-being, because that's what the Kingdom of God by biblical definition is. It's *the family of God composed of spirit-beings*. It is totally a spiritual concept.

So, again if you look at what does the Feast of Tabernacles picture? It pictures the Millennium. Again, we're going to look at that later today, but first of all I want to establish very clearly from the Bible that the Kingdom of God is exclusively a spiritual concept. It is not a physical concept that physical human beings are a part of as we just saw explicitly stated here.

Let's turn over to John 3 and we'll see Christ teaching this exact same concept. John 3 and we'll start reading in verse 1. This is Jesus Christ having a conversation with a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

**John 3:1.** *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*

2) *This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

3) *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

4) *Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

5) *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (NKJV)*

Now what does He mean by born of the Spirit? Let's keep reading.

6) *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (NKJV)*

In other words, it's composed of spirit.

7) *Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*

8) *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (NKJV)*

If you're familiar with the common teachings in the Protestant world today, you know that they very often teach this section of scripture very differently than what I'm talking about here today. Very oftentimes you will hear the phrase "born-again Christian" thrown around and what they're referring to is their idea of someone who has been baptized and received the holy spirit; that person, by their definition, is a born-again Christian.

In fact, this idea was introduced into the Church of God a couple of decades ago in the early 1990s. That was in the days of the Worldwide Church of God and I was attending Ambassador College at the time this idea was first being introduced. I attended from '88 to '92. Now my senior year in college, we had a guest speaker from Pasadena who came to Big Sandy and was guest lecturing in our Senior Bible Class and presented on this very chapter. He was considered an "expert" in Greek for the church.

In addressing this particular chapter, his explanation for what was being explained here was simply, again, receiving the holy spirit and being converted. When he got to verse 8, his explanation of verse 8 was, "This is just referring to the spirit because you cannot see God's spirit, but you can see the fruits of it in a person's life."

That's not what verse 8 says. Verse 8 says, "So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." In other words, when it comes and goes and you can't see it, it's saying that the people

are like that. But the only way for the people to be like that is for the people to be born of the spirit, to be composed of spirit. So, again, how do you enter the Kingdom of God? How do you inherit the Kingdom of God? By being born into the God family, changed to a spirit-being, because it is a spiritual concept that physical human beings cannot be a part of.

Again, there are a few times in the Bible where the term the Kingdom of God is used with figurative language. But, if you study the terminology, you're going to see throughout the Bible the Kingdom of God is referred to as a spiritual concept. It is not referring to a physical planet with physical human beings enjoying a very enjoyable physical environment. That is not the Kingdom of God. It is a spiritual concept and we shouldn't intermix that terminology because it creates confusion and false perceptions in our minds about what the gospel, what the plan is about.

Before we go any further, let me also address one other concept that is often referred to here and also somewhat confuses the terminology here. Turn over to Revelation 11 and let's address verse 15 here. There is a usage of this term "kingdom" that I'd like to address.

Before I even read this scripture, let me just talk about the fact that in our current physical world today, we oftentimes use in English the word "kingdom" where we refer to a nation that has a king over it. When the ruler of a nation is a king, when that's his title, we will oftentimes refer to the territory he's governing over (the people of that nation) as his kingdom. That's a very common usage of that terminology. Again, that's a concept in our world, but we have to understand there is a distinction between what that is talking about and what the Bible is referring to as the Kingdom of God. That's what I want us to understand—the differences here. Let's read Revelation 11:15.

***Revelation 11:15.*** *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (NKJV)*

The reason I mention this particular scripture is that this is often referenced in the context of making the statement "When Christ returns here on the earth, He's setting up the Kingdom of God on earth." And this verse is quoted basically as the support for that statement. Let's understand again two separate concepts here.

Realize it's referring to the "kingdoms" (with an "s", plural) of this world. In other words, the physical nations, the rulerships of this world are, yes, being transferred over to Christ because Christ and the firstfruits are returning down to the earth and, yes, they're taking over rulership of the world. That is absolutely true. And, yes, oftentimes in our physical world we refer to that as He's King of kings and this is the area He's ruling over, so, therefore, His Kingdom. And we follow that logic. Yes, that is valid in that sense.

But here is why I take great exception to basically mixing this terminology. If you follow this term “Kingdom of God” throughout the Bible and use the Bible’s own definition for it, this is why I take issue with it. If you take a Bible search program—I always reference PC Study Bible because that one is on my personal laptop but there many similar products out there. If you take one of those and do a search on the term “Kingdom of God” (those exact words together), what you’re going to find is it only shows up in the New Testament. Not that the Old Testament doesn’t make reference to the Kingdom of God, but in terms of those words actually being together, you’ll find that phrase only in the New Testament.

In the New King James Version of the Bible, you will find that phrase used 70 times throughout the New Testament. Specific to the book of Matthew, you will find another phrase called “the Kingdom of Heaven” and Matthew is the only one that uses that one. He uses it 32 times. If you look at the parallel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it becomes obvious that when Matthew is using his term “Kingdom of Heaven”, he’s referring to the same thing. When you look at the other parallel accounts, you’ll see Mark, Luke, and John referring to the same conversations, the same accounts and Matthew is using “Kingdom of Heaven” while the others are using “Kingdom of God.” Obviously, this is the same concept they’re talking about, only using different terminology.

If you study what they are talking about and what is used in all those instances, Christ is not talking about a physical planet with physical human beings enjoying a very positive wonderful physical environment. That is not what is being referred to by Kingdom of God. It’s referring to the spiritual concept as we defined here in 1 Corinthians 15 and John 3. It’s the spirit-born family of God that is being referred to here.

Again, I understand the physical concept of having a king who is over this area and, therefore, that is his kingdom. Yes, that is how we use the term in English when we talk about it. But if we mix that terminology, now we start thinking in terms of this millennial setting as the Kingdom of God. Then when you read through the New Testament and you see this terminology used again and again, what is your brain associating with it? You’re now mixing the millennial setting with the Kingdom of God. These are distinctly separate concepts because we have to understand that one is physical and one is spiritual.

Again the time of the Millennium that we’re here picturing here in the Feast of Tabernacles is a wonderfully positive environment. In a moment we’re going to go through an overview of it in detail. It is a beautiful environment and it’s fun just to talk about, just to look forward to how positive it is. As wonderful as that is, it is incredibly inferior to the Kingdom of God. It is not worthy to be compared to the Kingdom of God, because one is a physical concept; the other is a spiritual concept. And again, we have to realize this millennial environment that we’re picturing here is not the end destination. It is a stop along the roadmap on the plan to get to the ultimate destination. That’s why it’s called the gospel of the Kingdom of God and not the gospel of the Millennium. Again, it’s a step along the way; it’s not the destination.

With that in mind, as we know we're here at the Feast of Tabernacles to picture the millennial environment. Again, this is a very biblical thing. God commands us to take a week and to focus on what it's going to be like. So, let's start off with by just getting an overview of what the Millennium is going to look like because it's a very beautiful picture. Again, it's something that any physical human being who has experienced this world over the last six thousand years would look at that and say, "If I have a chance between this and that, well, I'll take that Millennium every day of the week because that's just fabulous sounding."

So, let's turn over to Revelation 20 and let's get a view of what this is going to look like. As we go through this, what I'm ultimately going to do is a comparison and contrast between the Millennium and the Kingdom of God. Again, I want you see how they are distinctly different and how the Kingdom of God is infinitely superior to the millennial environment. What I'm going to do here to set the scene is read through the first seven verses of Revelation 20. We'll get the overall context of the Millennium and even the events that lead up to and after this time period we're talking about.

***Revelation 20:1.*** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.  
2) He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; (NKJV)

Notice this one thousand year figure. We'll see this about six times in the next verses. This will just keep coming again and again, because one of the things I want you to understand with this is the Bible defines for us just exactly how long the Millennium lasts. The overall point in this is: We're talking about temporary. Do you remember Rick's sermon on the first day? What was the whole symbolism of the dwellings that Ancient Israel had to build? Temporary. That was the whole point. Wasn't it? It was temporary dwellings because what we're doing is comparing something that is physical and temporary to something that is spiritual and permanent. That's one of the differences we're going to see here. Now pick up in verse 3.

*3) and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.... (NKJV)*

Here we have that figure again—one thousand years.

*3b) ... But after these things he must be released for a little while. KJV)*

We're going to see here that not only do we have the exact time frame we have the events that box it in. We know what happens prior to it, the fulfilling of the Day of Atonement when Satan is bound and is gone for a thousand years as it tells us. On the other end, it's Satan being released again. So, we know the events around it and exactly how long it lasts. Now let's continue in verse 4.

*4) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (NKJV)*

Notice that figure just keeps coming up—a thousand years.

*5) But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.... (NKJV)*

Again, we just keep hearing about these one thousand years.

*5b) ... This is the first resurrection.*

*6) Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (NKJV)*

So again, how long are we talking about? A thousand years, we can't miss it by this point. John just keeps repeating it.

*7) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison (NKJV)*

So, what we're talking about is this wonderful thousand year period here and not only do we have the exact time frame of it, we know the events that lead up to it and what happens right afterwards. But the overall point I want you to hear from this is that as wonderful as the Millennium is, it is physical and it is temporary. And like everything else in the physical realm, it has a beginning and an end because that's just the very nature of physical whereas spiritual is eternal and lasts forever. When we look later at the Kingdom of God, we're going to see it referenced as the Kingdom that lasts forever. Again, that's why in comparing these two, the physical Millennium, as wonderful as it is, just is not even in the same ballpark. It's not even worthy to be compared to the Kingdom of God.

Let's also take an overview of what this environment is like, what we're here picturing in the Feast of Tabernacles. As I mentioned, this is a very, very positive environment. It's something just fun to talk about. When we stop, sit back, and think about what this pictures, it gives you a smile on your face and makes you feel warm and excited because it's a wonderful time to look forward to. It's also because of how we are wired as physical human beings. It's oftentimes easier to wrap our heads around this than it is the Kingdom of God because, again, we're physical and we relate to this picture. The spiritual is a little harder to get our heads wrapped around. Let's turn over first of all to Isaiah 2:1 where we're going to read through a very common millennial scripture that we tend to focus on this time of year.

**Isaiah 2:1.** *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*

2) *Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.*

3) *Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

4) *He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (NKJV)*

When you compare that to today's world, doesn't that sound fabulous? How often do you turn on the news to watch world events and the top story is some ugly war going on somewhere, or it's acts of terrorism and all the violence and mayhem caused as a result. So, you read scriptures like this and say, "Everyone is getting along and there's not war? That sounds fantastic!" Especially compared to our world today as it is. Again, it is a very fantastic environment and it gets better than this.

Let's turn over to Isaiah 25:26.

While we're turning over there, one of the other major problems that we have in today's world is not just the issue of war. Oftentimes a lot of suffering comes about just simply from a lack of resources, particularly in regard to food resources. You can think of areas in particular, and what oftentimes come to mind are areas of Africa where on the news of starvation and famine and all the disease epidemics that tend to come as a result of lack of resources affecting areas there. You see the painful suffering those people are going through. We're looking at a time when those issues simply won't happen. It's not going to be a time when there are scarcities of resources and people suffering as a result because there are going to be abundant crops.

**Isaiah 25:6.** *And in this mountain The Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. (NKJV)*

In other words: A time of abundant crops when the best delicacies are readily and easily available.

If you would turn over to Amos 9:13, we'll see a little more detailed description of this.

**Amos 9:13.** *"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.*



*14) I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.*

*15) I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God. (NKJV)*

Now again, here we have a picture of the plowman overcoming the reaper. If you are like me and work in an office environment in a city and always have, this may not immediately have a tangible meaning to you. That's exactly how it was for me. A few years ago I was studying into this particular scripture and I was thinking, "How do I quantify, in rough terms at least, what does that really mean? What is that saying?" Again, I live in Dallas, Texas and I've worked in an office corporate environment most all of my career. I'm not really in touch with the agricultural world.

So I reach out to our resident experts on that subject who do farming for a living and basically have done for their whole career. Here are folks that are in touch with the agricultural world that can help me out with this. So, I reached out to them and I said, "Help me understand in practical terms what does this mean, 'the plowman overcoming the reaper.' What does that really mean in terms of the results?"

And, of course, as you might imagine, the answer had some qualifiers on it. They said, "It depends upon what crop you're talking about and what area of the world you're talking about. Things can vary." But they said, "Generally speaking, that means getting about twice your normal yield from a crop."

Now think about that. If that is the norm and what you're producing is about twice what you normally would—and this is the norm for everybody—what are you going to get? You're going to get an environment where there is plenty to go around. There are plenty of resources. You don't have the scarcity. You don't have the famine, the starvation because there are plenty of resources for everybody because you have these constant abundant crops.

One of the reasons for this is the condition of the earth at the time all this is happening. Today we have environments like Death Valley. We have the Sahara Desert. We have large spaces of land that are not usable in terms of producing crops to be able to feed people. This is all going to change in the future. Turn over to Isaiah 35 and we'll start in verse 1.

***Isaiah 35:1.*** *The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;*

*2) It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God. (NKJV)*

Now, jump down to the second half of verse 6.

6b) ... For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.  
7) The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. (NKJV)

We're talking about even making the barren and dry desolate areas very green, fertile, and usable. Again, this is one of the major aspects here that creates this environment of abundant crops. It's because the land is so much more lush and usable.

Turn over also to Isaiah 41:18, where we'll see some further description of this.

**Isaiah 41:18.** *I will open rivers in desolate heights, 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 and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress 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 has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it. (NKJV)*

If you are familiar at all with cypress trees, they grow in very wet areas. You can't grow one in a desert. You have to have a lot of water to sustain cypress trees. So, if you're talking about growing these in the parched places, they're not parched anymore. It's a very lush green area. And this is what the earth is going to be transformed into during this whole time frame, because, again, it's going to be healed from the environment of where it was at the end of the day of the Lord.

At the end of the day of the Lord, the earth will just be obliterated. It will be destroyed and if God doesn't intervene to supernaturally heal it quickly, it's not going to sustain life. But God isn't just going to restore it to the condition it was prior to all of this, He's doing an upgrade.

Just to give you a humorous example with this, I was discussing the sermon idea of what I was going to cover here with friends of mine in Dallas who are big on technology. They always have the latest iPhone gadget that comes out. They're always updating to the latest version. I'm an Android guy myself, but they're big fans of the iPhone. And I believe the latest iPhone is the 6, the Version 6.0. I was joking with him. I said, "What God's going to do here is He's going to go from Earth 6.0 to Earth 7.0. He's doing an upgrade with new bells and whistles, making a fancier model when we start into the Millennium."

Because, again when you read through this description, it's much better than the current earth that we have today. It's not just a matter of restoring it to where it was before the Day of the Lord destruction happened. We have a new improved model that we're looking at going forward. That's the environment we have here, but it even gets better than this.

Can you imagine, in a lot of today's world how much suffering do we have as a result of health problems? If you receive the regular prayer updates, (I'm sure probably the majority of this audience does) at least once a week if not multiple times a week, I think it would be fair to say the vast majority of the requests that are put on there are health related. Now there are certainly other types of requests and other trials that people are requesting prayers for, but I think we could easily say that the vast majority of that is somehow health related and the different sufferings people are dealing with. In today's world, we have a lot of that. We have cancer and diabetes and heart disease, and, again, all manner of health problems that cause lots of suffering.

Well, imagine an environment where that's not the case because that's exactly what we have in the Millennium. Let's turn back to Isaiah 35. This time we're going to pick up here in verse 5 which we skipped over last time.

***Isaiah 35:5.*** *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*6) Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing.... (KJV)*

Notice the environment here. He's talking about healing all these kinds of problems. Imagine a world where you don't have to send out regular prayer requests because of the agonizing health trials that a lot of brethren are going through and requesting prayer for them to help them endure to get through this. Doesn't that sound fantastic? Isn't that something very positive again, just fun just to talk about?

When we picture this wonderful environment of a time of what this will be like, any human being who has lived, again in Satan's world, up through these first 6,000 years, who compares to that will say, "I'll take that every day of the week. That is a fabulous picture." But again, as I want you to see as we go forward with this as wonderful as that is, it's nothing compared to the Kingdom of God and that's part of the picture I want you to see in this sermon.

It's not just all of the issues I've mentioned here. It gets even better because think about one of the other major challenges that we have in our world today—just human beings getting along with each other. This is especially true if you live in a larger metropolitan area which you might say is a more multi-cultural environment where you have many people from different backgrounds, ethnic groups, different countries that speak different languages. One of the major issues that people have in being able to relate to and understand one another is just being able to communicate with one another. Because if you speak different languages that creates a huge barrier in just being able to talk to one another, to relate to, and to have unity with each another. This problem gets solved as well. Turn with me to Zephaniah 3:9.

***Zephaniah 3:9.*** *"For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord. (NKJV)*

Notice the exact reference here is talking about the unity created as a result of everyone being able to easily communicate with each other. Basically this is the reverse of what happened at the tower of Babel. At the tower of Babel in Genesis, God looked and said, "They can work together too easily and they're going to destroy themselves too fast. I have to intervene and stop this." So what did God do? He confused the language purposely, knowing that was going to divide their productivity and slow their ability, given human nature, to destroy themselves quite so quickly. And God used that as a tool, quite frankly, to create division and to stop that from being able to happen. Here we have the reverse. God basically is reversing that situation and saying, "Now give everybody one language so that they all talk together and work in unity with each other."

Again this environment just keeps getting better, but it's better than that. It's not just all these wonderful things for the people; the animals change too. Turn over to Isaiah 11 and we'll start reading in verse 6.

**Isaiah 11:6.** *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*

*7) The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*8) The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.*

*9) They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (NKJV)*

Isn't this the visual image that most often comes to our minds when we think of this time here? When we think of the Millennium and what the future holds, isn't the visual image that typically comes to our minds that of a lion, a lamb, and a little child together? That's what we oftentimes think of and, again, that's pulled directly from this scripture. Now remember that vision image. We're going to come to back this later.

But again, this is oftentimes what we think of when we think of this fabulous wonderful environment that we're picturing here in the Millennium, pictured again by the Feast of Tabernacles. This is directly what this time is picturing. And we're commanded to look forward to this and to understand this part in the plan of God.

But again, as I mentioned, we also need to understand this is not the destination. This is a step on the roadmap on the way to the destination because the destination is the Kingdom of God.

As wonderful as this picture we've just described is, it's still not perfect because the physical never can be. Even in this wonderful environment with no Satan and all of these wonderful blessings, guess what? We still have some sin. In spite of all of this, we still have some sin and some rebellion. Turn over to Zechariah 14:16. With human beings our core problem always comes down to sin. It's always at the root cause of our

corruptibility and the problems that we have. It always gets down to our inability to completely follow God even in the best of circumstances.

**Zechariah 14:16.** *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall 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 whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain.*

*18) If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*

*19) This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (NKJV)*

This scripture doesn't dogmatically tell us that Egypt is going to do this. It says, "If Egypt" does this, then, this is what will happen. But, obviously, we can see that God has already planned His response to those that rebel, even in these circumstances. Why is that? Because He knows it's inevitable. He knows somebody is going to do it. So, He has already proclaimed, "Whoever refuses to follow My instructions (I know it's going to happen.), here is what's going to be the result because somebody is going to do it." God knows that's going to happen. God says, "Come up and keep the Feast." And some people say, "No, I'm just not going to do it." Again, that's, by definition, sin. Rebellion against God's will and God's instructions by definition is sin. Again, we have the problem of sin even in this perfect environment.

Obviously, from the setting that we read in Isaiah 2, our sin problem is dramatically less than it is compared to our world today. You couldn't have, again, a world where they don't teach war anymore and have this peaceful environment if you didn't have a dramatically reduced level of sin as compared to what we do today. The binding of Satan alone will take care of a great deal of that. Again, that's the whole picture of the Azazel goat, having the sins being put on him and he goes off to an uninhabited land. That's what that pictures.

I started off this sermon with a comparison and contrast between the physical Millennium and the spiritual Kingdom of God. We need to understand this corruptible nature of the physical, of physical human beings, is the core of our problem because sin is at the heart of it. Even in this perfect utopia, we still have some sin because it's just the nature of human beings.

Turn over to Romans 7:14. What we're going to read here is the apostle Paul describing some of his personal struggle with the issue of sin. It reveals to us, again, the basic corruptible nature of the physical and of humans.

**Romans 7:14.** *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

15) *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.*

16) *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.*

17) *But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*

18) *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

19) *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.*

20) *Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. (NKJV)*

This is the apostle Paul. Think of him. He is kind of the poster child for Christianity. He wrote more of this book than anybody else. He's kind of the poster child that the book puts up as an example. Here he's saying, "As hard as I try and as dedicated as I am to this, I still just mess up because it's my inherent nature as a human being. I just can't measure up." Again, Paul's telling us the inherent corruptible nature of the physical because the only way to really solve all these problems is with the spiritual because, as long as you have the physical, you're going to have corruptible, you're going to have problems, you're going to have sin. Again, even in a perfect utopia which is beyond what most of us can even wrap our heads around in envisioning it, you still have some rebellion and sin because that's just human beings. That's why the physical is never the ultimate answer. We have to go to the spiritual.

Not only do we have the corruptible nature—because we know sin ultimately brings about death—but the physical by itself, by definition, has a beginning and an end. So, death is inherently a part of the equation when we're talking about physical. So, let's turn over to Hebrews 9:27 to notice one scripture that speaks to this concept.

***Hebrews 9:27.*** *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, (NKJV)*

Again, death is an inherent part of the physical experience. If you notice, everything in our physical world has a beginning and has an end and it's all corruptible. None of it lasts eternally. You have to be in the spiritual realm for that to take place. This is why the physical is just inherently inferior to the spiritual. Even the best physical environment you could possibly imagine is still inferior to the spiritual. It is not worthy to be compared to the spiritual because they are just not in the same ballpark with each other.

To further understand this, just turn over to Ecclesiastes 1:1. Just as an interesting side note, Rick was mentioning in his sermon on the first day that the book of Ecclesiastes was oftentimes read during the Sabbath in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles in Old Testament times. So, here we are on the Sabbath in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, I guess it's appropriate we turn to the book of Ecclesiastes.

The book of Ecclesiastes, I like to sum it up with "It's a story about learning the hard way" because this is what Solomon did. It's lessons from his life, but if you read through the story in detail, it tells you how he set out purposely saying, "I want to embrace folly and madness, but I want to guard my heart with wisdom." In other words, "I want to go play with fire, but I'll be so smart I'll outsmart the fire and I won't get burned." Well, it didn't work out that way. He got burned anyway and he's teaching us that lesson.

But in the process of this, he teaches us some valuable things about the nature of the physical and how the physical is just never completely satisfying. Again, it's always limited; it's always corruptible; it never completely fulfills everything. This is why; again, the physical is always inferior to the spiritual. Not worthy to be compared. But let's start off with Ecclesiastes chapter 1 and verse 1.

***Ecclesiastes 1:1.*** *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.*

2) *"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."*

3) *What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?*

4) *One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever.*

5) *The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it arose.*

6) *The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north; the wind whirls about continually, and comes again on its circuit.*

7) *All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again.*

8) *All things are full of labor; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. (NKJV)*

In other words, regardless of how many wonderful things we have to please our senses, it's just never enough. We're insatiable and we always want more. We're never fully satisfied. We're never complete in this physical world. Again, it takes the spiritual to make that happen.

Now, let's turn over to Ecclesiastes 2 and pick up in verse 4 for what I want you to see in this one. Solomon had great wealth to the point that he could kind of have everything that he wanted. And in some ways we get a small taste of that in how we go about keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Do we not? You have one-tenth of your income compared to what you spend for the rest of the year. So, you can afford to do things and have nice food, nice accommodations, enjoy activities and things that you wouldn't normally do the rest of the year. You can have abundance through this time. But, one of the lessons this is teaching us is regardless of what wonderful physical abundance we can have and what blessings we have, again it's never enough. It never fully satisfies because that the inherent inferior nature of the physical.

***Ecclesiastes 2:4.*** *I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards.*

5) *I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.*

6) *I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove.*

7) *I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house.*

*Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me.*

8) *I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.*

9) *So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.*

10) *Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor.*

11) *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. (NKJV)*

Because if you think about it, and, I'm using a loose analogy here, Solomon's ongoing life was somewhat like our Feast of Tabernacles all year long. What I mean by that is during the Feast of Tabernacles because you have all your second tithe you saved all year, you have abundance; you have a level of wealth that you don't have the rest of the year. That's what makes this really special. Solomon is a man who had money coming out of his ears. He could afford to do anything he wanted and he goes into great detail of "Here's all of the projects I took on and all the wonderful things I did because I just had so much money I didn't know what to do with it. So I just took on every pleasure that I wanted." That was his ongoing life.

And what did he find as a summation of it all? It's not fully satisfying. "Yes, I had all these wonderful things. The blessings were great, but when it was done I wasn't really satisfied and fulfilled" because, again, you can't do that in the physical; it takes the spiritual to make that happen. That's one of the lessons of this whole picture. We have to understand that the physical is again just inherently inferior to the spiritual.

Let's turn back over to 1 Corinthians 15. This time we're going to start in verse 42.

**1 Corinthians 15:42.** *So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.*

43) *It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*

44) *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

45) *And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

46) *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.*



*47) The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.*

*48) As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.*

*49) And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (NKJV)*

Notice here the comparison and contrast that Paul's doing here. He's comparing the physical to the spiritual and showing how the physical is inherently inferior. And what is the ultimate answer to this? Let's keep reading in verse 50.

*50) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

*51) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed —*

*52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*54) So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (NKJV)*

Notice Paul's saying, "What's the solution to all of this? It's being born into the Kingdom of God, being changed into a spirit-being because the physical is always limited. It's always corruptible. It is inferior and the solution to all of this is, again, being born into God's family? That's why, again, the big picture is what? The gospel of the Kingdom of God because that's the end destination on the roadmap. Again, if you look through the holy day plan, what do we have? We have the major steps in this plan of salvation and it's a roadmap that takes us all the way to where? the Kingdom of God. It doesn't stop at the Feast of Tabernacles with the Millennium. Again, we get the Last Great Day in its fulfillment and we get on the other side. Then we have the Kingdom of God spiritual forever. This is simply a stop on the roadmap. It is not the destination.

Let's start taking a look at the Kingdom of God and comparing this. As I mentioned, the environment we're here picturing in the Feast of Tabernacles as we're looking forward to the Millennium, we've seen it is a very fabulous, very uplifting and exciting to talk about the timeframe, but it is not the Kingdom of God because the Kingdom of God is not about the physical. It is about the spiritual.

Turn over to Romans 14. We're going to pick up in verse 15, but I'm just going to summarize the context so you understand what Paul's addressing in this particular chapters. What Paul was addressing here with the Romans was basically a dispute that was going on in the church between those in the church who were vegetarians and thought it was wrong to eat meat and those that were meat-eaters. They're arguing with each other and throwing rocks at one another. "We're more righteous than you," and

this kind of behavior is going on. Paul is trying to tell them to knock this off. “Stop this. You’re hurting each other and this is a silly argument.” But where we pick up in verse 15, Paul makes an important point for us here.

**Romans 14:15.** *Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.*

16) *Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;*

17) *for the kingdom of God is not [food] and [drink], but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)*

In other words, he’s saying that the Kingdom of God is not about physical things. It’s not about physical blessings. This is a spiritual concept and you should have your mind on that. You should be striving to be a part of this and stop disputing over physical things. Again, the whole point here is that the Kingdom of God is not a physical concept and we need to understand that.

First of all, you notice that I started off by defining what the millennial timeframe is. Again from Revelation 20, we see exactly how long it lasts. We see the events before and after it. We know exactly what we’re talking about. But notice that timeframe is limited and it is temporary. A thousand years to our physical minds sounds like forever because rarely do human beings ever make it to a hundred in this world. A lot of folks these days make it into their eighties or to ninety but rarely do you see someone hitting the one hundred mark. So you think, “A thousand! Wow, that’s harder than I can comprehend.” To God that’s a blip on the radar screen because the Kingdom of God is forever.

Turn over to 2 Peter 1:10.

**2 Peter 1:10.** *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your [calling] and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;*

11) *for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

In other words, this is the Kingdom that lasts forever. This is no mere temporary one thousand years; this is for eternity. You can’t even measure it. There’s not an ending point! You would need an ending point to have a measurement.

Turn over to Daniel 2 and we’ll see the Old Testament makes a reference to this as well. We’re going to break into the context here in verse 44, but just to summarize what’s being covered here. Nebuchadnezzar has had this dream of this image and he’s wondering what it is. Daniel is interpreting this for him and telling him that it represents the major world ruling kingdoms that will be throughout time. Then Daniel gets to the bottom of the statue and he refers to Christ coming back to overtake all of these to set up His kingdom. Notice how Daniel defines this kingdom he’s talking about.

**Daniel 2:44.** *And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (NKJV)*

Notice Daniel is not saying that Christ is going to come back, take over, set up a really wonderful and limited environment for just a thousand years. He doesn't say that. He's says, "Christ's coming back and setting up a kingdom that lasts forever." Daniel isn't referring to this millennial limited timeframe. He's talking about the Kingdom of God that lasts forever, which has no end to it because it's spiritual; it's eternal.

Not only does it not have parameters in terms of being limited. It also doesn't have the corruptibility because this ultimately solves the fundamental problem that we as human beings have, which is sin. That's always what gets us into trouble. But it's only when we get turned into god-beings and have the very mind and nature of God that this problem goes away. It's not just reduced; it goes away.

Let's turn over to James 1:13.

**James 1:13.** *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

*14) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

*15) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (NKJV)*

Notice again, we have this comparison and contrast between the physical and the spiritual, but what does it tell us? Once you turn into a god-being, even the temptation to sin goes away. That's the only way to fully solve this problem, because notice even in an environment where we took Satan and his whole influence out of the way, we still had some rebellion. We still had some sin going on. The only way to solve this problem, again, is in the spiritual because once we're turned god-beings having the mind and the very nature of God, that's when the sin environment goes away. That's when we can truly have a utopia. This is why it's the ultimate destination.

Anything in between here and there, again, may be a wonderful thing like the Millennium. It's not the destination because when we compare these two, again, one is not worthy to be compared to the other. And I'm sure you've heard me mention that phrase throughout this entire sermon and I'm sure most of you know I didn't originate that phrase. I stole it from the apostle Paul. Let's turn over to Romans 8 and verse 18.

**Romans 8:18.** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

*19) For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

*20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;*

*21) because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (NKJV)*

Now, if you understand what Paul's referring to here as "the glorious liberty of the children of God," he's talking about the Kingdom of God. That's what the ultimate solution is here. And notice he says that this physical world is not worthy to be compared to it. Now, understand in the direct context of what Paul's referring to that he's not talking about the very positive environment of the Millennium. He's specifically addressing the sufferings, the hard times, those times that we would prefer to skip that we're going through in this world. These are not worthy to be compared with the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. But I think we can also apply the concept that even in a wonderfully positive environment like the Millennium that even that is not worthy to be compared to the Kingdom of God. And let me prove that.

Turn over to Revelation 21. We're going to read here verse 1 but let me summarize here the environment of chapter 20 so we get the full context. If we were to read through chapter 20, it would give you an overview of the last three major holy days throughout God's plan. It starts off with the fulfillment of Atonement with the binding of Satan, describes the millennial environment for us, takes us through the Last Great Day picture of the White Throne Judgment period and where that wraps up. But notice now what happens when we finish the physical plan here and we jump down to chapter 21 and verse 1.

***Revelation 21:1.*** *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

There is no more sea because we're talking about a spiritual earth here. Today on our physical planet about one-half of our oxygen supply comes from plankton in the ocean. If we don't have a sea anymore, we don't need this oxygen production anymore. We're talking about a spiritual world here that doesn't have physical beings. But I want you to understand what happens here. Notice, as I mentioned when we go from the day of the Lord to our millennial environment, the earth gets an upgrade. We go from Earth 6.0 to Earth 7.0 because we get an upgrade here, but notice what happens with Earth 7.0. It finds its way to the garbage can, because what happens when we get to Revelation 21:1? That's Earth 10.0; it's a big upgrade. Since I was joking with my friends, I said, "This is the spiritual version. It's a major upgrade."

But think about that. What oftentimes happens when you get new technology? How many of you still have an 8-track player in your home? You're laughing because you threw that away a long time ago! Didn't you? A lot of us probably don't even have VCRs anymore. Think about it because when you got your DVD or your Blu-ray player you went "What do I need this for?" And you tossed it in the trash because in comparison "Why do I need this old archaic thing when I've got this new fancy version?"

That's what's happening here. Even in this perfect physical environment that was so wonderful, even when we get to the conclusion of it, what happens to it? Don't need that anymore. Throw it in the trash. We've got a spiritual world! What would we need that for? Again, notice, not worthy to be compared, because that's ultimately what happens and we have to understand, again, that's how we should look at all of this because the Millennium is not the end destination. This is a step along the way.

Now, let me mention one other thing that adds a little more light to this. Have you ever read through the Bible numerous times in your life and you read over a scripture just again and again and again but it just never dawned on you what it meant? The words were there on the page, but you just didn't get it and it never jumped out at you. In preparing this sermon, I had one of those "aha" moments. Look over at Revelation 20 verse 11.

**Revelation 20:11.** *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.... (NKJV)*

Now I would always read that part and think, "Okay, this is just an expression that refers to Christ and how powerful He is." Read the next sentence.

*11b) ... And there was found no place for them. (NKJV)*

Heaven and earth—"there was found no place for them." Obviously, He's not saying, "The universe has gotten so crowded these days we just don't have a place for them anymore. The shelf is so full I just don't have a spot to put it up there anymore." He's obviously not saying that.

But read it in context. What did we read in Revelation 21:1? The current heaven and earth, what did we do with them? We tossed them aside. So, consider the scene that's being described here. The following verses that are right after this, what picture are we getting? Everyone is standing before Christ being judged on their works.

Do you give someone a performance evaluation when they first start a job? No. You do that after they've completed a year or two and you're judging what they've already done. Correct? If you judge someone on their works, where are you? You're on the back end looking at what they've already performed and you're reviewing that performance.

If you're at the end of the process there, obviously [physical] heaven and [physical] earth have served their purpose. It's not that there isn't a spot to stick it on the shelf anymore. It doesn't have a place in the plan anymore, because once the physical gets to the end of the Last Great Day, you don't need it anymore. It's served its purpose; it's done. It's time for Earth 7.0 to go in the trash because now we're getting to Earth 10.0. That's where we are in this plan. We have to realize that these two don't compare to each other.

Now in looking at all of this, as I've mentioned, sometimes I've noticed throughout my history in the Church of God a confusion and an interchanging of these concepts. I'd like to take an honest look at our history and understand some of why we might do that. Understand when I'm looking back at this that none of this is intended to be a criticism or a condemnation of anything whatsoever. The way I'm looking at this is similar to the perspective of people who do genealogy studies.

Have you ever gone back and looked at family history? One of the things that you learn from that is your parents and their parents, what their religion was, what their customs were, what they did for a living. And when you understand those dynamics, it helps you understand what formed you for who you are today because all these things somewhat affected your perceptions, how you see your world, and how you interact with it. It's similar to what the psychology industry refers to as "your family of origin." In other words, if you understand the family you grew up in as a child—the idiosyncrasies of your parents, or their beliefs or customs and the different things they did—those form your world and your perceptions of it as you grow up. Understand that's the perspective I'm coming from in what I'm about to say.

Now most of you that are hearing this sermon probably remember the days of the Worldwide Church of God. You remember a time when the vast majority of those who had been called at this time were primarily in one large organization. And that organization had a very large media effort. We had at one time a magazine called *The Plain Truth*, which had a subscription at its zenith of about 8.5 million. We literally reached millions of people. We also had a television program and we called that program "The World Tomorrow." On that program and in promoting that program we oftentimes put across that what we were doing was proclaiming the good news of the world tomorrow. We also had a magazine by that title as well. We had a secondary magazine that was a complement to *The Plain Truth*, which was geared towards a stronger religious content or biblical content audience. The title of that magazine was *The Good News*. If you looked at the entire front page, the actual title of it was *The Good News of the World Tomorrow*.

As we all know, the term "good news" is a play on the concept of "gospel"—the gospel of the world tomorrow. How did we define this term "world tomorrow"? And what emphasis did we place in putting it? Realize this is not a criticism. I just want us to understand our perceptions. How did we define that term? We wrote a book that we published defining in great detail just exactly what we meant. It was called *The Wonderful World Tomorrow What It Will Be Like*. I still have the hardbound copy on the bookshelf in my house at home. The hardbound copy is 102 pages. Of those 102 pages, the first 100 pages are an overview of the major problems of this world and a detailed description of how wonderful the Millennium will be and how these problems will be solved there. The last two pages? The spiritual Kingdom of God.

Understand I am not attacking that. I'm not putting it down. I'm not saying anything that is inaccurate because in those last two pages the scriptures covered in there and

explained were just how I started off this sermon explained the same way. I'm not saying there is anything inaccurate about that.

But I am saying we should look at our emphasis in how we defined that, because we oftentimes put forward "What are we looking forward to?" Proclaiming the good news of the world tomorrow and what was our definition of that? One hundred pages about the Millennium, two about the Kingdom of God. We tended somewhat to merge them together.

So, when we thought of a visual image of what the gospel is all about, what is the visual image that most often comes to mind? Is it not a lion and a lamb and a little child together? Isaiah 11:6, a millennial prophecy. I'm not attacking that. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with it. It is definitely a picture of what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures. We are commanded to look forward to that. It is not the Kingdom of God. It is a picture of the Millennium.

But how often do you see these days, if you have a Facebook account when you get around to this time of year when brethren are getting excited about the Feast of Tabernacles, looking at what all this pictures, they put a picture of lion and a lamb together on their Facebook page and the caption says "Kingdom of God." How often do you see that? I see it regularly.

Because what have we done? We've merged those concepts together. But think about what that does. This focuses our minds that the gospel, the end result of the plan here, what the roadmap is leading to is a perfect physical pain free, physical world. And that is not the case. The end result of where this journey is taking us to is a spiritual world that is pain free and is a spiritual utopia. Think of it like that.

If we focus on thinking that Christ's whole purpose of coming back is to set up this perfect physical world, we read in Revelation 20:1-7 exactly the parameters. This starts with what? Satan being bound. It ends on the other side of the one thousand years with what? Satan being loosed again. Does Christ lose His mind after a thousand years and forget what the plan was? Of course not! He wrote the plan. He knows exactly what He's doing.

What He's doing is this is a roadmap leading, again, to the ultimate destination. And what is that ultimate destination? the Kingdom of God, the spiritual world that lasts forever.

In our physical world, we love stories that even very positively. When you read stories to your children, do they not oftentimes end with some version of "And they all lived happily ever after?" We get that. That is part of the story. That is part of where the ultimate destination of this roadmap is leading to—a story that ends with "And they all lived happily ever after." But it is not "They all lived happily ever after with a lion and a lamb and little child in a physical world."

If you want a visual image for what this looks like in that utopian world, it's Revelation 21:4. This is when we get to Earth 10.0 and we have replaced heaven because we now have a new heaven as well. It's now a completely spiritual world. We've gotten down to the wrap up at the end of the previous chapter.

Just as an interesting side note, if you compare the last couple of verses there at the end of Revelation 20 to Matthew 25, you'll find a strikingly similar comparison. Basically you have the Son of Man of His throne, the sheep on the right, the goats on the left; "Well done thou good and faithful servant.... I never knew you ... go into the lake of fire." You have that final judgment. Once we wrap all of that up, where do we wind up? With this spiritual world. We've done away with all sin. All that's been thrown in the lake of fire. We no longer have the physical. We have a totally spiritual world and that's when we can get truly to a utopia that lasts forever. This is where we get to truly the feel-good, happy ending, as I love to put it in Revelation 21 verse 4.

***Revelation 21:4.*** *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (NKJV)*

This is your visual image for where the roadmap leads. The way the story ends is "They all lived happily ever after in the Kingdom of God."