

How Will Christ Rule in the Kingdom?

Feast of Tabernacles

Rick Railston

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By way of introduction, I wanted to point out an article in Der Spiegel. Der Spiegel is a German weekly news magazine. It's the largest of its kind in Europe. Der Spiegel means "the mirror" in German and it was an article from June 11th of this year about the Roman Curia. The Roman Curia is the administrative apparatus and the central governing body of the Catholic Church. This was an article about how the Roman Curia actually works. Let me quote from this article, as I said, by way of introduction.

Fear is running rampant in the Curia where the mood has rarely been this miserable. It is as if someone had poked a stick into a beehive. Men wearing purple robes are rushing around, hectically monitoring correspondence. No one trusts anyone anymore and some even hesitate to communicate by telephone. A "reform" of the Curia is possibly a contradiction in terms. Its hierarchical, essentially medieval organizational model is incompatible with modern management. The Vatican is an acronymic albeit surprisingly tenacious system in which pecking orders and an absurd penchant for secrecy and intrigue prevail. 'The only important thing is proximity to the monarch,' says a member of the cardinal staff. Rome works like an absolutist court, one in which decisions are made by people whispering things into other's ears rather than by committees. 'There are many vain people here, people in sharp competition with one another,' a staff member adds. Who spoke to whom and for how long? What did they talk about? Who attends early mass with whom and who invites whom to dinner? Who is in and who is out? Who belongs and who doesn't? Who's coming into favor and who is falling out of favor? 'This mood fosters feelings of exclusion, discrimination, envy, revenge, resentment,' the monsignor says, and all things have now appeared in so-called Vatileaks documents, that we've all heard about. The Vatican is disintegrating into dozens of competing interest groups; in the past it was the Jesuits, the Benedictines, the Franciscans and other orders that competed for respect and sway within the Vatican Court. But their influence has waned and they have now been replaced primarily by the so-called New Clerical Communities that bring large cheering crowds to masses celebrated by the Pope. The neo catechumenate, [which is a new organization that I had never heard of] the Legionnaires of Christ, the Traditionalists of the Society of St. Pious the Tenth and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, not to mention the Worldwide Santa Mafia of Opus Day, [they go on to mention].

Last Paragraph:

They all have their open and clandestine agents in and around the Vatican, they all own real estate and run universities, institutes and other educational facilities in Rome. Various cardinals and bishops champion their interests at the Vatican, often without an official or recognizable mandate. At the Vatican, everyone is against everyone and everyone feels they have God on their side.

Boy, it sounds like a fun place to work, doesn't it? It kind of sounds familiar though! This used to be the manner of rule in the Church of God years ago, and I'm sad to say, it still is in all too many cases. The question is: Does Christ rule this way? Is this what Christ wants? Is that the way it's going to be in the world tomorrow, something like this?

Now we all know that the resurrected saints are to rule in the Kingdom of God. This is all by way of introduction. We haven't gotten to the point yet. Let's go to Daniel 7:27 as a reminder. We all know that the resurrected saints will rule in the Kingdom of God.

Daniel 7:27. *And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, (now think about that) whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him (referring to Jesus Christ).*

But it says the saints of the Most High will have dominion, will have the kingdom under the whole heaven. Now jump all the way to the New Testament, Revelation 5:10. This is a very familiar scripture. Talking about God's called out ones who are resurrected in His kingdom.

Revelation 5:10. *And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign (or rule) on the earth. (KJV)*

Now think about that. We won't turn there, but Greg covered it on the Sabbath, Luke 19, the parable of the pounds and what did Christ say to those who were given one pound and gained ten pounds? He said, "You've been faithful in very little," but He says, "You have authority over ten cities." The one that gained five off of the one, He says, "You're going to have authority over five cities." That's rule, that's reign. We speculate about the details of how all this is going to work, as we did in the Worldwide Church of God, but there can be no doubt whatsoever that God's saints will rule with Christ in the Kingdom of God. So that begs a very, very important question. How is Christ going to rule in the kingdom? That's the title of the sermon. How is Christ going to rule in the kingdom? We're going to talk about five areas that define Christ's rule in the kingdom.

But, as we saw with the Roman Curia, is Christ going to rule that way? Is that the way God's government is going to work in the Kingdom of God? This is important because we're going to be required to rule in the same manner that Christ rules. We're not going to rule in a different manner than Christ. We're going to have to rule in exactly the same manner as Christ rules, therefore, we had better know how Christ is going to rule in the

kingdom so we can start practicing now. If we don't understand how Christ is going to rule in the kingdom, then we're way off track. As we've seen, the Roman Curia is way off track. If we're honest with ourselves, I'm pointing to myself, I've been off track about how to rule or how to administer as an elder, and the Church also has in years past.

So we're going to cover five areas, but the first one is an area that we need to dispel very quickly.

1. Will Christ rule with a rod of iron?

This is an important question because we're going to be there under Jesus Christ. Will He rule with a rod of iron? Over the years, we've heard that in the Kingdom of God, Christ will do that. He will rule with a rod of iron. In fact, when I came into the Church in the mid '60s, I had been in the Church less than a year and the head of the ministry at the time was up on the lectern just pounding away, jaw set and talking about ruling with a rod of iron and smashing things and all of this. The strong implication was that if anybody stepped out of line, they were going to be smashed with this rod of iron. It set well with me because I had come into the church out of the military and it just fit right in and I never gave it all that much thought. Many in the Church frankly looked forward to that day, to rule with a rod of iron and all too many looked forward to exerting power and control with fear, thereby exalting the self. There's something about human nature that wants people to fear them and bow down to them and quake because that exalts the self. Is that the way Christ is going to rule?

All too often our view of God is colored by our experience with our own fathers and in some cases, as with me, experience in the military. If our father was harsh and dictatorial, we see God and Christ the same way. In the early days, many high ranking ministers came in and they viewed God and Christ as being harsh and dictatorial or their dads were harsh and dictatorial, so they tended to see Christ and God that way and tended to preach that way. Many high ranking ministers back in the '50s, '60s and '70s came into the Church out of the military so they brought that model of authority and rule into the Church of God. That harsh teaching came, in part, from a couple of verses that we want to cover right now under point number one, Christ ruling with a rod of iron. Let's go to Revelation, chapter 2 and we'll read verses 26 and 27. This was quoted quite often.

Revelation 2: 26. *And he that overcomes and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.* (referring to us)

27) *And he* (referring to Jesus Christ, and by extension, all of us) *shall rule them* (meaning the nations) *with a rod of iron;* (notice this) *as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father.* (KJV)

So it does indeed sound like we're going to be smashing people with this rod of iron. Let me quote from a couple of commentaries that shed light on this. Let's go to Adam Clarke's Commentary. He says, "He shall restrain vice by the strictest administration of justice and those who finally despise the word and rebel shall be broken and

destroyed.” Yes, those who rebel against God are going to be destroyed, very harshly. Jamieson Fausset and Brown says the following: “Rule with a rod of iron literally means, rule as a shepherd.” We’ll get to that in a little more detail later. They go on and say, “As severity here is the primary thought, rule as a shepherd seems to be used thusly, ‘He who would have shepherded them with a pastoral rod shall, because of their hardened unbelief, shepherd them with a rod of iron.’” We get the distinct impression here that rebellion against Christ is what is going to be severely dealt with, rebellion and going against God and Christ.

Okay, that’s one verse. Let’s continue on in Revelation 19 and we’ll begin in verse 11. We will read through verse 15. Again, this is another reference for ruling with a rod of iron, referring to us as saints.

Revelation 19:11. *And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he does judge and make war.*

12) *His eyes [were] as a flame of fire, and on his head [were] many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself.*

13) *And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and his name is called The Word of God. (KJV)*

There’s absolutely no doubt who that is.

14) *And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean. (KJV)*

We know from other references that this has to refer to the saints of God, coming with Jesus Christ.

15) *And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations (We’re going to get into what “smite” means); and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (KJV)*

We’re talking about severity and about fierceness and wrath. Now, let’s look at the Greek word for “smite”. It’s Strong’s 3960 if you care to look it up later. It has a very, very broad meaning. It means everything from to knock gently; that’s the first meaning and then everything in between; but from to knock gently ... to striking fatally with a weapon. It can mean either of those two, depending on the context and how it’s used. We’re going to later see what determines whether Christ knocks gently or fatally. There is something that determines that and we’re going to see that before we’re done. But understand, the context of verse 15 is Christ’s initial return, His second coming to a world that views Him as an intruder, maybe an alien invader, and who fights Him and wants to rebel against Him. That’s the context.

Remember when Korah rebelled against God, remember how many died, not only Korah and all his family, but 14,700. Christ, the God of the Old Testament dealt very harshly with those who would want to replace Him or His rule. But we have to ask the question: After that initial rebellion (we don't have time to go into that, but there will be an initial rebellion of people who don't want God to rule over them) but after that, those who survive the great tribulation, are going to be ruled by Christ and the government of God and by us as His assistants.

Let's ask the question: Will He use the same degree of fierceness and wrath and force on those people who survive and come through that? With that thought in mind, let's ask: Will Christ rule with a rod of iron against those who do not rebel? It's very important to understand. The word "rule" is Strong's 4165 and as Jamieson Fausset and Brown said, it means "as to tend as a shepherd, to feed sheep or cattle figuratively as a supervisor." The word "rule" means that. Let's see how it is used in another verse in the New Testament. Let's go to Acts 20:17 to see how this Greek word was used in Revelation 19, ruling with a rod of iron. The context is, Paul is calling a meeting of elders.

Acts 20:17. *And from Miletus he (referring to Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church.*

Okay, now jump to verse 25 of Acts, chapter 20. Now Paul is saying:

25) And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

What a shock. The elders had to be shocked and I'm sure some of them broke into tears.

*27) For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
28) Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed (that's 4165. That same word that was translated "rule" in Rev. 19) the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.*

Here it obviously means to feed the sheep as a shepherd would feed the sheep.

Now let's look at the word "rod". You can go back to Revelation 19 if you want. The word "rod" is Strong's 4464 and Zodiades says in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament, he says specifically in this verse, the rod refers to a scepter, a staff or a wand of office, meaning a symbol of office. It could be used as a shepherd's staff or a scepter or a wand. The point is, if you've done any study about shepherds and shepherds' staffs and how they herd sheep, a shepherd's rod or staff was used to protect the sheep from those who would want to do them harm. The crook was used to grab a sheep around the neck to pull it out of the bushes or move it around, but the other end of that stick was used to fight off a wolf that was trying to tear the sheep into

pieces. The staff was not used to abuse, punish or frighten the sheep. It was used to help and protect them.

Understand too that true sheep do not rebel against their master. You don't see sheep coming together and trying to rebel. Sheep are followers; they follow the master. So let's understand that Christ when He returns, yes, is going to put down all rebellion and those who fight against Him at His second coming. However, those who survive and those who live into the millennium and those into the Great White Throne judgment period, He will tend them as sheep. He will tend them as sheep that are bruised and shocked and hurt. Let's understand.

Here's a principal that if we are going to be teachers in the world tomorrow, if people obey because of threat or abuse, they obey because of fear and not because they want to. Then when you remove the threat, they go back to their old ways. Here's a point. If Christ needed beings just to swing rods and clubs at humans, He doesn't need the saints for that. There's no shortage of thugs and bullies that would be happy to do that. They would willingly do that. You don't need God's Spirit to swing a club or a rod of iron at people and beat them up. You can go out in the world and get that any time you want. You see, what Christ wants are those who have spent their entire Christian lives learning through the Holy Spirit how to have love and kindness and gentleness and mercy, the same kind that God and Christ have so that we can treat people in the world tomorrow and treat people in the Great White Throne Judgment time with those same fruits of God's Spirit that is part of their very nature; at the same time, never compromising God's law (NKJV).

So let's understand as we end this first point, the full meaning of ruling with a rod of iron. Christ does rule severely against those who would try to overthrow Him or try to rebel against Him or who hate Him. We will get into that a little later. But He also rules to feed and tend as a shepherd with a staff or a scepter of His divine office. So let's understand the full meaning of what it means to rule with a rod of iron, because I think we've all misunderstood that and have sometimes misapplied that.

That leads us to the second point about how Christ is going to rule in the kingdom:

2. Christ does not rule with abusive force.

Yes, He will rule with force, but not abusive force, not to abuse people. Let's go to Revelation 3:20, and look at the letter to Laodicea. Christ is talking to the Church at Laodicea, and guess what? We are in the Laodicean era and this is addressed to us.

***Revelation 3:20.** Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man (or woman) hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.*

So Christ is knocking at the door, and guess what? Whose responsibility is it to open the door? It's up to us, isn't it? He's asking to come in. He's asking for us to open the

door. Now notice, Christ doesn't kick the door down. He doesn't rule that way. He could; He could just come in and smash that door and get in somebody's face and start yelling and screaming and have the rod and whack on him. He could do that, but He chooses not to. He wants us to willingly open the door. He wants us to obey Him because we love Him. He wants us to be obedient because we're so thankful for what he's done for us, for this world we live in, this beautiful place we have here, this nice facility, our health, our life, our friends and family. Look at what He's done for us. He wants us to obey because of our gratitude for all of that. He does not want us to obey because we have this axe over our neck and we're just in absolute fear. That is not God's way.

Let's look at an example of how Christ will rule in the millennium, and by extension, into the Great White Throne period. Let's go to Zechariah 14. It's talking about keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. It's talking about nations that did rebel against God, fought against Christ's second coming, but now He has established His rule. Let's pick up the context here and go to verse 16.

Zechariah 14:16. *And it shall come to pass, [that] every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem ...*

They had previously come against Jerusalem. They had been subdued with that rod of iron very directly and fiercely. These are nations that previously came against Jerusalem.

16b) ... shall even go up (after that rebellion is put down) from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

What a time that is going to be. These nations that were Muslim or pagan or whatever, now are going to be reoriented and taught and led and healed. They're asked now to go up to Jerusalem. Now understand that some are more hard-headed than others. Some turn more slowly than others and there will be some that don't want to go. So, what if they refuse? Does Christ deal with them like Sodom and Gomorrah and just fry them to a crisp? Notice verse 17.

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

Now here's the point. Christ's response to those who are hesitant to go, who are afraid to go or maybe have some rebellion left in them and don't want to go, His response will be measured and merciful to allow people time to see the errors of their ways and to change.

Let's say you're a dry land farmer and counting on rain and you go for the first month and there's no rain; we didn't want to go up to Jerusalem. We didn't go up to Jerusalem and Christ said, "Okay, if you don't want to go up then there's going to be no rain."

They say, "Well, we'll see about that." So the first month goes by and there's no rain. The second month goes by and there's no rain and, you know, farmers learn to trust in God these days for their survival. Most of us are not that intimately tied into the weather, the rain and the land, but they are very intimately tied into that. So these farmers all of a sudden at the end of sixty or ninety days, there are no clouds in the sky and no rain. Guess what? Maybe, just maybe, we ought to go to Jerusalem, or maybe my knees should not be so stiff and maybe I should bend some and get down on my knees and ask God to forgive me and maybe He will open up the heavens and give us some rain. So, God, Christ in His rule, you see, measures His response to get people's attention. He has patience; He gives them time to see and then the opportunity to change.

Now does this sound like a leader who is harsh and cruel and just ready with that rod of iron to smash someone the minute they step out of line? It doesn't sound like it to me. Let's go to Matthew, chapter 11. Sometimes we forget amidst all the clamor of ruling with a rod of iron, if we've come out of that mindset, we forget these scriptures. We'll read verses 28 through 30. This could apply directly to those who survive the great tribulation and come into the millennium, those who are resurrected at the time of the White Throne Judgment who are just blitzed and don't know what's going on. Christ might well say this to those people.

Matthew 11: 28. *Come unto me, all [you] that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. (KJV)*

What a promise to people who have come through the great tribulation and seen the carnage and the desolation.

29) Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; ...

That's going to be important later. He says, "Take the time to learn from Me the way you ought to go and the way you ought to live your life.

29b) ... for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls.

Boy, are they going to need rest. Most of us here today, we'd like rest too and we will get it in due course. But in God's world, these people are going to want rest and Christ is saying, "I'll give you rest. Just take my yoke upon you and I'll give you rest."

30) For my yoke [is] easy and my burden is light.

Does that sound like somebody who is with a set jaw and a club in his hand, just ready to smash people? It doesn't sound like it to me. Does this sound like somebody who will rule abusively? It doesn't sound like it to me.

How does Christ teach us today? I look back on my life and I've seen some of my thoughts and my attitudes and my deeds and I am embarrassed and am abhorrent

about things that I have said and done, and guess what? God has ruled with patience, kindness, gentleness, and longsuffering. If He wasn't longsuffering, we wouldn't be here right now. Is that going to change in the millennium? No, it's going to be amplified in the millennium because He wants people who have the same mindset, who have the same Spirit, who have the same character to do the same to all these shell-shocked people that come into the millennium and into the Great White Throne Judgment.

So, point number two is that Christ does not rule with abusive force. Yes, He can rule with force against rebellion, but it is not abusive; it is just, and there's a difference. If we are honest with ourselves, particularly those who came into the Church in the '50s, '60s or '70s, have been on the receiving end of abusive force. We should learn a lesson from that, never to repeat it, certainly as spirit beings.

That leads us to the third area of talking about how Christ will rule in the Kingdom of God.

3. Christ rules with the very nature of His Spirit.

He wouldn't do it any other way. The very nature of His spirit, that's the way He is going to rule, and the Bible is replete with examples of the nature of God and the nature of Christ. You see, God and Christ are (what?) They are love. It's not that they *have* love, They are love. We find that twice in 1 John, chapter 4. They are love. That love is expressed through the fruits of that very spirit that is the spirit of love. The very first characteristic, as we know, is in Galatians 5. It is love; that's the very first one, and then joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control.

Let's see that in Isaiah 40:11. These scriptures are so comforting; they should be comforting to us. If we have the mindset that we're going to be strutting around with little whips in our hands and having people "hop to", we need to get that out of our minds, because that is not the way it will be. If we don't get that out of our minds, we will not be there.

Isaiah 40:11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: ...

What does a shepherd do? Does he get the rod and start beating on the backs of the sheep? No.

11b) ... he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry [them] in his bosom [and] shall gently (not abusively) lead those that are with young. (KJV)

That's how Christ will operate and that's how we must operate in the Kingdom of God and, as we're going to see, it should be how we operate right here and right now.

So, how is Christ going to do that? Unlike today, one way He is going to do it is by His personal leadership. We are going to see Him; the world is going to see him. He's going to set a personal example in the book that we have in our laps, but this is going to

be a personal example that people can see and we will see, and we will learn from that example.

Another way He will lead as a shepherd is through His law, the same law we have now. The law is not going to change. God doesn't change. They will have the same law that we have and we look in this law and it is a law of love. We can't read the Bible without seeing that everything that God does is because He loves His people. He loves every single one of them.

Proverbs 6:23. This is a very familiar scripture. God so loved us that He gives a guide book. What kind of ruler would expect certain things but never tell you what to expect? I've worked for ministers in the Church and bosses outside the Church and they never tell you what they expected, but when you didn't do what they expected, they got really upset with you. That is very frustrating.

Proverbs 6:23. *For the commandment [is] a lamp; ...*

It sheds light on where we are supposed to go, the path we are supposed to go.

23b) ... and the law [is] light; ...

Meaning when we keep the law, we are standing in the light and the light opens up and we see things we didn't see before.

23c) ... and reproofs of instruction [are] the way of life.

We learn when we violate the law, and we all have. I mentioned in a sermon right before the Feast that one of the ways we learn is by pain, and reproofs of instruction often are accompanied by pain and it will happen in the millennium and it will happen in the White Throne Judgment time. Pain will be there if people disobey. That's the only way to learn. Disobeying God causes pain in our lives. They are proofs of instruction. They're a way of life. So we're going to see the personal leadership of Christ. Hopefully, we will be there to set a personal example based on our experience as humans and then we will have God's law. Look at the fruits of that way of rule. Let's go to Ezekiel, chapter 34. Look at the fruits of this way of life; not as the Curia runs their operation, not as maybe we've run things in the past, but look at the fruits. The God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ says ...

Ezekiel 34:25. *And I will make with them a covenant of (fear? abuse? No!) peace, ...*

That is a spiritual covenant as well as a physical covenant.

25b) ... and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: ...

Physically, that refers to animals, because we know the nature of the animals will be changed, but also, evil humans. Evil humans can be beasts. We see that on the news, people who dismember and eat other people, people who rape little children and all of that. They are evil beasts. They're going to cease out of the land. Spiritually, the evil beasts are going to cease. Satan and the demons are going to be put away. Those evil beasts are not going to be around.

25c) ... and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, (no need for defense departments and armies) and sleep in the woods.

If kids and parents and families can safely sleep in the woods, that means there are no predators in the woods. Dorothy grew up at an idyllic time on the coast north of Seattle and they would go out and romp and play in the woods, never locked their doors and felt totally safe out there by the beach and in the woods. We can't do that today, but there will come a time when the people and the families will sleep in the woods and not worry, but have a peaceful sleep with their kids around them. Maybe some animals from the woods will come out and lie down with the kids and the kids can play with them. No worries at all.

28) And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, ...

Why? Because there's not going to be any heathen. They'll be changed. Their minds will be changed. Their attitudes and conduct will be changed.

28b) ... neither shall the beast of the land devour them; (because their nature is going to be changed) but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make [them] afraid.

This says, in the millennium nothing shall make them afraid including the rule of Jesus Christ, including all of us. We will not make them afraid through abusive force and through fear, to exalt the self. We need to get it through our heads. The fruits of God's way are always good for those that He serves. God and Christ never do anything for our harm. The pain, the trials, the tribulations are not to punish us, not because He gets some kind of perverse joy in seeing us suffer, but rather it is for our ultimate good and, yes, sometimes we only learn through pain. People that we are, we only learn through pain, but the end result is for our good.

So this third point is that Christ rules with the very nature of His Spirit and if we want to be there, we have to do the same.

The fourth area where Christ rules is:

4. Christ rules depending upon the heart, the mind and the motivation of His subjects.

Christ rules (the way and manner that He rules) depends upon the heart, mind and motivation of His subjects. There are several principals involved to understand here.

Only God knows the heart, we don't. I wish that we did, but we don't. Psalm 44, verses 20 and 21. It is very clear in this and other scriptures, that only God can look into the heart of an individual and read that heart. Men, ministers included, cannot read the heart of a human being. We can judge the fruits, but we can't peek into the heart.

Psalm 44:20. *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;*

The psalmist asks the question,

21) Shall not God search this out? for He knows the secrets of the heart.

He knows what's in our mind; He knows what's in our heart. It just blows my mind that people think they can live a double life, a Church life and then a reprobate life and think somehow they can get away with it because somehow God doesn't see, He doesn't know. Of course God knows. God says He knows the secrets of the heart. He will search it out. In the millennium, when we're made spirit beings, maybe we will be given some, if not all of that ability. I'm sure we'll have some of it, maybe all of it. So the first principal we need to understand about how Christ rules depending on the motivation and the mind and the heart of His subject is that only a spirit being, only God and Christ at this time, know the heart of a human.

The second principal is that humans are responsible for their conduct. They are responsible. I gave a sermon on that right before the Feast, because it's needed in the Church. All of us need to understand that we are responsible. The Church isn't responsible, the mate isn't responsible, the parents are not responsible, the children aren't responsible for everyone else. We are responsible for ourselves. Galatians 6. Let's read verses 7 and 8. Paul says here to the Church ...

Galatians 6:7. *Be not deceived; ...*

Sometimes we've been deceived. I've been deceived. Sometimes we think God winks at sin or God tolerates sin. A high ranking evangelist back in the '60s said, "God winks at my sins because of what I do for the work." I don't think so. God is no respecter of persons.

7b) ... God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

If we think otherwise, then we are deceived and we are mocking God, because what we're saying is, what you say in your word is not true. If I can get away with this sin, then what you say in your word is not true. If I'm not held accountable for this sin, what you say in your word is not true.

8) For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (KJV)

So let's understand these principals as we explore the subject of Christ ruling depending upon the motivation and the mind and the heart of His subjects. So how will Christ rule? It depends on what is in the heart and in the mind. It depends on the motivation of the human being.

For example, is the human really trying to love God with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their life? Are they really trying to do that? Are they really trying to love their neighbor as themselves? If that's in their heart, the trying and the motivation, if they're trying to do that, if people want to follow Him but don't know how, He will educate. God will start educating. Look at Psalm 119 and verse 105. It's very much like the proverbs we read earlier. You see, God will educate, take the time and the effort to educate.

Psalms 119:105. *Your word [is] a lamp unto my feet,...*

David says, I can look down and see my feet and see the path that my feet are walking on.

105b) ... and a light unto my path.

So God will take time if people's motivation and heart are correct, but they just don't know how; God will take time to educate. Look over in Proverbs 4:13. Here's an encouragement for all of us. Put it in the context in the millennium of how Christ will rule.

Proverbs 4:13. *Take fast hold of instruction (Learn from what you read in the Bible. Learn from it.) let [her] not go; keep her, for she [is] your life.*

If people's hearts are right in the sense that they want to obey, but their life has been scrambled, they're confused, they're bewildered, they don't know how, they've never been trained properly, what God and Christ are going to do and what we will do is to teach them and train them. Remember I said in Matthew 11:29, where Christ says, "Learn of me." God will give them time to learn of Him; patience and kindness, but it depends on their motivation. If they want to learn God's way, we will be there to teach. The Bible will be there for them if they want to learn God's way. Now if people want to follow God, but they stumble because of weakness or some horrible examples in their past, they stumble, God will be patient, Christ will be patient and longsuffering, as He has been with us. Let's go to Luke 11 and we'll read verses 11 through 13. Christ is answering a question with a parable and it's a very instructive parable. He's talking about a family situation and a father and his children.

Luke 11:11. *If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?*

Would you be that cruel and harsh? Would you do that?

11b) ... or if [he ask] a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Would you give him a snake that might bite him or poison him?

12) Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

I've been stung by a scorpion. That is no fun. Would you do that to your children, he is saying.

13) If you then, being evil (and we all sin), know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

If those through horrible examples in their life or trauma or whatever, beg God for His Holy Spirit, this tells us that He will willingly give it, and then it's a matter of patience, kindness and teaching, over time, to get them oriented the right way. He will give what each individual needs because He knows the heart and maybe we will too.

Look at 2 Peter 3:9. God's motivation is not there to use a whip and a chair to subject and abuse people. I'm afraid that notion got into the Church years ago and we need to rid ourselves of that notion.

2 Peter 3:9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; (what is that promise?) but is longsuffering toward us, ...*

Boy, has He been with me, and I know He has been with each one of His people.

9b) ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Look how He has treated us in these latter days. He has been patient and gentle and kind, even though we have been off track, we've sinned, we've had snotty attitudes or whatever. He has been patient and kind and gentle and just leads us down the path and it might take weeks, days, month, years even, until we get back on the path and we're heading in the right direction and we see it. His rule, you see, is kindness, gentleness and patience and longsuffering to those who want to get back on the path, even though they might not know how and even though they have had horrible examples in the past. We're going to be there to pick them up, to encourage them, to teach them, to pat them on the fanny and give them a "that-a-boy" when necessary and help them back on the path.

But, now here's the flip side of that coin, if people want their own way in direct opposition to God's way, if people want to play games with God, if people want to try to deceive Him with a wicked heart, guess what? He is going to rule with dramatic force,

as Christ will when He comes the second time and those armies stand up against Him and the blood runs up to the bellies of the horses. One thing Christ gets upset about is rebellion and He will use crushing force against rebellion, as we have already seen with Korah and we read in Revelation 2 and Revelation 19.

The reality is, you see, that there will be some who do not want to be in God's family. There will be some who want to continue in the way they have learned from Satan and they would rather commit adultery, they would rather fornicate, they would rather abuse children, they would rather commit murder than follow God. There are some people that just want to do that and they would rather die in the lake of fire than submit to God.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 6: 9 and 10. We need never to forget these verses. They talk about a red line with Iran and their nuclear program, but that is nothing compared to God's red line. There's a red line that God draws and He will not tolerate people who go beyond that, who want to do what they want to do in rebellion against Him. I'll read this out of the New King James.

1 Corinthians 6:9. *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?... (NKJV)*

You see, apparently people in Corinth when they allowed that young man to have illicit relations with his step-mother, somehow figured that you can commit unrighteous acts and be in the Kingdom of God. He says, don't you know that the unrighteous are not going to inherit the Kingdom of God?

*9b) ... Do not be deceived. (They were deceived before he wrote this letter).
Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,*

10) nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God. (NKJV)

Contrary to the world that we live in, contrary to the teachings of the "Christian" churches; this is what God says. Look at Galatians 5:21. It carries it a bit further to the Church in Galatia, repeating some of the same sins, but also adding to that.

Galatians 5:21. *Envy ...*

People who envy; people who want what other people have; people who don't like it when someone else gets something that is nice or worthwhile or is exalted in some way.

21b) ... murders, ...

Alcoholism used to be one of the biggest problems in the Church; I don't know if it still is; I hope not.

21c)... *drunkenness, revellings* (party goers, they would rather party than study God's word; they'd rather party than pray) *and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

They would rather sin than obey God. They will not be around. So when a human knowing full well the truth, their mind has been opened and knowing full well the truth, will not accept God and Christ to rule over them. There is only one result and we find that in Luke, chapter 19 and verse 27. Christ is saying that those people are His enemies.

Luke 19:27. *But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, ...*

This loving, kind, gentle rule over them; they just don't want it. They would rather rape and pillage and murder and do all the things that were just described. He said if they don't want that kind of rule, if they don't want me to reign over them, bring them here and kill them before me so I can watch, because I want to make sure they're gone forever. I want to make sure they don't pollute my kingdom. I want to make sure they don't pollute others in my kingdom either, as Satan did. He took a third of the angels away.

27b) *... bring hither and slay [them] before me.*

So that is the line. You see, how God and Christ rule depends on the attitude and the motivation and the heart and the mind of the people. Let's go to one final scripture under this fourth point. Hebrews 10:31. This is something we should always keep in mind. God's rule is not fearful in and of itself. It's a loving and kind and gentle rule, but there's a principal here in Hebrews 10:31, that if we don't want that rule, then it does become fearful.

Hebrews 10:31. *[It is] a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

We never want to go there. What we want to do is teach and train people what a loving and kind and gentle God and Jesus Christ we serve and to teach and train them so they want to be there.

That leads us to the fifth and final point.

5. Christ wants people to obey because they want to obey.

He wants them to obey and He wants us to obey because we want to. Anybody will obey by threat of torture. Anybody will obey by threat of death, but when that threat is removed, they go back to their old ways. We've seen the medieval movies about all the horrible tortures that the Catholic Church imposed upon people. You'll say anything if the pain is great enough, but that doesn't mean that your mind or heart is changed.

Once the threat is removed, they go back to their old ways. This is what God and Christ want.

Matthew 22. We've been through this before, but we can't emphasize it enough. We'll read verses 33 through 40. Christ was teaching and the people were astonished at what He taught, absolutely astonished. Their minds were blown.

Matthew 22: 33. *And when the multitude heard [this], they were astonished at his doctrine.*

34) *But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.*

35) *Then one of them, [which was] a lawyer, asked [him a question] tempting him, and saying,*

36) *Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law?*

37) *Jesus said unto him, (very simple; there is a simplicity of Christ) "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*

38) *This is the first and great commandment.*

39) *And the second [is] like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

40) *On these two commandments hang (some? part? majority? No.) all the law and the prophets. (KJV)*

It is so simple. Love God with everything you have and love your neighbor as yourself. You see, if people love God with all their hearts, then they will want to obey completely. Nobody has to have a whip and a chair after them. They will want to do it completely. They will want to pray long and hard and often because they love God with all their heart. They will want to study His word deeply and long and hard because they love Him with all their heart and they want to learn about Him. During the day, they will want to think about God and have God on their mind all the time during the day, because they want Him as their partner and they want God and Christ to be part of their lives and they want to follow the way of Jesus Christ and have the mind of Christ. Then they will want to compare their conduct with the conduct of Jesus Christ. They want to look at themselves and compare it with the image of Jesus Christ and see the difference and then make changes, because they love God with all their heart. If people love God with everything they have, they will want to please Him and be in harmony with Him, in harmony in thoughts. Every thought in our head, we should want to have that thought in harmony with God, not in opposition with God, but in harmony with God. Our words should be harmonious with God's words. There are deeds harmonious with God's deeds. As Jason was pointing out in the sermonette, the people around here in this area should see Christ living in us by our conduct, by our tone of voice, by the smile on our face, by how we handle an adversity if something doesn't go our way.

Let's go to 1 John 3:22. This is the last scripture under the fifth and final point. This is a very important principal.

1 John 3:22. *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, (and why is that?) because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

This means when we ask something and we're asking because our mind is the mind of Christ, our deeds and thoughts and motivations are in harmony with God and Christ, then God is going to answer our prayers. He might not answer them in the way that we want, but they will be answered as His will is for our good, for our benefit. If people love God with all their heart, they will put God and Jesus Christ at the center of their lives.

We have to be prepared, you see, to teach and train and guide the entire world to get to the point where they want to obey God with all their heart and they want to love their neighbor as themselves and they want to please God with every ounce of their being. We have to take a group of people that are shell shocked and shattered, coming into the millennium and teach and train them to make that transition from selfishness, Satan's world, all the horrible things they have been through in the tribulation and all of that, to where they want to obey God and please God.

So, let's understand this fifth point. Christ wants people to obey Him because they want to obey Him, not because of a rod of iron, not because of a whip and a chair, not because of a gun to their head. So we are going to be in a position of getting people to make that transition. Guess what? We've got to do it now or we won't be able to do that.

Let's conclude by seeing that much of what we have discussed is going to happen in the future, but we here (as Jason was getting across) we here have a chance to put it into practice now in our personal lives, within the Church of God. God is watching to see, are we going to rule and behave in the Church of God right here in Kellogg, Idaho or Elkhart, Indiana or wherever God's people are? Are we going to behave and have rule of order that is emblematic of the way God and Christ will rule in the millennium? We had better do that. We need to make that transition. We want to treat people the way God and Christ will in the millennium so that we can learn that now and practice that now.

In closing, let me ask an important question. How would you like to be ruled? If you were on the receiving end, how would you like to be ruled? Would you like to be ruled with a club and a whip and a gun to your head? I don't think any of us want that. Would we like to be ruled with fear and hateful threats? No. Would we want to be ruled with abuse or be on the receiving end of abusive force? If we are honest with ourselves, many of us have already received that, we've already been on the receiving end of that and God allowed it to happen. In part, I think He allowed it to happen so that we would experience it and we would say in our hearts, "We're never going to allow that to happen again." We're not going to go there; we're not going to do that. That is wrong. It is Satanic. We're not going to go there.

We're going to look into the Bible and see through our experience how God and Christ have ruled us and treated us and we're going to do the same for other people and we're going to start now. We're not going to wait until the millennium. We're going to start right now. So I ask, how do you want to be ruled? Do we want to be ruled with love and kindness and gentleness and patience? Of course, we do. If we are honest, occasionally we want to be ruled with a 2x4 between the eyes that gets our attention. Sometimes with my thick head, that's the only way I learn. West Texans are some of the most stubborn people on the face of this earth. You can be kind of subtle and kind of hinting at this or whatever, but the hammer right on the forehead gets your attention. "Okay, God! I'm awake. I understand what you want." If we are honest with ourselves, we would want that too, because we want God to get our attention.

The point I'm making is that God is watching now, us, individually to see how we will rule with the comparatively little responsibility that we have now. Remember in the parable of the pounds, Christ said, "You have gained this from the little that I've given you." Well, compared to spirit beings, we have very little right now. God is watching us to see. He gave ten servants a pound each and one of them gained ten. In Luke 19, He said, "You have been faithful in very little," and He said, "have authority over ten cities." He is watching us today to see what we do with the little we have. Are we going to do it His way? Are we going to be motivated by the love that He is and through the fruits of His Spirit? He is watching to see with what little authority we've been given, how we handle that. Do we rule by being led by the Holy Spirit?

In closing, let's remember this one principal. Romans 14:17. I've been off track in the past. I imagine many have, thinking the Kingdom of God is this or that or something else, and the Bible is very clear what the Kingdom of God is and we cannot forget that and let's put it into practice here at the Feast.

Romans 14:17. For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; ...

We're going to have a hard time keeping that in mind because it's easy to eat and drink and make that the focal point, but we are reminded that it is not meat and drink, but what is it?

17b) ... but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

What we need to do is practice that righteousness, peace and joy here at the Feast now, carry it on in our lives after the Feast and then put it into practice in the Kingdom of God. We need to make sure that this is very much in our personal lives and the life of the Church and our lives here at the Feast. So let's have a great Feast. Let's just enjoy the Feast and put into practice God's way every minute of every day for the rest of our lives.