

Three Model Nations

Feast of Tabernacles

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To begin the sermon let's turn to Acts 3:19. I will be quoting from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. The context here is that Peter is addressing the Jews after God healed the lame man. Notice what he says, because it points to this day and what this day symbolizes.

Acts 3:19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*
(KJV)

The Greek word for “refreshing” is interesting because it means *refreshing coolness after heat*. We have all experienced that feeling on a hot day when you get a cool breeze or you take a cool drink of water. It's one of the most refreshing things in the world. That's what it's referring to. A time of refreshing is coming. Continue in verses 20 and 21 from the New King James Version.

20) *and that He [God Almighty] may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,*
21) *whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*
(NKJV)

The Greek word for “restoration” means *a restitution of a thing to its former state*. That applies very much to this time that we are celebrating, because the beauty and the health of the earth is going to be restored from the damage that man has done to it over six thousand years. That's horrible enough, but more importantly the damage that will be done to the earth during the Day of the Lord; God striking the earth with trumpet plagues. In the first trumpet plague, a third of the vegetation will be wiped out. In the second, all life in the sea is going to be wiped out. In the third, a third of the water supply around the earth is going to be wiped. Then in the sixth trumpet plague, a nuclear war will occur and wipe out a third of humanity. Can you imagine the damage done to the earth with six thousand years of man's rule, Satan's rule, plus the Day of the Lord? Despite all of this destruction, we are looking forward to a time when all of that is going to be restored to its former state the way the earth was when Adam and Eve walked this earth before they made a very bad decision.

If you notice carefully in verse 21, it says “the restoration of all things,” not just the earth, the waters and the air and the soil itself, but also mankind's relationship with God will be restored at this time to what it was before Adam and Eve decided to take on the role of

deciding for themselves what was right and what was wrong. The question is: How does that get done? How is God going to restore His relationship with mankind? Is He just going to wave a magic wand and just like that everything is going to be maybe the way it should be? Suddenly all of the people that have lived through the tribulation or who will be born during the Millennium will just suddenly want to obey God all by themselves? Is that the way it's going to work? The Bible says emphatically no. That's not the way it's going to happen. Let's go to Zechariah 14:16-19 from the New King James Version. The context here is immediately after the Day of the Lord. We can get some hints of what's going to happen. Remember, in this context the people have just witnessed all of the destruction that I have just described, the penalty for not following God. Christ has returned. Satan has been bound.

Zechariah 14:16. *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations ... (NKJV)*

The Hebrew word for "all the nations" is Strong's number 1471. It's the Hebrew word "gowy," which means *a foreign nation, hence a Gentile nation*. Today in modern Hebrew the term gowy is very common, because it's used by Jews to refer to all of the rest of us who are not Jews, the gowy. Back in the '70s I traveled around for a company and did a lot of technical training and spent quite a bit of time in New York City. I was training mostly Jews and I could hear them occasionally refer to me a gowy. Yes, you are not one of them. You are a Gentile.

16b) ... which came against Jerusalem ... (NKJV)

It's speaking of human beings under the influence of the beast who attacked Jerusalem and paid the price for it.

16 continued) ... shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts ... (NKJV)

We already understand that when the Bible says Lord of Hosts, it means God Almighty.

16 continued) ... 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)

We see here there's a clear implication that despite the fact that Satan is bound and even though the survivors have seen this horrible, horrible devastation and destruction

and power on a first-hand basis, that's not enough to get everyone to obey God. You'd think it would be, but it's not. It's not going to happen that way. So, it appears that when Christ returns, God is not going to just snap His fingers and everybody's mind will change and obedience will break out around the earth. That's not the way it's going to happen. The fact is God does have a plan to bring mankind into harmony with Him. Does He reveal it in His word? Absolutely He does.

Today what we want to do is examine God's plan to bring all humanity to a knowledge of Him and then to obedience to Him. We will find that ultimately the entire world will obey, not because somebody is standing over them with a whip and a chair or a rod of iron, but they will do so because they want to, because they will choose to do so. We are going to study God's plan to bring humanity in obedience to Him. It's a plan He has used in the past and it's one He is going to use in the future, because God is consistent. We are going to see before we are done here that this plan involves each one of us. It is vitally important for each one of us to get clued into God's plan, because we are going to be part of it. The title of the sermon today is

Three Model Nations

In order to see what God will do we must begin with what He has already done. As I said, He is consistent. He doesn't change and we learn from what God has already done.

1. The first model nation is Ancient Israel.

We want to look at them in detail, see what happened, what mistakes they made and see how we can learn from them. Let's go to Ezekiel 16:4-5 from the New King James Version. Here God is speaking to Jerusalem, but also to Israel in general. Notice God's attitude and the state of Israel.

Ezekiel 16:4. *As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.*

5) No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field ... (NKJV)

Can you imagine a newborn baby just thrown out into an open field? That happens, but God is describing this and describing Ancient Israel.

5b) ... when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. (NKJV)

We know that eighty people of the family of Joseph entered Egypt. It ended up becoming a nation of millions of slaves. In verses 8-14 notice what it says.

8) *"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness." ... (NKJV)*

Remember when Ruth lay at the feet of Boaz and she said to him please take your maid servant under your wing because you are a close relative? Do you remember what Boaz did? He covered her and then he married her. We see here that God put his wing over Israel and covered her.

8b) ... *"Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God. (NKJV)*

He is referring here to the covenant at Sinai.

9) *"Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil.*

10) *I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

11) *I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck.*

12) *And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.*

13) *Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. (KNJV)*

The New International Version says *you rose to become a queen*. Notice in verse 14 after God took them out of Egypt and all of the miracles and took them on the way to the Promised Land, their fame went out through the whole Middle East.

14) *Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord God. (NKJV)*

God is saying your fame went out. You were blessed because I love you and I am showering these blessings upon you. So, God turned these millions of slaves in abject poverty into His own special people and He blessed them accordingly as we just read.

Why did He do that? Was it because Israel was something special, that they had the genes and the chromosomes and were better than anybody else? Most emphatically not. Let's go to Deuteronomy 7:6-8 from the New King James Version. Moses is talking to the people reminding them that they weren't called because they were hot stuff.

Deuteronomy 7:6. *"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. (NKJV)*

What an honor.

7) *The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;*

8) *but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob], the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (NKJV)*

We see here that God didn't love them because they were the biggest or the best or the brightest. He calls them the least of all people. The same is true for us today, because we are the weak of the world. We are the least of the people and yet God smiles upon us and has called us and as a result all of us are here this very day. Continue in verses 13-15 from the New King James Version.

13) *And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.*

14) *You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock.*

15) *And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you. (NKJV)*

You see God wanted this first model nation to have what we would call today the good life, a pleasant life, a prosperous life, a healthy life. He did so because He loved them and because of the promises that He made to Abraham. Also, there was a bigger reason than just blessing the people, because God did tell them He would give them everything. He said He would do their fighting for them. He would give them cities that they hadn't built. He would give them vineyards and fields that they did not plant, if only you will obey Me you will have all of this abundance. God did exactly as He promised. Let's go to Joshua 24:11-14. We are breaking into Joshua obviously. This is the time when Joshua's life is nearing an end. Notice what he says. He is reviewing what God has done for Israel.

Joshua 24:11. *'Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you — also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand.*

12) *I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites, but not with your sword or with your bow.'* (KJV)

You hardly had to raise a finger.

13) *'I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'* (KJV)

What a gift. They were there ready and waiting for you. Because of these blessings God is saying this is all I asked of you.

14) *"Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the Flood and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!"* (KJV)

Serve God. So, God fulfilled His promises and He gave Israel instant wealth. Why? It was because He wanted them to be a model nation for all of the Gentile nations around. He wanted them to set an example to all of the other Canaanite peoples. Let's go to Exodus 19:3-6. God here is speaking to Moses from Mount Sinai. Notice what He says about Israel. Notice what He calls them.

Exodus 19:3. *And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;*

4) *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

5) *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:*

6) *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* (KJV)

Moses did and Israel heard those words that God wants you to be a model nation to set an example for all of those around you. The only qualification was they had to obey Him. Let's go to Deuteronomy 4:5-6 from the New King James Version. Moses again is reminding Israel of their history and how they got to the east side of Jordan before they were going into the Promised Land after his death.

Deuteronomy 4:5. *"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess.*

6) *Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples ...* (NKJV)

The New International Version says *other nations*. If you obey Me they will look at you and say what a wise nation Israel is.

6b) ... who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' (NKJV)

One of the many roles of Israel is to set an example for all of the Gentile nations around them; the surrounding peoples, to show what could be done if a nation obeyed God. then the peoples around would witness the blessings that this God of Israel passed on to them.

That's exactly what happened in the beginning except something went terribly wrong. Israel forgot why they were blessed. They forgot who they were and how they were called out of a field, a baby thrown in a field ready to die. They deluded themselves into thinking that they made themselves great. They stopped giving God the credit and stopped looking to God. There's a huge lesson there; not giving God the credit and looking to the self. As a result they stopped walking in His ways. Let's go to Deuteronomy 31:16 from the New King James Version. This is shortly before the death of Moses. He is warning Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:16. *And the Lord said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers ... (NKJV)*

It's your time to die. Notice what God knew in advance at this moment in time. Israel is on the east side of Jordan. They're ready to go across. They're ready to enter the Promised Land. Moses is dead. Joshua is in charge. Look what God already knew.

16b) ... and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them." (NKJV)

God already knew that. Continue in verses 20-21 from the New King James Version

20) "When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat" ... (NKJV)

They have grown fat as a nation. It's the same with the United States, Canada today. We've had blessing on blessing and we've grown fat. We make the same mistake that we're going to read about now.

20b) ... "then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant.

21) *Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants” ... (NKJV)*

That’s an important statement that we need to remember as we go forward. The descendants of Ancient Israel will not forget this lesson.

21b) ... *“for I know the inclination of their behavior today” ... (NKJV)*

God says He knows their inclination. Sometimes we look at our kids and they’re tempted to do something. You know one is different from the other. We look at the kids and know pretty much what they’re going to do here, because we know our kids. God is saying the same thing.

21 continued) ... *“even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore to give them.” (NKJV)*

The Complete Jewish Bible says about “know their inclination” *I know how they think*. God knew how Israel thought as a nation. The Hebrew means *the motivation*. God is saying I know their inclination. I know their motivation. I know what they’re going to do. They’re going to turn from Me not long after you cross the river, Joshua. How did Israel think? Let’s go to Ezekiel 16:15 from the New King James Version and see. This is how Israel thought and this is the way the United States, Canada, the modern nations today think also. Notice what Israel did. Did they trust God?

Ezekiel 16:15. *“But you trusted in your own beauty ... (NKJV)*

Remember what Satan did in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28? He trusted in his own beauty. Israel is doing the same thing.

15b) ... *played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. (NKJV)*

Here Israel is supposed to be a model nation and look at what they’re doing. You see, instead of following God, what they did is they ran to adopt the gods of the nations that they were supposed to be a model to. God gave them all of these blessings and yet they wanted to go and worship the gods of the nations that they’re about to conquer. Which is superior - the gods of these nations or God Almighty? Yet, they ran. They didn’t walk. They didn’t shuffle. They ran to adopt the gods of the other nations, the very nations they were to be an example to. Continue in verses 30-34 out of the New International Version. What a condemnation.

30) *“How weak-willed you are, declares the Sovereign Lord, when you do all these things, acting like a brazen prostitute! ”(NIV)*

The Bible can get very blunt sometimes. God can get very blunt sometimes. It's a good thing because sometimes we need a two by four between the eyes to get our attention. This is what God is doing.

31) *"When you built your mounds at the head of every street and made your lofty shrines in every public square, you were unlike a prostitute, because you scorned payment."* (NIV)

We are going to see they were worse than a prostitute. They receive payment for services rendered. You wouldn't even get paid He said.

32) *"You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!*

33) *Every prostitute receives a fee, but you give gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favors.*

34) *So in your prostitution you are the opposite of others; no one runs after you for your favors. You are the very opposite, for you give payment and none is given to you."* (NIV)

God said this first model nation, Ancient Israel, was worse than a prostitute. They had illicit relations and Israel paid them for that. Continue in verse 59 from the New King James Version.

59) *For thus says the Lord God: "I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant."* (NKJV)

We know in approximately 720 BC, Assyria conquered the northern ten tribes. They deported them and essentially those tribes were lost to history. Then approximately a hundred and ten years later Babylon conquered Jerusalem and Judah. They burned the temple. They tore it down and they either killed the Jews or deported them back to Babylon. It's such a sad ending for what could have been such an incredible story of a people following God and the blessings that come as a result, but Israel's inclination was to compromise. They wanted to compromise more than they wanted the blessings of God. Think about that. That's what's happening today isn't it? Why this sad ending? We know the answer in Deuteronomy 5:29.

Deuteronomy 5:29. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* (KJV)

If they just had the heart and obeyed, none of this would have happened to them. As we read earlier God knew their inclination. God knew they would fail. He knew this in advance. We have to ask the question: If He knew they were going to fail why did He allow them to fail? The reason is because Israel didn't think they would fail. They

thought they were doing the right thing. So, failure had to be demonstrated to them. It had to be graphically demonstrated that if you don't follow God, if you don't put God first, if God isn't at the center of your life, you are going to fail. God had to let that happen as an example for all humans from that point down to the present. If we haven't learned this already it's going to be a painful lesson. God is showing all of us that apart from Him we will fail. If God is not at the center of our life, if God is not the focus of our life, we will fail. It's only through the exercise of God's holy spirit that any of us can succeed in this life and also be an eternal spirit being in God's kingdom. This is a lesson to a group that will appear some thirty-five hundred years after the temple was torn to pieces the first time and they will not fail. A second Israel will emerge and they will in essence get a do over. They'll be able to do it right. The first model nation failed miserably because they didn't have God's heart. That leads us to the second model nation.

2. The second model nation is Israel in the Kingdom of God.

There will be descendants of those who failed miserably in the Kingdom of God. There are numerous scriptures that show that Israel will get a second chance. They will do so in the Kingdom of God when God will bring them back from a scattered condition to the original land and then they will become a model nation. They will be allowed a do over from God. Let's go to Ezekiel 35:24-36 from the New King James Version. This is after the return of Christ. Notice what happens.

Ezekiel 36:24. *For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. (NKJV)*

We see here that the physical descendants of Israel and Judah will be returned to the physical land of Israel.

25) Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. (NKJV)

Their sins and their adulteries thousands of years ago will be forgiven during this time. It's just like baptism. When I do baptismal counseling I remind them that when they come up out of that water, they are a new person, as white as snow in God's eyes, like a clean new born lamb with no blemish when they come up out of that water. This is exactly what's going to happen to Israel, the second model nation at this time. Notice what happens. It happened to us just as we came up out of the water and had hands lain upon us.

26) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27) I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. (NKJV)

Unlike their first attempt that miserably, miserably failed they will be given a second attempt. The big difference is they will have God's holy spirit that they lacked before.

28) Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

29) I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.

30) And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. (NKJV)

Notice verse 31 referring to Israel as a nation.

31) Then you will remember your evil ways ... (NKJV)

They will look back. Maybe God can run a real time history lesson in our brains to allow us to look back and see what actually happened thousands and thousands of years ago. Who knows?

31b) ... and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. (NKJV)

This also holds true for the Great White Throne Judgment when all of those are raised up that died during these times, these invasions and captivities and all of that. They will get a chance likewise. You see God knew Ancient Israel did not have the right heart, so about thirty-five hundred years later after the destruction of the temple a new nation arises out of the destruction of the Day of the Lord and guess what? They will have the right heart. It will lead them to true repentance.

33) 'Thus says the Lord God: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.

34) The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.

35) So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'

36) Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it." (NKJV)

We count on it. Israel will once again be a model nation - this time in the Millennium, this time with the right heart. Then all of the nations, the gowry surrounding them, will see the benefits of their obedience, of following this God that they probably don't know yet. They will learn the lessons of obedience and see that. That will lead them over

time to choose to obey God, because they will know that this is the right way and they will have learned the lessons of history from the past. Let's go to Jeremiah 31:31-34 from the New King James Version. It is talking about a day yet future.

Jeremiah 31:31. *"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah —
32) not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord.
33) But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* (NKJV)

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This didn't occur before, didn't happen before.

34) *"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'" ...* (NKJV)

What a concept. The whole world knows God. It's sad to say the vast majority of this world knows nothing about God, even a nation that says "in God we trust." The vast majority knows absolutely nothing about God. At this time:

34b) ... *"for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."* (NKJV)

Two things are going on here. The physical descendants of Ancient Israel are returned to their land. They are confronted with their national sins of thirty-five hundred years ago and the light bulb goes on and they repent and God gives them His holy spirit. Then the other nations around them, the gowys, see this repentance, see this obedience, see the blessings that result and they want to follow God for the same reasons. They want to follow this God of Israel because they see the blessings that God has brought upon them. This nation doesn't turn. This nation doesn't prostitute itself. This nation follows God more and more and more over time. Let's go to Zechariah 8:20-23. Talking here is the Lord of Hosts. We know the Lord of Hosts sits between the cherubim and therefore the Lord of Hosts is God the Father talking.

Zechariah 8:20. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:
21) And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also.* (KJV)

This is a wholly different attitude.

22) *Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.*

23) *Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. (KJV)*

What a time. Look at the change from the first model nation to this second model nation. Let's go to Isaiah 2:3-4. Notice what's going to happen. What a time and we're going to be there to see it.

Isaiah 2:3. *And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: ... (KJV)*

Can you imagine that happening today; people saying let's go learn about God. Let's go find somebody who knows about God, because we want to know about God. It's just the opposite, but there is going to come a time when people are going to want to see God. They will walk. They will go. They will journey to be taught of God.

3b) *... for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

4) *And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (KJV)*

What a time unlike what we have today. We have more war, more killing, more fighting than at any other time in man's history. Yet, we are celebrating, looking forward to a time when that will cease and the second model nation will lead the way. They will succeed where the first model nation failed because God's holy spirit is in them. That is essential. Then once that happens all of the other nations of the world will want to follow that example. We've covered two model nations, both Israel. One failed. One is not going to fail. What is the third model nation? Remember Ancient Israel, the first model nation, didn't have the heart. The second model nation in the Millennium will have the heart. What about the third model nation and what does it have to do with us? What is our role in this third model nation? Let's go to 1 Peter 2:9 from the New Living Translation. Here we have the answer. Peter is talking to those who are called by God. We would say he's talking to the brethren, talking to church members.

1 Peter 2:9. *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. ... (NLT)*

This is just like the first two model nations.

9b) ... You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, his very own possession.
... (NLT)

Why is that? What is the purpose?

9 continued) ... This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. (NLT)

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3. The third model nation is God's Church.

It is all of us. I am not talking about corporations. God doesn't invent corporations. God doesn't pay attention to corporations. God looks at people and if they have God's holy spirit, they're His children. We have been called to show others the greatness of God, just like Israel will in the Millennium and just like Ancient Israel should have done all those millennia ago. We're supposed to pay attention to what the two other model nations did; one failed but the second model nation will succeed. We are commissioned, called to do the same thing.

Notice our role in the days that this Feast portrays. Let's go to Revelation 5:6-10 from the New International Version. It's clearer. This was a vision about a Lamb. I think we all know who the Lamb is.

Revelation 5:6. *Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (NIV)*

Notice what he did.

7) *He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. (NIV)*

We know God the Father sits on the throne so the Lamb comes and takes a scroll from the Father's hand.

8) *And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb [Jesus Christ]. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

9) *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

10) *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." (NIV)*

This is speaking of all of us today and everyone all around the world keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. It's talking about all of God's people. It tells us we are a holy nation of kings and priests and we have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Let's go now to Isaiah 30:18-21. God is speaking of Israel in the Millennium. Notice this. The second model nation is going to have help from the third model nation.

Isaiah 30:18. *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.*

19) For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. (KJV)

Now we're told how that answer is going to occur.

20) And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

21) And thine ears shall hear a word ... (KJV)

The New International Version says *your ears will hear a voice.*

21b) ... behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. (KJV)

Who are they going to see? Who are they going to hear? The second model nation is going to see and hear the resurrected third model nation. We see here that the third model nation, all of us, are called to be an example. Sometimes I don't think we get that. I certainly didn't. I have been in the church over fifty years and my guess is the first forty years I didn't get it; thick headed. We are called to be an example not only in the Millennium but here, right now. We are called to be an example to the people all around us; the grocery store clerk, the guy at the other end of the phone that maybe you have a beef with. Being the third model nation assumes a tremendous responsibility to set an example that Ancient Israel did not do and Israel in the Millennium will do. We're in the middle between those two events. We are called as the third model nation to set an example for all of those around us so they can look and say, "You know I'd kind of like to be like them. I should be more like them. I shouldn't be yelling and screaming and getting upset and all of this. I deserve to be yelled at and they didn't yell at me. They were very calm and very kind and very gentle, but they got the point across." We have the opportunity to set an example that Ancient Israel never did. It's sad to say I think the greater church does not get it. The greater church today has not fulfilled the role of a model nation. There is too much self-righteousness. There is too much condemning and rock throwing. Well, you don't know what we know therefore we're not going to have anything to do with you. You don't follow this or do that or whatever,

therefore we're going to keep arm's length because we're better than you are. Does that sound like a model nation?

Also, there is too much lukewarmness to be a model nation. It's kind of like Ancient Israel isn't it? It is within the church today and that's sad, because not everybody is going to be in the Kingdom of God. It is our time now. We only get one shot at this.

How can we go out and be crabby? How can we go out because we might be having a bad day, go take it out on somebody else? We had a murder in our area a couple of months ago. This man went to a pot shop and wanted to buy pot. They wouldn't sell it to him because he didn't have a proper I.D. The guy behind the counter decided to take his lunch. He went out in his car behind the shop and was eating his lunch. The guy that got refused service went back to his car, got a pistol, went up and shot the guy twice through the window and killed him. He later was apprehended and he confessed – I was having a bad day. So, a bad day justifies killing somebody. That's the world we live in.

The point is between lukewarmness and self-righteousness and narcissism and thinking only about the self, we as the greater Church of God have not so far done a very good job. I am speaking to myself. I'm admitting I haven't. Finally the light bulb went on a few years ago. The fact is we're not doing a very good job of being a model nation. Sadly, we look a lot like Ancient Israel right now.

The good news is we have an opportunity to change that starting today. We can change that not because we're great, but because we have access to God's holy spirit and if we exercise it, we can be that model nation. Our responsibility here at the Feast and after the Feast and for the rest of our days is to behave like a model nation of God, to behave how God would want us to behave, to behave as God has called us to be practicing the two great commandments. It is so simple. It is not complicated. There is a simplicity in Jesus Christ. The two great commandments are you love God with all your being, love Him with everything you have, put Him at the center of your life and the second one is you love your neighbor just as much as you love yourself. So, that means we treat neighbors the way we want to be treated. If I love myself then I had better love the guy next door to me or the guy sitting next to me in traffic. Are we doing that? You see, it is our responsibility to be this third model nation that we discover in the Bible practicing these two great commandments.

As we go through the Feast, let's dedicate ourselves for the rest of the Feast; put it in practice because we're here with people we don't know out in Rapid City. We have brethren sitting here that maybe don't know each other all that well yet. Let's dedicate ourselves to being the model nation starting today here at the Feast.

That concluded the three model nations. Today pictures the restoration of all things when the earth will be restored to its former beauty and what an earth that will be. More

importantly God's relationship to mankind will be restored. We've seen that Ancient Israel was called to be a model nation, but they miserably, miserably failed because they did not have the heart. Then thirty-five hundred years later a new model nation will arise after the return of Jesus Christ. God will lead them to rend their hearts in repentance, learn the lessons from their ancestors of the past. They will truly repent on a national level. They will be given God's holy spirit and then they will be an example to all the nations around them that live through the tribulation. They will lead them to repentance and them to God. Then most importantly for us today we've seen that the church, those of us sitting here in this room are the third model nation. We know we can have great joy in keeping the Feast. We are brothers and sisters. We love each other. Even though we may not have met somebody in this room we still love each other because we are the children of God and we have the common bond of God's holy spirit. We can have great joy in keeping the Feast, but we also have the responsibility of being examples to each other and to all of the people around us.

This plan that we've just been talking about today is a fantastic story. What a fantastic plan. When you think about it, only the mind of God could come up with this. No human could dream this up. Only the mind of God could come up with this plan of salvation involving three model nations. What we look forward to in the Millennium is that all people all over the earth no matter the color of their skin or their background or where they came from will have a choice and they will choose to follow God of their own free will. They will do it because they want to, not because somebody's ruling them with a rod of iron and has a gun to their head. Let's close with one final scripture in Isaiah 11:9, because it's going to be fulfilled during this time. This is something I think in the past maybe we haven't appreciated as much as we should have. We understand the first part of this verse.

Isaiah 11:9. *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: ... (KJV)*

There will come a time when there will be no more war, no more destruction, no more fighting, no more making weapons of war.

9b) *... for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (KJV)*

This is a key for the church today. Are we seeking the knowledge of the Lord? Are we seeking to know more about who God is? How can we be like God if we don't know who He is? How can we be like Christ if we don't know who Christ is? How can we have the mind of Christ, as Paul tells the Philippians, if we don't know who Christ is? So, we see here a key in the Millennium is that the earth shall be full of that knowledge. That's what we should seek now, to know God better by study and by prayer; to know Christ better by study and by prayer. Some day that knowledge will be as deep as the waters in the sea.

The true knowledge of God and Christ is going to cover the entire earth on this day at this time. Israel will be God's model nation. We are going to be teachers of that model nation as the third model nation, but we will be a spiritual model nation. This is the greatest plan in the history of the universe and we are so privileged to be part of it. Let's just pray that that day comes quickly, but let's fulfill here at the Feast our responsibility as the third model nation.