

Happy Endings

Last Great Day

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At the end of a long day, Dorothy and I sometimes try to vegetate a little bit and watch an hour of a TV program before she heads for bed. One of our favorite programs is on PBS and it's titled "Call the Midwife." I don't know if any of you are familiar with that but it's about a group of women who lived in England in the 1950s and they served as midwives to the poor in the east end of London. And it documents their service as midwives to people that are very much in need and were very much poverty stricken. It shows how they cared for pregnant mothers and new babies, but the thing that is so joyful about this program is it always has a happy ending. So many things, movies, books, whatever, have tragic or horrible endings but this particular TV program, "Call the Midwife," it's a seasonal thing. It goes on for a few weeks, goes off for a year, and then comes on for a few weeks like a lot of shows do—it always has this happy ending.

Now, with that in mind, in contrast to that, world history records that most human beings that have ever lived on the face of this earth have had unhappy endings, horrible endings. The Bible has a few. Remember King Saul? It was approximately 928 BC and he went to battle with the Philistines. All his sons were killed. And after he was wounded he fell on his own sword and died by himself with his servant there. You find that in 1 Samuel 31. He did not have a happy ending to his life. Then King Zedekiah of Judah—the time frame was about 585 BC—he was appointed as king by King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon. Then he rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem, captured the city, captured Zedekiah. And if you remember, Nebuchadnezzar took Zedekiah's sons right in front of him and killed all of Zedekiah's sons right in front of his eyes, right in front of him and then had his eyes put out; then went to Babylon and died in captivity in Babylon. You find that in 2 Kings 25. And King Zedekiah's life did not end happily.

In 1570, the Ottoman Turks attacked the Island of Cyprus. Now Cyprus is an island in the east end of the Mediterranean just below Turkey, out in the middle of the Mediterranean. Historically, Cyprus was controlled by the Phoenicians in what is now Italy. And the Muslim Turks attacked Cyprus and they quickly captured Nicosia, which is the largest city and the capitol, and they slaughtered 20,000 people in capturing that city.

Then they moved eastward and conquered the rest of the island very quickly until they came to the Fort of Famagusta. That was a state of the art fort in those days. In fact, the walls were designed by Leonardo da Vinci. The Catholic commander of that fort was a Venetian and there were Venetian forces in the fort. His name was Mark Antonos Bragadino.

The Muslims arrived and surrounded that fort on the east end of island and the Muslim commander sent a message to Bragadino. They allowed the messenger to come in. He had a basket. He opened the basket and it was the head of the military commander in Nicosia. The Muslim commander said, "This is what's going to happen to you if you don't surrender." They didn't surrender and after a year long siege, Famagusta was finally taken in the spring of 1571.

Then the Ottoman commander told Bragadino, the general there that he could have safe passage to go back to his homeland, but he said also that there were fifty Muslim pilgrims that were in the fort at the time and he said, "I want them released." Then everything changed when the Muslim commander found out that all fifty of those pilgrims had been killed. They had been slaughtered by those in the fort. So what he did is he cut off Bragadino's nose and ears, then strapped him down and slowly started skinning him alive. Periodically he would dip him in salt water to increase the pain. Over—It's not recorded how long this lasted. It was several days—he completely skinned this man, took the skin, stuffed it like you would a stuffed animal and traipsed it to the city to show people what would happen if they revolted. Well, Bragadino, his life did not have a happy ending if you can imagine the agony and the pain he went through.

Then Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, he ruled in the late 1600s, early 1700s. In 1698 he suppressed an alleged revolt. It really wasn't. These people were for him but because of politics, those near to Peter the Great convinced him that they were leading a revolt. And He captured all 1700 revolutionaries and he imprisoned them in various monasteries in western Russia. Then he had them all taken as prisoners to what is now Moscow. After he built fourteen torture chambers and thirty furnaces, each day he would take a group of these 1700 and he would slowly roast them alive. He watched the entire process. He ordered his doctors to keep them alive as long as possible and shortly before their death, he would behead them and then put their bodies on spikes around the city as a reminder of what would happen. He did not allow those bodies to be buried for six months. So, you know what would happen to those bodies with the birds and the carrion and all of that. This roasting of the 1700 went on for six months. You can imagine if you were waiting in line to get roasted what your life would be like and then to have that happen. So these 1700 people did not have a happy ending.

In more modern times in Nanking, China right before the start of our involvement, the western world's involvement in World War II, the Japanese army entered Nanking on December 13, 1937 to begin a six-week campaign that is called in history "The Rape of Nanking." In those six weeks—nobody knows how many—somewhere between 200,000 and 300,000 Chinese were brutally tortured and killed. It was common when a Japanese soldier found a mother with an infant, he would rip the mother from her, throw the infant up in the air and catch the infant on his bayonet and then watch the infant struggle and squirm while the mother sat in tears until the baby died. Then that mother would be raped and brutalized until she was killed. It's just amazing what humans can do to other humans. And those 200,000 to 300,000 residents of Nanking did not have a happy ending of their physical life.

In World War II, the worst naval disaster in the history of the U.S. Navy occurred toward the end of that war. It was the *U.S.S. Indianapolis*. It was a Portland heavy class cruiser and it was on a top secret mission. From the San Francisco area it delivered the world's first operational atomic bomb to the island of Tinian on July 26, 1945. It was the first bomb to be dropped on Japan, but it was a highly secret mission, no communication, radio silence as they sailed to Tinian.

And then four days later on the way home at fourteen minutes past midnight that ship was midway between Guam and Leyte Gulf, it was hit by two torpedoes out of six that were fired by a Japanese submarine. The first torpedo blew the bow off. The second torpedo hit mid-ship on the starboard side near a fuel tank and near a gun powder magazine. The resulting explosion split the ship in two. It knocked out all electrical power. So, there was no ability to radio for help. She went down in twelve minutes. Since it was a top secret mission, nobody in the Navy knew where that ship was or knew that it was even in distress. Of the 1196 people on board, approximately 300 went down with the ship, burned to death, torn apart in the explosions. About 900 sailors made it into the water. There were very few life rafts in the water because of the swiftness of the sinking and the explosions. So, most survivors of those 900 wore a standard Navy kapok life vest.

The next morning, the shark attacks began at sunrise. They continued for five days. The men were scattered throughout that area. Some held onto each other. Very few were in life rafts. Most were by themselves in a life vest. And one by one, the sharks got them. When the blood was in the water, it started a feeding frenzy on the other sharks. Some of the men lost their minds while waiting to be eaten alive. Five hundred seventy-nine of those men died alone in the water by themselves afraid and scared to death. Of the 1196 on board, only 317 survived. Five days later the Navy had sent out patrol planes, finally realizing the ship didn't arrive in its port, and started a massive search. Only 317 survived. Those men did not have a happy ending to their life.

Unless we think that all in the "barbaric" past, look in the Middle East today. Look at ISIS—beheadings, crucifixions, mass killings. Not to mention what Hitler did to the Jews in World War II and the concentration camps, the mass killings there, the gas chambers and all of that. All of these lives, they didn't have happy endings.

In fact, if you look at world history, most human beings over the millennia have not had a happy ending when their life was terminated. As we discussed last year—we won't go into it but we did the math last year—it appears that well over a hundred billion humans have lived since the world began. That does not count abortions. You can add many more, maybe a billion or two, due to abortions. But of the one hundred billion plus that have lived since the world began, most, frankly, had a miserable life. Most died either as infants or died before the age of 30 because of the sanitation and the health conditions and lack of penicillin and things like that. Most died from disease, starvation, war and persecution or they were worked to death as slaves. Very few of that one hundred billion plus lived like we do today in a relatively developed country and a

relatively stable society, very few of that hundred billion. Most of them lived their lives with no real future. No hope for enough food, always scrambling for enough food. No hope for clean drinking water. No hope for freedom from disease and the plagues that ravaged humankind hundreds and thousands of years ago and are threatening to do so today. No hope for decent living conditions that we take for granted. We live like kings, better than kings that lived in these drafty cold, stinking castles in the Middle Ages.

No hope for an education. Most had no hope for a decent job or for any kind of safety and security. Their lives were in danger every day. Today it would be like someone growing up in the nation of Somalia—just awful conditions. No hope. No expectations, just struggling from day to day. In short, most of the one hundred billion people that lived on this earth had no hope for a better life. They just endured their lives and then they died. They lived a life of suffering and then they died. As the man said, “Life is hard. Then you die.” For most of the one hundred billion, that was their life.

Most of them also believed a lie. They either didn’t worship anything or some worshipped creation, as we know. Some worshipped multiple imaginary gods as the Greeks and the Romans and the Babylonians and the Egyptians did. Many worshipped idols of wood and stone. Some worshipped money and power. The vast majority worshipped Satan and they didn’t know it—just didn’t know it.

I did the math, 99.99 percent of the one hundred billion that have ever lived have never understood the purpose of life. Most of them have never heard of the true God. They’ve never heard of God’s plan of salvation. They’ve never heard the truth about Jesus Christ who died for all mankind. They’ve never experienced any long-lasting peace and happiness. Their life was a life of misery. Most of the one hundred billion never had any solid believable hope in a future after death—nothing that they could count on. Most died doubting, troubled, afraid. And, frankly, many died gladly because their life was so miserable and death just put an end to all the suffering. The vast majority, as we said, died believing a lie—some kind of lie. We know who the author of that is—the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). And he is the one that’s been behind the horror that these one hundred plus billion have experienced over the millennia.

So, after six thousand years of unhappy endings, God is going to soon step in and say, “Enough is enough.” The trumpet will be blown, which we celebrated on that feast day. Satan will be put away which we celebrated on the Day of Atonement. The one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ will be ushered in and things will begin to change. Then we come to this day at the end of a thousand years, this day which rectifies the unhappy endings of billions. This is my favorite holy day because it gives over a hundred billion people opportunities, hope, a life that they could never dream of in the misery that most of them led in this life.

Let’s go to Isaiah chapter 26 and we’ll read verses 17 through 19. This is the way the people of the world and certainly the Church of God today feel even though many do not acknowledge it. Maybe they know it subconsciously.

Isaiah 26:17. *Like as a woman with child, that [draws] near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and [cries] out in her pangs; [just like that he says,] so have we been in [Your] sight, O Lord. (KJV)*

And the church is kind of that way now. We're in agony. We're in pain. We're crying out because there's a lot of suffering in the world. There is turmoil in the church and the end is near. Verse 18, I'll read out of the Tanakh.

18) We were with child, we writhed—it is as though we had given birth to the wind; ... (TAN)

Nothing was there!

18b) ... we have won no victory on earth; the inhabitants of the world have not come to life. (TAN)

There hasn't been any resurrection yet. It hasn't occurred. Christ hasn't come yet. That's the attitude. Verse 19, back to the King James. Notice what Isaiah says. This is a promise.

19) [Your] dead men shall live, together with my dead body [Isaiah's dead body] shall they arise. Awake and sing, [you] that dwell in dust: for [your] dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (KJV)

That's what this day is all about—the earth just throwing up the bones of the dead. And this begins one of the biggest events in the physical universe. I believe bigger than creation itself. Why? Because God is bringing dead people back to life. Now you think of the miracle that is compared to creating a planet or a sun or something like that. Take somebody who died five thousand years ago and is dust and their bones are not even there or recognizable and yet, God in His power and wisdom is going to resurrect people with the same body, the same DNA, the same person from dust. That's a greater miracle than creation itself I believe.

So, the subject today, the topic, the title today—as I said this is my favorite holy day—the title is a simple one.

Happy Endings

And we're going to talk about this day in relation to the thought of “Happy Endings.” And that's why this day is so joyous and so fulfilling. We don't, I think, even have a clue. We talk about it. We think about it, but when it happens, we'll look back and say, “We didn't even know the half of it!”

- 1. The first point I'd like to make is this day represents the beginning of happy endings, just the beginning.**

Let's see what occurs this day. Let's go to the familiar scripture in Ezekiel chapter 37. We'll read the first fourteen verses.

Now when we read these verses, put yourself in the mindset of a spirit being standing on a hill overlooking a valley. You're a new spirit being. You're kind of excited about yourself, new body, all of that, but you're anticipating an event and you're standing up on a hill looking down on a valley and you don't know quite what to expect but you know something big is going to happen.

Ezekiel 37:1. *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the [middle] of [a] valley which was full of bones, (KJV)*

We don't know if they're waist high, knee high. Who knows?

2) And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. (KJV)

Meaning, they had been dead a long time, had been there a long time.

3) And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? ... (KJV)

And, of course, Ezekiel gives a very wise answer.

3b) ... And I answered, O Lord God, [only You know].

4) Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O [you] dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

5) Thus [says] the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and [you] shall live: (KJV)

And this is how it happens. The bones come up because we just read that the earth cast out the dead, the bones.

6) And I will lay sinews ... (KJV)

Ligaments, tendons begin to form on the bones.

6) And I will lay sinews upon you, ... (KJV)

And then muscles begin to form linked by the tendons. Bones begin to be linked together by the ligaments.

6b) ... and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, ... (KJV)

And then the skin forms on these bodies.

6 continued) ... and [I will] put breath in you, and [you] shall live; ... (KJV)

And here it tells us the purpose.

6 continued) ... and [you] shall know that I am the [Eternal]. (KJV)

These one hundred billion plus have never known God and the purpose of resurrecting them is so they will know.

7) So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, ... (KJV)

And we're on the hill and there's a noise and the ground's shaking. Then the bones start coming together, bone to bone, and then the sinews and the ligaments and the tendons come together, and the flesh comes on, and then the skin covered them "above" the King James says. The New King James says "covered over them."

8b) ... but there was no breath in them. (KJV)

They were just whole corpses but no breath.

9) Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus [says] the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

10) So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, [they] stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

11) Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: ... (KJV)

And we know that over time the whole world is going to be grafted into Israel. And this refers to the entire world. "Behold, they say." I'll read now out of the New King James.

11b) ...'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' (NKJV)

Verse 12, back to the King James.

12) Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus [says] the Lord God; Behold, O my people, ... (KJV)

And we know Christ died for all mankind.

12b) ... I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

13) And [you] shall know that I am the [Eternal], when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, (KJV)

Now notice verse 14 because we're going to come back to this.

14) And shall put my spirit in you, and [you] shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall [you] know [only then shall you know] that the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, ... (KJV)

So we see here that God is not going to just bring them back to life, but ultimately he will put His spirit in each and every one of them assuming they want that to happen.

Now let's go to the other scripture, Isaiah 65. We attribute this; we believe very strongly that this applies to this time. As we go through it though, keep in mind that this could be dual and it could apply to the Millennium also. We just don't know, but we feel very strongly that it applies to this one hundred year period because of what we're going to read. Isaiah 65:20.

Isaiah 65:20. *There shall be no more [there] an infant of days, ... (KJV)*

So that means during this time birth will stop. Human physical birth will stop from that point on.

Isaiah 65:20. *There shall be no more [there] an infant of days, nor an old man that [has] not filled his days: ... (KJV)*

So this tells us clearly that the infants will grow up to be 100 years old and the old men will live to be 100 years old.

20b) ... but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. (KJV)

And, as I said, that could also apply to the Millennium. We just don't know.

Isaiah 65:21. *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit [thereof]. (KJV)*

Indicating that nobody's going to bother them. There are no hordes coming down like what we read in Cyprus, people invading the land. There won't be any of that. They'll be able to plant and enjoy the fruit of the land.

22) They shall not build, and [have] another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree ... (KJV)

Trees live a long, long time.

22b) ... are the days of my people, and [My] elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23) They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the [Eternal], and their offspring with them.

24) And it shall come to pass, that before they call, ... (KJV)

Now notice the personal relationship during this one hundred year period. He says:

24) ... before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, ... (KJV)

Meaning, during this time, the nature of the animals, the aggressive nature of the animal kingdom will be changed because Satan is put away. That influence is no longer there.

25b) ... and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's [food]. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, [says] the [Eternal]. (KJV)

Now what a time because the people that are resurrected have had nothing but hurt and destruction, have seen it most all their lives! What a happy ending to man's 6,000 years of absolute misery. So, we've just taken a very brief look at this first point of what's going to happen on this day. It's the beginning of happy endings.

2. Now the second point we want to make is let's look at these resurrected people and let's see what their mind is going to be like, their state of mind is and how God's going to deal with them because we're going to be helpers, but we're going to follow God and Jesus Christ and how they want it done.

This is just my speculation. I think it's logical, but it's my speculation. When they are resurrected this day, most likely they will come alive with the last thoughts they had when they died. If somebody died from some wasting disease, they will just remember being weak and hardly able to function and then they just went to sleep. If somebody was killed in battle, the last thing they remember is the sword coming down on their neck. They will remember, I believe, the last thoughts they had prior to their death.

And they will, undoubtedly, be in a state of shock because guess what? There is a huge contrast. Put your mindset in somebody who died violently. It could have been a car wreck, a plane spiraling out of control or something like that and that's the last thing on their mind. Now they wake up and they look around and they see hundreds of thousands, millions of naked people standing there. What a contrast!

And you can think, "What's going on here?" They're shaking and they're afraid. Then all of a sudden whoever was attacking them isn't there. There's just a bunch of other people. They're looking around too, wondering what on earth is going on here. So they have a huge contrast between the last thing they remembered and the present of them standing there. Obviously, it doesn't say but I believe God is going to talk to them. Christ is going to talk to them. That contrast is going to get their attention very quickly and they're going to start thinking "What has happened? The sword was coming down toward my chest and now I'm standing here. What on earth is going on?" So questions come to their mind and I'm sure God will be there to introduce them to a new world.

Understand too, there's the infrastructure that was left at the end of the Millennium because there are no wars; there is no disease. We have a rapid population explosion. So at the end of the Millennium there are homes. There are gardens. There are farms. There are buildings. So the infrastructure is tailor-made for these people. They can move right in because those in the Millennium are either in the grave or they're spirit beings by that time. So food, clothing, and shelter will already be in place for them.

Many will need to be healed when they're resurrected—immediately healed. Otherwise they couldn't survive. Let's say somebody died of cancer and they're resurrected. If they were resurrected with their cancer, they would turn around and die again. So God is going to have to perform many miracles to keep these people alive who died of cancer, back in the Middle Ages the bubonic plague, black lung disease, AIDS, whatever it might be. They will rise up healed of those diseases. It's logical because they wouldn't live otherwise.

In addition to that, many will need a degree of healing before they can go forward—mental healing, emotional healing before they can go forward. Think about this. What if somebody died and they were just berserk mentally ill? They went crazy, ran across the street, got run over by a car, but were just out of it. It might have been a schizophrenic. It might have been somebody with PTSD—all manner of psychological disorders. Psychological disorders aren't exclusive to the twenty-first and twentieth century. They've been going on since day one. So God would have to heal them of these psychological disorders.

What about those with totally perverted minds—pedophiles, sex addicts, child molesters and so on? They're going to have to have God intervene and heal their minds. How about those with drugs—meth, heroine, alcohol—sex? Those with just consuming additions, they will have to be healed.

Now why do I say this? Why would an initial degree of healing be necessary? To be baptized and to receive the holy spirit, we have to see ourselves. We have to see our sins. And if you're a blathering alcoholic, you can't do that. If you're a perverted sex fanatic, that's all that's on your mind. Nothing else matters. And so, God is going to have to intervene and heal people to the degree that they can begin to see themselves so that they can repent. Acts 2:38 tells us that. And some of these people are so perverted it's going to take some healing by God, supernatural healing to undo the damage to the point... God's not going to wave a magic wand and make it all go away, but he's going to heal them to the point where they can begin to see themselves and they can begin to battle the problems that they have had in their former physical lives. They have to have a healed mind in order to see and in order to repent.

The prophet Ezekiel gives us a hint about this. Let's go to Ezekiel chapter 36 and we'll start in verse 26. Two things happen here in this verse. Notice what he says.

Ezekiel 36:26. *A new heart also will I give you, ... (KJV)*

Now we know that Ancient Israel, God said in Deuteronomy 5:29, “Oh if they had a heart....” But they didn’t. So this changes that. And God says. “A new heart will I give you.”

The Hebrew word for “heart” is Strong’s #3828, if you want to look it up, and it means *the mind or the will or the intellect*; likewise it means *the center of anything, the core*. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament says, “It usually refers to the seat of one’s inner nature.”

And God says, “I’m going to give you a new inner nature. I’m going to give you a new mind. I’m going to give you a new will.” Then in the latter part of verse 26, He tells us how.

26b) and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, ... (KJV)

This uncaring, unfeeling, selfish narcissistic heart that is prevalent in the world and has been prevalent since Adam and Eve walked the earth. He says, ‘I’m going to take that way,’

26 continued) ... and I will give you a heart of flesh. (KJV)

And He’s going to give us a new spirit. We read that in Ezekiel 37:14 I mentioned earlier. Just take note of that. So for these people with perverted minds, sick minds, God will heal their minds in order to make it possible for them to ultimately receive the holy spirit if they are willing, if they see and if they repent.

Additionally, after this shock wears off and things calm down and maybe people get into homes and begin to clothe themselves and begin to provide for themselves, there are going to be some people who just flat out don’t want to obey. Human nature is human nature. They just flat out won’t want to obey. Some would rather continue in their life of sin than follow this new way that God is teaching them—serial killers; child molesters; those who lust for power and control and have to be at the top of the heap; those who lust for the praise of men and want to be worshipped and magnified and they can’t overcome that. They’ve got it so indwelling in their system that they’re just not going to want to obey. It’s going to be a fight—a fight for us and a fight for them. We’re going to come into conflict.

Others have to deal with lifelong patterns of behavior. Think about this. There are certain clans—Ireland, Scotland come to mind—certain tribes of American Indians and African tribes that are warriors. They live to fight. That is their whole purpose and meaning in life. The ancient Samurai, they train, they think, they equip for nothing but fighting. All of that is going to have to be overcome. And it’s not going to be overcome right away.

Still others simply don't want anybody to tell them what to do. There are many even in the church. I've seen back in the old days when they had the big coliseums we used to meet in, the big buildings. I was in parking for a few years. You would rope off a place where nobody was supposed to park and invariably somebody would park right in the middle of it because nobody was going to tell that guy what to do. And some of those people are going to butt heads.

All of these will have to be dealt with. They need to be taught. They need to be trained. They need to be encouraged to overcome their past. And we know Christ is patient and kind and it's going to take time. God will have unique ways to demonstrate His power and to get their attention. God will demonstrate His power to nations. That's already been covered a couple of times in Zechariah 14. It applies, yes, to the Millennium, but it applies even more to the Last Great Day. Those who refuse to come up to Jerusalem on the Feast of Tabernacles to worship, there won't be any rain. And after that if they still stubbornly refused, there will be a plague.

So you see during this time God will introduce the concept, the principle of blessings and cursings. The world doesn't understand that now, but they will then. "You obey Me, you will be blessed. You butt heads with Me, and things aren't going to go very well and you will suffer." Most people will get the message. Some, a little more stubborn than others, may take a little longer but it will happen. God is, in addition to demonstrating his power to nations, He will demonstrate His power to individuals. Let's go to Isaiah 30 and look at verse 20. God brings it down to an individual level because He cares for and loves each one of us. As we think about this, now we're part of this. We're soldiers; we're helpers; we're teachers and God says do something and we're going to go do it. Notice what it says.

Isaiah 30:20. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, ... (KJV)

What this tells me is God is going to show them the principle that you reap what you sow. If you have "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction," it means you haven't been doing very well. "You haven't been obeying Me very well." So, they're going to have that, some trials and troubles.

20b) ... yet shall not [your] teachers be removed into a corner any more, but [your] eyes shall see [your] teachers: (KJV)

We will be spirit beings and there will be times when we can manifest ourselves and start teaching one on one.

21) And [your] ears shall hear a word behind [you], saying, This is the way, walk [you] in it, when [you] turn to the right hand [meaning going off the path to the right], and when [you] turn to the left [going off the path to the left side]. (KJV)

So, this might indicate that there will be times when we will be invisible but they will hear a word. “Now, think about what you’re doing. You’re heading in a wrong direction here. Let’s just think about this.” They hear a word or a thought in their head. There will be times that we, along with the angels, will be there together sometimes visible, sometimes invisible depending on circumstances.

Last year we talked, speculated, and maybe joked a little bit about a “spiritual straight jacket.” For those of you that were here, I mentioned the fact that sometimes to get somebody’s attention, we might have the power over somebody who is rebellious or blowing their mouth off or something just to put them in a spiritual straightjacket. In other words, it would be the equivalent of encasing them in granite and they can’t move. They can breathe and move their eyes but that’s all. So that way you can just sit them down and have a talk with them.

Let’s just say for example somebody gets angry, doubles up their fist, and they’re mad at their neighbor or son against father and they just start swinging. All of a sudden, far before the fist hits the jawbone, they’re frozen and they’re just there—frozen. All of a sudden a being appears before them and says, “What are you trying to do here?” You’re going to inflict pain on another brother. That’s not God’s way. God’s way is love and kindness and serving and yet, you’re trying to hurt somebody. Now let me give you a taste, just a little taste of what you are going to inflict upon this person.” So without hitting anybody or anything—this guy is still frozen here. His eyeballs are looking around. This guy all of a sudden starts feeling the pain that he would have experienced if he had been hit. He feels the bones crush in his cheek. He feels his jaw broken. He feels some teeth getting loose. He feels blood flowing into his mouth. He feels the throbbing and the aching and he’s sitting there frozen. All of a sudden his eyes are getting big and he’s feeling some pain. I’m speculating obviously, but God has ways of teaching people and pain is a very good teacher. We all know that. So after a minute or two of this intense pain, you just ease it off. Back it off. This guy is still frozen there.

“Do you like that? Do you like the way that felt. Do you want to do that again? Do you want to hit your brother again?” Uhn-um. It’s not going to happen. ‘Okay, then I’m going to let you go and let’s have a talk.” So you’re teaching one on one. I’m just speculating. Maybe that will happen. Maybe it won’t happen. But then if you let him go and he just grits his teeth and runs after the guy he was about to hit, guess what? He’s going to get frozen again. Then you come up to him and say, “Okay, you were going to hit him and kick him and punch him. I’m going to really turn the wick up and let you feel what it’s like.” So after a time, maybe some of the hardheads will learn. God is capable—I’m just speculating—but He is capable of doing all kinds of things like that to teach people lessons they would otherwise learn and these miracles whether it’s through individuals or through miracles with plagues and no rain, they give people a dose of reality of this new world. And they give people a dose of reality of God’s way. Do it wrong; pain results. Do it right; you will be blessed.

And in my opinion—this is just my opinion—we have underestimated the magnitude of this task. Think about it. Think of the billions and billions of people. In years past, we

just assumed God would wave a magic wand and everything would be fine. It is going to be a struggle because look at us. Look at the struggles we've had. Look at the times we've opposed God. Look at the times we've had wrong attitudes and wrong approaches. Are they going to be any different than us? I don't think so. We must be prepared to help Christ deal with these billions and each one is an individual. Each one has different experiences, different personalities, different weaknesses, different faults, and different sins and we have to deal with them. We will be teachers and coaches and mentors. The point is we will do nothing for their harm. Everything we will do for them is for their ultimate good as God does with us, but it's going to take time. That leads us to the third point. This second point is we've looked at these people and maybe some ideas of how God is going to deal with them.

3. The third point is on this day is we're going to meet face to face those people we have hurt and we have harmed in this physical life.

They're going to come back up. People we may have punched out. People we may have said horrible things to. People we have sinned against, caused them hurt, horrible things within our families, at schools, jobs, neighborhoods. Now when they arise, how are we going to react? People that we have harmed and hurt, how are we going to react?

Will we react with arrogance? "Oh, I'm a spirit being now. Look at you." Condescension? Looking down on people? Will we be dismissive of what we did in the past saying "Ah, that doesn't matter"? We will be dismissive of that? Will we be hateful? Or will we show love and humility and understanding? God's testing us now to see now how we are going to deal with similar situations in this physical life because He wants to be sure when we're made spirit we will do it correctly.

How will we treat them? Will we ignore the past and not take responsibility for what we did in this physical life? Will we fail to apologize because we're now spirit beings and that's beneath us? Will we fail to make things right because now we're more powerful and we're in charge? Or will we come to them and say, "Do you remember me? We were in high school together and I did some horrible things. I gossiped about you. I did this. I did that. And I am so sorry"? Then we will patiently explain what has happened to us and how we are different now than when we were back in high school and did those horrible things. We will apologize as spirit beings to human beings. That takes humility. But I can't wait, I can't wait to do that.

I can't wait to apologize to my parents of what a jerk I was at times and how unthankful I was at times and how I didn't appreciate all the things that they did for me and the sacrifices they made for me and how I didn't do as much as I could have done in their old age to take care of them. I want to go and I want to get down on my knees and I want to apologize to them and tell them I am sorry. I could have done it so much better.

We need to have that because Matthew 18 will apply in the one hundred year period just as it applies today. Matthew 18 isn't going away. It's still a principle of God and we

have to be ready to do that. And it takes the fruits of God's holy spirit to do that. We must prove now to God that we can do it in this life so He will be confident we will do it in the next life because He's not going to allow somebody in the next life to not be willing to go back and apologize, not have the humility to do that. That's the third point. We're coming face to face with people we have harmed and hurt.

4. The fourth point is on this day, similarly we're going to meet face to face people who have hurt us.

All of us have received evil at the hands of others—some even in our own families, at school, on the jobs, in neighborhoods, but especially in the church. We have received evil at the hands of people in the church. Now many of those people were never converted. They didn't have God's holy spirit. They will come up in this time. They attended church with us but they never had God's holy spirit. They will come up at this time and they have hurt us.

Now, I've heard the following quotes by God's people attending church within say the last ten years. This one, referring to this time, "Now, I have got you I'm going to make you pay for what you did to me. I'll be a spirit being. You won't. And I'm going to nail you." This is another direct quote, "He will have to come to me on his knees." Meaning: "I'm setting myself up." The only person we go on our knees to is God. Not a human. Not even an angel or not a spirit being. Think of that attitude if that attitude was extant in God's Kingdom. Rather than do that, will we forgive and forget as Christ has done with us? Let's go to Luke 6:37. That will apply to us. It will apply to all the people in this one hundred year period. Christ's teachings are so direct and so simple and so many times we don't pay attention or we minimize them or we overlook them.

Luke 6:37. Judge not, and [you] shall not be judged: ... (KJV)

That means to judge from the standpoint of condemning, looking down and judging, setting ourselves up as a judge like a judge sits behind the bar.

37b) ... condemn not, and [you] shall not be condemned: forgive, and [you] shall be forgiven: (KJV)

So we have to prove now that we won't judge, we won't condemn, and we can forgive. Otherwise, God won't allow us to be in that position as spirit beings.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 13:5 and let's remember this principle relative to this time when we are spirit beings and there are billions of people there, but there are people there who have hurt us, hurt us deeply. 1 Corinthians 13:5, I'm going to read it out of the NIV. It's talking about love. That's the subject.

- Love *"is not rude."* God doesn't want rude people in His kingdom, especially as leaders and teachers, but we've all been exposed to that in the past. There have been teachers and leaders that were very rude, very arrogant.

- Love *“is not self-seeking.”* If we have true love, we’re not here to aggrandize ourselves. We’re not here to put ourselves up on pedestals. We’re here to serve others. We don’t seek our benefit. We seek the benefit of other people. And in this one hundred year time, we’re going to have billions of people that we’re going to have to seek the benefit of. We have to do what is right for them because look at the mess they’ve been in their lives. Look at what they’ve been through—all these people and the horrors they’ve been through. They need self-sacrificing servants who will help them. Not selfish people at all.
- Love *“is not easily angered.”* We can’t allow ourselves to get angry if somebody pushes against us. Back in the old days if you got angry with a minister, you were accused of a bad attitude and kicked out of church. We can’t do that to these people. They’ve been through so much. They’ve been through such horror. Yes, some of them are going to get angry. Some are going to get rebellious. Some are going to curse. But if you have love for them, you understand what they’ve been through. If you have to, use a spiritual straightjacket just to get a word in edgewise, calm them down or maybe you can say “Look, let’s sit down and talk about this. You’re full of anger and hatred. Let’s talk. Let me tell you something.”
- This is the big one for people who have done harm to us. I love the NIV translation here. Love *“keeps no record of wrongs.”* And I see that so much in marriage counseling where husbands and wives just don’t forget. My mother remembered what my dad did wrong fifty years and she remembered it like it was yesterday. And it was always there. Love doesn’t keep a record of wrongs. And for us when we come up as spirit beings and there are human beings there, we can’t keep a record of wrongs. They might have hurt us, yes. And we might talk to them about it, yes. But we’re in the reconciliation business not the punishment business.

God wants spirit beings, men and women, today who are reconcilers, who are healers, who bring people together, who can teach and train. Each one of these four traits is going to be needed by those who will help God do this incredible task in this one hundred year period. And we must prove to God that we can do it now because He’s not going to take a chance on people at this time. We have to prove ourselves before that time. That leads us to the fifth point and I’m going to ask a question.

5. Given these realities—what we’ve talked about today, everything we’ve discussed—who would God want to be there to help Him on the Last Great Day? Who is He looking for?

Those eager and ready to rule with a “rod of iron”? I’ve heard sermons years ago about they can’t wait until the Millennium and the White Throne Judgment because they want to bark orders and they’re going to instill fear in them and we’re going to rule with a rod of iron. Is that what these people need? Is that what God wants? Some in the Church of God are doing that right now—instilling fear, intimidating people.

Those eager and ready to aggrandize themselves, strutting around with swagger sticks and in boots, thinking only about themselves, thinking only about their position and their authority? Is that what these billions need? I don't think so.

Or do they need those who are going to exhibit the fruits of God's spirit? That's what God wants—beings that will exhibit His very nature. Let's go to Galatians 5. Remember the context as we read Galatians 5. Remember the context that those resurrected are coming alive with their last memories and their last thoughts and their last emotions. Think about what they need and think about what we should be prepared to give them. Galatians 5:22, "The fruit of the spirit is:"

- Love. We have to love every one of them—every single one of them! They need love. They do not need hate. They have had enough hate. They've had enough condemnation. They need love.
- Joy. They died; the vast majority of them died with anything but joy. And guess what? They're going to need people to teach them and help them regain a sense of joy. If you have suffered your whole adult life, just suffered and suffered and suffered, the joy has been beaten out of them. They don't have any joy. They don't know what joy is. And by our example, we're going to have to teach them that.
- Peace. Most of them died in a world that was anything but peaceful. Therefore, we need to be peacemakers between individuals. Within families we need to be peacemakers.
- Longsuffering. We're going to need this in abundance as God and Christ have it in relation to us because I look back and I see how longsuffering and patient God has been with me despite my thoughts and my actions and waywardness and wrong attitudes and all of that. He has been so patient and so kind. They will need time to unlearn and to relearn. And we're going to have to be patient with them, longsuffering.
- Gentleness. The New King James says "kindness." Do they need harshness at this time or do they need a gentle hand. I think we know the answer to that one.
- Goodness. They died in a world that was anything but good. Zodhiates says this word means *active good*. He says it can include "*rebuking, correcting or chastising*." You don't have to do it harshly. It can be done gently but we will rebuke; we will correct; we will chastise for their own good.
- Faithfulness. To do things faithful in God's way, always pointing them to God and Christ and never pointing them to ourselves. Every time you see an angel in the Bible and some human being wants to kneel down and worship an angel, the angel says, "Get up. Don't worship me." We will do the same thing. God will not have somebody there at this time who wants to be worshipped themselves. He needs people who will focus the attention on the Father and the Son.

- Meekness. They are going to need to see leaders who do not exalt themselves because that's all they've seen. Whether they saw Hitler, whether they saw a king of England, whether they saw a Samurai leader in Japan, they were all exalting themselves. They need leaders who are humble and meek and leaders who will exalt Christ and the Father—not themselves.
- Temperance. The New King James tells us it's "self-control." If we can't control ourselves in dealing with all these billions, how can we help them? If we get out of control, everything falls apart. So, we have to prove to God in this life that we can control ourselves. We can control our minds. We can control our words and our deeds.

So at this critical juncture in God's plan, He wants spirit beings who have previous demonstrated that they have all of these characteristics in their lives. Otherwise, we won't be there.

6. In order for all of us to have a happy ending in our lives prior to Christ's return or at His return, we have to learn to love all of God's children.

Every one. No bigotry. No bias. No racism. No looking down on other people. In the past we looked down on the world because they weren't the firstfruits and we were. They weren't the elect and we were. We can't do that. We can't look down on people because they're not up to our level. In the time to come, we can't look down on people because we're spirit and they're not. We can't do that.

Love coupled with humility is the key.

We won't turn there but 1 Chronicles 17:6, David said when he wasn't allowed to build the temple but he found out God would allow his son to and he could assemble the provisions, he said, "Who am I? What is my family? What is my house that you have brought me to this point?" Let's go to Psalm 84:10. It talks about both humility and obedience. Notice David's attitude. He was the king of Israel—the king of Israel! Kings today strut around and exalt themselves. Look what David did.

Ps 84:10. For a day in [your] courts is better than a thousand.... (KJV)

Meaning, one day in Your court is better than a thousand days not in Your court. And he says:

10b) I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (KJV)

So you see here two things—obedience and humility. That's what will be needed. We must prove to God in this life that we have moved from selfishness and pride to love and humility. We have to prove it now and we don't have much time left. We've got to

prove it now—going away from pride, going away from selfishness, and having love and humility. That leads us to the seventh and final point.

7. In order for all of us to have a happy ending, we have to treat everyone equally with dignity and with respect. We cannot be a respecter of persons.

We can't function with these billions if we have favorites. You can't teach and train if you promote one over another or you don't spend time with people or you make people feel like second-class citizens, so to speak. We've all felt that. We've seen it happen in the Church of God. There was the "in-group" and there was the "out-group." And as a minister now for over forty years, most of the time, I've been in the out-group as far as ministers go. There was the in-group and there was the out-group. We cannot do that. We can't be a respecter of persons.

We won't go there for the sake of time, but James 2 in the first nine verses puts it in beautiful language. He says "If there is somebody meeting with you on the Sabbath and somebody comes in and pulls up front in a Mercedes and she walks out with a fur coat and he's got a \$3,000 suit on and \$1,000 pair of shoes," and then he contrasts that with say a bag lady that comes in. She's rolling a cart in and has old clothes and maybe her Bible in the cart. If those two come into the church at the same time, he saying, "Who's going to get the attention?" He says, "You're going to have a reserved seat for the guy that comes up in the Mercedes. And you're going to tell the bag lady to sit over in the corner in the back and keep quiet." And he said, "You can't do that. You just can't do that!"

In verse 9 of James 2, he says if you have respect of persons, you commit sin. We've all done it. We've all been there, but we are not going to be in God's Kingdom if we can't love everyone equally, show dignity and respect to everyone. I don't care what their background, what their race, what their intelligence level is, what part of the world they grew up in, what time—whether they grew up a hundred years ago or four or five thousand years ago—we must learn to love all equally, to treat all equally, and to esteem all equally or we won't be there. And God's giving us the chance to prove it in this life right now. And as again, if look at the world situation, I don't know that we have all that much time. So we need to get busy. I'm talking to myself.

So in conclusion, we have seen that most of the world's population ended their lives in pain, in despair, in fear. This, after a miserable existence in the first place—unhappy endings! One of the greatest blessings God has given us of being called and of knowing the truth is that there is a happy ending when it's all over with. That is a promise. It is a commitment from God that at the end of this day, there will be happy endings for all mankind. Not just for us but for all mankind.

So, as we go home from the Feast, let's think about this. Before this Last Great Day is fulfilled in order for all of us to have a happy ending to our lives—the unhappiest ending would be sailing toward the lake of fire, but to have a happy ending for our lives—we must change from the old person to the new person. God is giving us time to do that.

We must change from the old person to become like Jesus Christ because He is not going to marry somebody who is not like Him. He's not going to marry somebody He can't recognize. And when we get married humanly, we want to marry somebody who is compatible. Christ is not going to marry somebody who's incompatible. He's especially not going to marry somebody who has a little bit of Satan in him or her.

So our job is to change from the old man to the new. But, as we've talked about here at the Feast, we acknowledge that fighting Satan and our human nature is so hard. It's difficult. It's every day. It's hour by hour. Sometimes minute by minute fighting thoughts, urges, things we'd like to say, things we'd like to do. And some people say, "I just can't do it." Do you know what? They're correct. They can't do it. Only God can. And that's the huge difference.

Let's go to Matthew 19:26 for a final scripture. If we rely on ourselves, no, we can't do it. If we rely on God, yes we can. Notice what Christ said. Very simple, it is very simple. We need to do it.

Matthew 19:26. *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (KJV)*

Now think about this. If God can resurrect over a hundred billion people, some of who have been dead for six thousand years, what can He do inside of each one of us? If He has that power, what can He do inside of us or inside between the ears? We all have sins. We all have faults. We all have shortcomings, but all of these—well let me ask the question. Could all of these be overcome by the same power that resurrects a hundred billion people? Of course! That's peanuts. That's child's play to God if we would just call on His spirit compared to what's going to happen this day and the power that will take.

So our duty is to exercise and to put to use the power of God that He has given us. So let's go home after the Feast and let's be determined to practice becoming the kind of beings God wants there on this day. Then, guess what? We will have a happy ending. Our family will have a happy ending. Our church brethren will have a happy ending. And most of all, the entire world, all of those who have ever lived will have a happy ending.