

# *Forsake Not the Lord*

**By – Warren Zehrung – October 20, 2011**

The title of today's sermon is "Forsake Not the Lord," and we will find out what that means as we go through the message today. I have a second title as I am sometimes want to do. This second title is designed more appropriately for the young men in the congregation, and the title is "**Spit and Dirt.**" That might seem blasphemous to you, but you will find out how biblically appropriate it is as we go forward in the message today.

All of us have been speaking about water, its attributes and its qualities, all of its forms and so forth, snow, dew, frost and we have a long list now from the Bible. I was surprised at how many came up. I want you to add to that list 'spit,' which is mostly water with a few enzymes in it to aid digestion. I would not mention spit except that it plays such a significant part in the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

We might think, 'Well I have not heard much about that.' But another reason I am using that for a title is because I do not want you to forget what I am saying today, because it is extremely important.

Let us begin by turning to the Spit Chapters in your Bible, and if you do not know what they are, they are Mark 7 and 8 to start with.

Spit is one of those wonderful things that God made that adds to our digestion and so forth, and I suppose some of you do not know it but Jesus Christ was a spitter. As a young man He became very proficient at spitting as some boys do. I have known girls, believe it or not, that grew up, got married and never learned to spit. We are going to have a very important lesson tied to this.

**Mark 7:32-34** Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He **spat** and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "*Ephphatha*," that is, "Be opened."

It was as though Jesus was enacting what was wrong. There must have been some obstruction of the vocal cords or the throat and Jesus just kind of went, "Ptooiie" and went through the motions. We know that the man's tongue was loosed and he began to speak plainly. It is incredible but why would Jesus Christ stoop to those levels as I look at some of the shocked faces out there when I speak of spitting and dirt. It is something that Jesus Christ did. We would not do that in proper company today, in fact I hesitated to mention it.

**Mark 8:22-23** Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town.

Can you imagine Jesus Christ just going, "Ptooie" right in the guy's face in his eyes? He asked him if he saw anything. Is Jesus Christ able to heal? Most of you agree, but some of you know that you are being set up. Okay, how about this, does Jesus Christ heal completely? I think so, but watch what happens.

**Mark 8:23b-24** And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

There was something wrong with what he was seeing. Was Jesus unsuccessful in healing this man?

**Mark 8:25** Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

I believe that what happens right here, is that this man had more than one thing wrong. He may have had a problem in different portions of his eyes. Many things can go wrong with your eyes. I think that this man had two things wrong with his eyes, maybe something on the front like cataracts, and maybe another problem. I think that Jesus Christ healed him twice. I think that there was a partial healing that took place. It is interesting that Jesus resorts to these physical things when all He would have had to do is issue a prayer.

I hear all of the time today, "God is not healing anybody anymore." Brethren, don't you believe it. People are being healed all of the time, but it is in God's timing. We will see that God heals in glorious ways.

Today is the **Last Great Day**, and it has a whole lot to do with 'seeing,' with blindness being taken away, and **blindness being removed**. We saw just a moment ago in the offertory message, Revelation 22:4. That is when everything is great and complete. This is the last chapter in the Bible and what does it say? Think of the world. Does the world see God as He is right now? No, the world is *blinded* to God. This day represents when the world's eyes will be open, and when blindness will be removed.

**Revelation 22:4** They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

The world does not see God's face right now. Blindness has to be removed and vision has to be restored. Here is something that you and I, and the members of God's church have to be especially careful of. Let's not say, "I see clearly." There is a degree of humility in here, but we should admit that we do not see clearly, even though we have been called. Even though these scriptures have been opened up to us, there is a great deal that we are oblivious to and that we do not know yet.

**John 9:41** Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

So to say, "I see clearly" when we don't see clearly is very dangerous.

This can apply to some of us in the Church.

**Isaiah 42:19** Who is blind but My servant, Or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, And blind as the LORD'S servant?

To a large extent the Church of God has had its eyes open, but not to everything, and to everyone in the Church. Not one of us has perfect spiritual vision.

**Isaiah 29:10** For the LORD has poured out on you The spirit of deep sleep, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, namely, the seers.

This certainly applies to Israel, as Israel today is certainly blind. You and I were once totally blind, but we have been called to be able to see a few things.

I am going to touch on a matter that has come before the Church of God and it has to do with the Holy days of being *watered down*, not considered quite so important, not containing the full meaning that we once thought they did.

We do things with the English language and we take a lot for granted. We know a lot of what we say is understood. If you had asked me two weeks ago, "Where are you going?" I would have said, "I am going to the Feast." I would not have said, "I am going to the Feast and the Last Great Day. We do not usually answer that way. I will show you some examples where they asked Jesus Christ where He was going and He said, "I am going up to the Feast".

This day, the Last Great Day of the Feast is spoken of in Leviticus 23, with all of the other Feasts of the LORD. But I started to say that it was very little understood. As far as I can tell, the Last Great Day was not understood at all – not the meaning of it, or what we are to do on that day? There is not a lot in scriptures about what to do on the Last Great Day. The Jews were pretty good about Passover and Unleavened Bread. All kinds of things happened on Pentecost, Trumpets and Atonement, but when it came to the Last Great Day the Old Testament scriptures are rather void of what it meant. I surmise or speculate that perhaps it was not revealed by God to those in the Old Testament because it didn't apply to them and they did not, would not, and could not have understood without God's Holy Spirit the meaning of the Last Great day.

**Joel 2:28** "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

The Last Great Day was just a day there and they did not understand that Israel, and the people from the tribes of Israel were to all die. Sure they had Ezekiel 37, and they knew about the Valley of Dry Bones, but they could not put it together with the Last Great Day, or at least I find very little evidence that they understood what it was about. But, from time to time they tried to do it right, and that is an example that we find here in Nehemiah 8:

**Nehemiah 8:17** So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths;

Why did they make booths? Because the scripture is very clear that for seven days you make booths and stay in them during the Feast of Tabernacles, which is a temporary dwelling.

**Nehemiah 8:17b** ...for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.

There was an extended period of time when they did not keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and they did not stay in booths. They were very happy to be able to keep the Feast. This was in a carnal way, an Old Testament way.

There are those that are saying, right now, that the Bible makes no reference to the Last Day, or the eighth day being the last day, or the Last Great Day. There is an effort to explain what is meant by those verses as being yesterday [the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles] being the great day, and the last day, of the Feast, and today [the eighth day] being something else. This is something for you to study, brethren. I am just going to bring some points out for you to look at. I believe that the Holy Days of God are extremely important, and I will lay the foundation for that in just a moment. As we read verse 18, I want you to think about this:

**Nehemiah 8:18** Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days;

We do not know what last day that is at this point. But we do know what the first day is, that is the first evening that we arrive, because God's Holy Days start in the evening. According to God's Law they kept the Feast for seven days.

**Nehemiah 8:18b** ...and **on the eighth day** there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.

That is exactly what we are doing today. Today is a solemn assembly. Yesterday [the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles] was not a solemn assembly.

Jesus had brothers and sisters and they did not believe that He was the Messiah. He was their big brother. I had a man come and correct me one time, he said that they maybe were Joseph's children and they were older. I do not see any evidence of that, so when I read in the Bible about Jesus' brothers and sisters I think of them all being his little brothers and sisters. They did not believe in Him. He said to them that His time had not yet come. What does that mean? It means that it was not yet time to be taken by the authorities, crucified, martyred and killed.

**John 7:6-7** Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. "The world cannot hate you,

None of them were converted at this time, as some of the brothers were later.

**John 7:7b-8** ...but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. "You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

We see that from the time that Jesus Christ was 12, He and His family were keeping Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

**John 7: 8b** ...I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

He did not say that He was not going, but He said that He was not going yet. He was going to the Feast and the Last Great Day. But He did the same thing that we do. We say that we are going to the Feast of Tabernacles. It is understood by all of us in God's Church, who know Leviticus 23, that we are going to stay for the Feast and *the Last Great Day*.

Brethren, I submit to you that one of the greatest blessings that God has given you and me at this time is a knowledge and an understanding that He has given to His people, to His Church in these last days. It is the knowledge of His plan, what He is doing, and how He is working it out as His plan is revealed by each and every one of the Holy Days.

God's plan shows us what He is going to do. Maybe the young people take that for granted. When I was growing up I knew about Christmas and Easter and it teaches you nothing about what God has done and what He is going to do. It is confusion.

But once we learn what Passover means, and Unleavened Bread, and what all of the different Holy Days, like Pentecost, when the Spirit of God was given to the Church – those are in the past – they have had their fulfillment. In the same way that we can see that Passover has been fulfilled the day Jesus Christ died, Unleavened Bread has been fulfilled. We read in Acts 2:1 that Pentecost has been fulfilled – “*was fully come.*” We can know that Trumpets is going to be fulfilled, and have an understanding of what it is. Atonement is going to be fulfilled, and we know a lot of details of what is going to be entailed in it. And, the Feast of Tabernacles, that we just celebrated, picturing the great ingathering, the great harvest that is going to last a thousand years. And, we can know something of the Last Great Day. The world out there is oblivious to the fact that we are in here keeping one of God’s Holy Days. They do not know what it means or anything.

How did we come to know these precious truths that we are taking so much for granted right now? Herbert W. Armstrong, and his wife, Loma, read Leviticus 23 and they said, “The LORD says that these are His Feasts, observe them, and keep them.” Early last century, Herbert Armstrong and his wife, alone, began to keep the Holy Days, including the Feast of Tabernacles, and I suppose the Last Great Day, I do not recall him mentioning that specifically. They lived it year after year. He understood very little after the first year. The second year maybe they understood a little more. But slowly and surely, as he kept the Holy Days, a pattern began to emerge and he saw Christ associated with Passover. Then he began to get an inkling of what was going on with Unleavened Bread and coming out of sin. Then Pentecost might have jumped off the page at him. All of a sudden you think that if those had a fulfillment maybe the others have a fulfillment also! Slowly but surely you start filling in the blanks. Today you and I are filling in the blanks if we are doing what God says, and if we are believing what God says in the Scriptures and not rejecting God’s clear directions that He gives to us.

Here is what happens. If God says, I will just make this one up, “Take a left,” and we go down the road there but the left is kind of steep and gravelly, but the road to the right is paved and wide, sometimes we will say it is too hard to do it the way that God says to do it, and we go the other way. Going the other way was pretty smooth, and pretty soon we are justifying not having done what God has clearly said to do.

Be that as it may, the Holy Days reveal to us unknown, unforeseen aspects of God’s Plan – what God is actually doing and what He is working out.

Let’s just run through them real quick, because I want to show the ‘type’ and the ‘antitype.’

Passover – In the Old Testament they could see the lamb. They could not see Jesus Christ the Messiah. You see how the type and the antitype work.

Unleavened Bread – They could see the flat, hard bread, but they could not see the sinless Messiah that we emulate today.

Pentecost – They could see those two wave loaves, and they knew that one was cooked with leaven while the other one [with the Wave Sheaf Offering, Leviticus 23:13] that represented Christ was not cooked with leaven – but oil. They could not see, in the Old Testament, that it pointed to the Church and God's Holy Spirit.

You could go through Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, but what about the Last Great Day? It is hard to tell about the Last Great Day as it is the least understood of the Holy Days, especially when you are in the Old Testament.

When the Church shredded and came apart in 1995, a book came out in print entitled, "The Temple, Its Ministry and Its Services" by Alfred Edersheim. I bought this book in July, 1996. The reason that I bought it was because I could no longer trust what I was being taught from Pasadena. I had rejected Pasadena's false teachings – I did not believe the Trinity, I did not believe that the Law had been done away with, and I did not believe all of the heresy that they were coming out with. And so I said, "I am going to have to rely on something else."

I started grabbing at straws. First of all I tried to find men of like mind. Then I said, "I am going to have to really dig in and do some research." So, one of the things that I did, was to buy this book. This book has all kinds of interesting things in it about what the priest did in the Temple and what the sacrifices meant. It talked about how they dressed and when they did the sacrifices, and all those kinds of things.

There is a ritual that is talked about in this book, and those who are blurring the line between the Last Great Day being yesterday [the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles] and the Last Great Day of the Feast being today, talk about this ritual. The ritual that is spoken of is called a number of different things, like the 'water ceremony,' but it has to do with going down to the pool of Siloam -- which I have waded in. The priests dipped water in the golden pitcher and they took it up to the Temple, and on each day they poured water about the Temple. Nobody seems to be real specific about when and what was said and so forth. But on the last day they did it multiple times, I think seven times. They did it at the close of the day according to some experts. But this ritual of pouring the water is not spoken of in the Bible nor is it commanded by God. It was just a ritual that went on at the Temple. One of the teachers at Ambassador College, when I was there, wrote this:

“During the time of Christ’s ministry on earth the Jews drew out water from the pool of Siloam, poured it on the altar every day, but on the Last Great Day of the Feast they circled the altar seven times and poured out the water of Siloam the last time. The waters of Siloam represented healing for the people. Jesus interrupted their ceremony and identified the Spirit of God as the source of eternal life (John 7:37-39).

It is interesting that about nine years ago, United Church of God, *aia* came out with a study paper saying that the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles is the Last Great Day. They put the paper out and it was received rather quietly. I did an extensive study just for myself, and did not speak on it at that time, because it built up the Feast of Tabernacles and did not say a whole lot about what was going to happen on what we had traditionally called the Last Great Day. Men have spoken on it, and it has come up again recently, and a couple of other men have spoken on it. One of the men in United that has spoken on this subject is a man by the name of Steve Shaffer, a minister in the United Church of God. He thinks, and said that when Jesus stood up and talked about rivers of living water, that it took place as it was just about to get dark when Jesus said it, but it was still yesterday on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and that Jesus did not say those words on the Last Great Day.

We come to a point in our lives where we individually should decide – because if we accept one track and say this is when it was, what does it do to our understanding as we read the Scriptures and as we try to understand the Plan of God and what God’s meaning for the Holy Days is?

Here is something that we can sink our teeth into.

Here is a quote from “The Temple, Its Ministry and Its Services” by Alfred Edersheim, and this is on page 222. ““It was the last day, the great day of the feast.”” “...It was on that day [Edersheim believes that day to be the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the Feast], after the priest had returned from Siloam with his golden pitcher and for the last time poured its contents on the base of the altar.” But this book of Edersheim’s speaks almost nothing about the Last Great Day – because Edersheim did not understand the meaning of the Last Great Day either. So they are more comfortable placing the water pouring ceremony *in* the Feast of Tabernacles which the Jews have celebrated big time. Any of you who have been to Jerusalem for the Feast have seen the beautiful Succoths. Some of them are half of the size of this room with pineapples, grapes, watermelons and it looks like you could not get all the fruit into two dump trucks – there is so much of it! But on the Last Great Day the Jews do not know what to do with themselves. This book is pretty much like that. If you try to look up the Last Great Day or the eight day in this book, you find very little information in there that will help. This book [the Bible] however has some things that we can sink our teeth into (I am holding up the Bible for those of you that are listening).

John, the beloved Apostle, was the last one to write the gospel messages. He had Matthew, Mark and Luke's gospel accounts in front of him. When John wrote, he did something very interesting. You all know it but I will just mention it for the sake of those who may come later and hear this.

John's entire message is written with the framework being the Holy Days of God. The four Passovers of Jesus' ministry are mentioned; the last one when Jesus Christ died. Jesus Christ did die on Passover, but that is being brought into question too. Even as we speak it is being brought into question whether Jesus died on the correct day or not.

John spoke about a lot of the Holy Days and they are in his chronological gospel framework. That is why John mentions times of the day, how many days on trips, and so forth.

John's writings are inspired by God and He gave John the words to give to us. This day, the Last Great Day, that we are keeping today is covered from John 7:37 all of the way through to John 10:21. All this Biblical account occurred on what we call the Last Great Day. And, we have the privilege to see what John wrote, what Jesus Christ said and what He did on those particular days – and to be able to understand their prophetic meaning with regard to the Last Great Day in God's Plan.

Brethren, blindness is on us, also on the Church of God in part, not just on the world. We are the last people of the Church of God before Jesus Christ comes back and it is important for us to get it right. It has been mentioned in this Feast: "Anoint your eyes." God says this to this present era of the Church, the people of God right now.

**Revelation 3:18** "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and **anoint your eyes** with eye salve, that you may see.

This is not said to those people out there in the world, but it is said to the Church of God. Many times the Bible says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what these words are."

Are we, the Church of God, able to retain the precious truth that has been given to us? There are, in my estimation, clandestine and surreptitious assaults, if you will, that do violence to God's revealed truth. In addition to the Passover timing coming into question right now – with a Study Paper on it. If anybody wants a copy of the Study Paper I will give you the documentation and the letter from one of the headquarters men that signed off on it.

The clear and obvious intent of God's Word, if our minds are open, is being twisted in some cases, "*By the slight of men and the cunning craftiness whereby they deceive.*" (Ephesians 4:14). Here is another example of this verse:

Some members are being convinced on God's Feast days – not *to feast* – they are being told by that it is wrong to do so when those men say, "Do not eat a feast meal on a high Sabbath with the brethren." [Those men do not understand the 'type' and the 'antitype' of God's Feast Days. Here is the type/antitype: Many people coming together to a large well prepared meal on God's Feast days **is a picture** of God's bountiful spiritual blessings being poured out in His Holy Day Plan for mankind.] Jesus shows us and He tells us the meaning of the Feast days, by His words and by His actions. If Jesus did something on the Feast day, then we should follow what He did. We should walk in His steps. Let me give you an example. Did Jesus need to be baptized? John the Baptist said no, but Jesus said, "Allow me to be baptized." Why? The scripture says it was, "*To fulfill all righteousness.*" It was the right thing for Jesus to do for a number of reasons. One was an example to us, as we need to be baptized. Baptism pictures a number of things. Baptism is totally necessary because of its symbolism. That is strange because things that are symbolic are tokens and they are not real. But baptism is totally necessary for salvation. But Jesus had not sinned and He had no sins to wash off – if we use that picture of baptism. Water cannot remove sin, water cannot wash away sin – it is strictly symbolic.

Let's go to the foot washing of John 13 when Peter said to Christ that He was not going to wash his feet. What did Jesus say? He told Peter that if He did not wash his feet that he would have no part with Him. That is bad, as we all want to have a part with Christ. That part has to do with the coming Kingdom of God and being with Jesus Christ.

**I Corinthians 5:7** Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us.

We know that Jesus our Passover was slain for us. We know when it was, it was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib, and we can see that in Exodus 12:16. As far as I am concerned, end of the study. That was the Passover Lamb without blemish. We can see that Christ is the Unleavened Bread of sincerity and truth.

**I Corinthians 5:8** Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but **with** the unleavened bread of *sincerity and truth.*

The Bible tells us to keep the Feast, **with Jesus Christ in it** with sincerity and truth. My question to you is, "Do we keep Unleavened Bread with Jesus in it, or do we keep Unleavened Bread with Jesus out of it?" They seem like small questions, but it makes a big difference. It is important for us to have a correct understanding of what God's intent is.

Does the Bible show that Jesus Christ kept the Last Great Day; the one that we are saying comes after the Feast of Tabernacles? Protestants and Catholics do not have a clue, they do not care, and they do not know what it means.

Brethren, if only there were some way to tie the words of Jesus Christ, when He speaks of **living waters** in John 7:37, that has been [incorrectly] purported to have been during the Feast of Tabernacles. If there were some way that we could tie those words in with the *eighth day*, the day after the Feast, maybe we would be getting somewhere. Maybe if we could tie those words spoken the evening before, with the daylight portion of the Last Great Day without question, something that we would be assured of, and when I am talking about tying it together, I am not talking about some obscure ritual that we do not have the details on that was kept 2,000 years ago, in a Temple that no longer exists, by the priests which are no longer functional. If we had something that was solid today, like the Word of God for example.

**Matthew 13:13** "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

But Jesus spoke in the same parables so that the disciples and you and I would understand. The same set of words was a closed door to one set of people, but an open door to us.

**Matthew 13:14-15** "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'

Brethren, the Plan of God **is** for us to see and to know. If only there were some way that we could tie the words of Jesus Christ in the daylight portion of the Last Great Day to the evening before, we might be a little more sure, whichever way it is, that Jesus said 'rivers of living water' during the Feast of Tabernacles **or** whether He was speaking of living waters on the Last Great Day.

**John 7:37** On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

Herbert Armstrong said that this living water had to do with God's Holy Spirit – he was absolutely correct.

**John 7:38** "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

What is Jesus talking about? John guessed that we would ask that question.

**John 7:39** But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

This is prior to Pentecost when this is taking place.

As we study the word of God, and the word of God is not broken, things start to fall into place. Jesus said this with what John says is the **last great day of the Feast**. Jesus just got through telling His brothers a little bit earlier, "I go up to the Feast, but not yet." In fact, before this we find Him in the midst of the Feast teaching. What were those people doing who were keeping it seven days? They were staying in booths, right? But what did they do on this last day of the Feast?

**John 7:53** And everyone went to his own house. [There was no longer a Scriptural need to stay in booths.]

John did not accidentally write that down. The seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles were over with, and they could start sleeping in their own beds now. It is a little too far for most of us to fly or drive to get back there. But we did not have to stay in temporary dwellings after the Last Great Day began at sunset yesterday.

I have heard a number of studies on this matter, and I have heard men make some bold statements, some unsupportable and some of them very bold. I have seen and heard those who would water down the Holy Days, prove over and over in a message like this, that the Feast lasts seven days. That is not the question. I believe that we all agree that the Feast of Tabernacles lasts for seven days, and not eight. They have that part right in saying, "*seven days in booths.*"

Let us go to the next morning, to the daylight portion of the Last Great Day. We are speaking about **Spit and Dirt**.

**II Corinthians 3:6** Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for **the letter of the law kills**, but the Spirit of the law gives life.

The letter of the law kills, and this needs to be kept in mind. Spirit gives life. These are the words of God. We are talking about **living water** giving eternal life.

We are now coming to Jesus' words on the morning of the Last Great Day.

Pharaoh of Egypt, and other significant rulers – there were a number of these powerful men... They were ambitious, vain, and cruel. They liked to go up to the pyramids and have someone **chisel their name** in the pyramid. Those names stayed for thousands of years for all to see. Everybody did not have books where they could print their names like we do today.

The Assyrians had conquests all over the known world. The Romans came right to Palestine where this was going on, and they liked to put their names in the building blocks of all of the magnificent structures build by such and such Caesar. Chiseling their names was a lasting memorial to their great conquests.

It came to be generally understood and practiced, and it was a form of insult or personal injury to take a man and demean him by **writing his name in the dirt**. [instead of stone] When it rains his name is washed away and it is not there permanently like Pharaoh's. It was ugly and insulting to write somebody's name in the dirt. It was very humiliating and degrading when somebody said that they were going to write your name in the dirt, especially if they added to your name – your sinful deed.

Do you remember when Jesus Christ was selecting His disciples and He came to Nathaniel. Nathaniel did not know Jesus Christ. But Jesus went up to him, looked at him lovingly in the eye and told him that He saw him when he was under the fig tree. What did that mean? Nathaniel had prayed something, or maybe he had vowed something to God.

Jesus Christ knew something that no living person on earth could possibly know. Jesus knew what was in the hearts of men and what was in the minds of men (Mark 2:8, Matthew 9:4). He knew men's deeds when He needed to. God the Father revealed those things to Him.

**John 7:46** The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Jesus Christ did some wonderful and great things, and they were astonished by what Jesus Christ said.

Let us look at what Jesus did on the morning of the Last Great Day.

**John 8:1-2** But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the Temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

Notice who comes along: the Scribes and the Pharisees. They are important people, they are the city fathers, and they are the educated city leaders.

**John 8:3-5** Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"

They were not interested in stoning her, but they were interested in destroying Jesus Christ and His reputation and His work.

Notice what Jesus Christ did:

**John 8:6** This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and **wrote on the ground** with His finger, as though He did not hear.

The scriptures do not tell us what He wrote on the ground. I think that He wrote two things on the ground. I think that He **wrote some names** on the ground. I think that he wrote in the dirt: Hank, Smittie, Otto, and so forth.

**John 8:7** So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

Nobody threw a stone, so Jesus stooped down and He wrote something else. I think the second thing that Jesus Christ **wrote on the ground** was a list of transgressions, not specific, no man there could say, 'Yes Otto did that', or 'Hank did that'. I think that Jesus Christ just wrote a few things that Jesus could connect with them alone. Like Jesus connected with Nathaniel. Anybody else standing there would not have had a clue what it meant to hear "I saw you under the fig tree." It was the same thing here. I think that Jesus Christ wrote something like "under the bleachers", "back of the van", or "down by the river side."

All of a sudden it started getting a little too hot for these Scribes and Pharisees and they started drifting away.

**John 8:9-10** Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

And the story kind of leaves us standing there. What in the world was going on? Why did John add this story first **on the Last Great Day**? There is clearly no question that this is not on the Last Great Day.

These Scribes and Pharisees were very important men, and they were the learned men of their day. Many of them knew their scriptures very, very well. Jesus Christ the night before had been speaking of the rivers of living water, and this morning he is **writing in the dirt** an insult to some of these city fathers. When somebody is writing your name there you start getting uncomfortable, especially if there are sins that could be brought out publicly that you do not want anybody knowing about. But it was also ugly and shameful to have your name written there. You do not want your name written on a "Wanted" poster or in certain places as it is degrading. Again, keep in mind that this is the daylight portion of the Last Great Day.

The Scribes and the Pharisees knew something else. They knew their scriptures very well. You turn on your television – day or night – and there are religious channels and these guys are spouting the scriptures over and over. They do not know exactly what they mean, but they know scriptures. The Scribes and Pharisees knew their scriptures, and they knew this scripture here in Jeremiah 17:

**Jeremiah 17:12-13** A glorious high throne from the beginning Is the place of our sanctuary. O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed.

The Scribes and the Pharisees, who just had their names **written in the dirt**, knew as it says here that you would be ashamed if you forsook the LORD. It was commonly understood that it was shameful to have your name written in the dirt.

**Jeremiah 17:13b** "...Those who depart from Me Shall be **written in the earth**,

Why? Here is the title of today's message: "Forsake Not the Lord."

When Jesus Christ wrote their names in the dirt it was a common saying, and it brought back to mind this scripture. It was an accusation, a statement, a fact that if they had done these other deeds that they had done they knew that they would be ashamed and that is what God said in Jeremiah 17:13. But notice what this verse goes on to say:

**Jeremiah 17:13c** ...Because they have **Forsaken the LORD**, The fountain of **living waters**."

This act of Jesus Christ writing their names in the dirt, as Jeremiah said their names would be **written in the dirt**, is a **direct tie** to Jesus Christ's statement the night before about **fountains of living waters**.

Again Jesus Christ, on the Last Great Day, shows Himself to be the source of living waters.

John the beloved apostle, under divine inspiration, clearly **ties** the words of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament – spoken the evening before by Jesus Christ – he ties those together. [John goes into minute detail to clearly establish that Jesus' words about Living Water were spoken on the Last Great Day – and not during the Feast of Tabernacles.]

What are some of the things that Jesus Christ did on the Last Great Day?

**John 9:1-3** Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

That man went blind his entire life so that God could work this miracle in him. Everybody was astounded because it was unknown for anybody born blind to live their whole life blind and to ever see.

Jesus Christ talks about being the light of the world.

**John 9:6-7** When He had said these things, He **spat** on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

As we go through here we see blindness being removed on the Last Great Day. John wrote these things down, under the influence of God's Holy Spirit to show us in part the meaning of the Last Great Day. We know that the blindness of the world will be taken away.

We understand, and can only touch lightly today, on the fact that the Last Great Day is that period of time when God is going to bring all people up from the grave who have been blind [to God's truth] throughout history and they will see God.

**John 9:14** Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

It was the **Last Great Day**, and it was also a weekly Sabbath this particular year.

This is all about the blind seeing, all about rivers of living water bringing about eternal life. If we had time I would go into verses 31-33 where it speaks more directly about blindness.

Here is the meaning of the day, and we can get that it is the meaning of the day because it is Jesus' words, they are recorded on this day, and they are not to be misconstrued or misapplied.

**John 9:39** And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

I have a little red flag by that one brethren, because we say, 'I see,' 'I know,' and Jesus Christ says that we are putting ourselves in jeopardy if we are not very, very careful. So be careful.

**John 9:41** Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

Can we apply that to ourselves?

Do we know the Shepherd's voice? When Jesus speaks these words, do we hear? We do not need to revert to men's ideas of what took place in the Temple service 2,000 years ago, and put our proof there. We can find our proof if we search the Scriptures, and if we trust God.

**John 10:4** ...and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

It always comes down to the exact same thing. I do not care what we study, it comes down to we have passed from death to life when we love the brethren. What do we do when we love the brethren? We sacrifice for them and we lay our lives down.

**John 10:15** As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Brethren, we have been called to do the same.

WZ/pp/sl