

The Last Great Day

A Hidden Lesson in Government

Those of us who have been in God's church for any length of time are very familiar with this day. It is the last day of the seven-day series of annual Holy Days, and is mentioned in only a few places in Scripture.

Leviticus 23:34-39. "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the *eighth day*, you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it. These are the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day — besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord. Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath-rest, and on the *eighth day* a Sabbath-rest.'"

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; and on the *eighth day* there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner."

Numbers 29:35. On the *eighth day* you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work."

II Chronicles 7:8-10. "At that time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. And on the *eighth day* they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the Lord had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel."

John 7:37-39. "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. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

This eighth day that follows the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles is a separate Feast, which in the Hebrew typifies "fatness, abundance, and fertility." Notice the character of this day.

1. On this eighth day there were more sacrifices than on any other holy day.
2. The day had a special significance because it is explained by Jesus as follows: "He that believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water. (But this He spoke of the

spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.)” (John 7:37-38).

3. Thus, the Last Great Day refers to **the activity of the spirit of God flowing into and out of God’s elect**, but not just those in the first resurrection; this must include the second resurrection as well. This day refers to the spirit flowing through *all* people!

The Great White Throne

There is every reason to tie the Last Great Day to the White throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. This section of Scripture says,

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. and the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books [that is their DNA, or personal traits; Psalm 139:13-16]. The sea gave up the dead who were in it [in the sea, such as the Flood], and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them [on the land]. And they were judged each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Verse 12 says that “... they were judged each one according to his works,” but we should understand that as not meaning that you can gain salvation by works — for salvation is a gift to us undeserving people (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8) — or that we can improve our position in the government of God in the coming age by doing more good works than someone else. Since the Bible interprets itself we should look a bit further into Revelation, to 22:12, where it says,



“And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (KJV). Some other versions agree with this translation. Our Creator has a definite plan for us reserved in His realm.

“In my Father’s house are many *mansions* [*mone*, ‘residences, abodes’]: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to *prepare* [*hetoimazo*, ‘prepare, make ready’] a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3).

We will comprise the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, and all of us will be the shining gems that decorate that incredibly magnificent place (Revelation 21:2-3). God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11), and He will grant each of us to be kings and priests (Revelation 5:10), sons of God made in His image, just like Him (I John 3:2; Romans 8:29; I Corinthians 15:49; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:4; II Peter 1:4).

Just as He has given each of us various gifts of the spirit (I Corinthians 12), exactly as He has willed it — “But now God has set the members every one of them in the body as it has pleased Him (verse 18) —

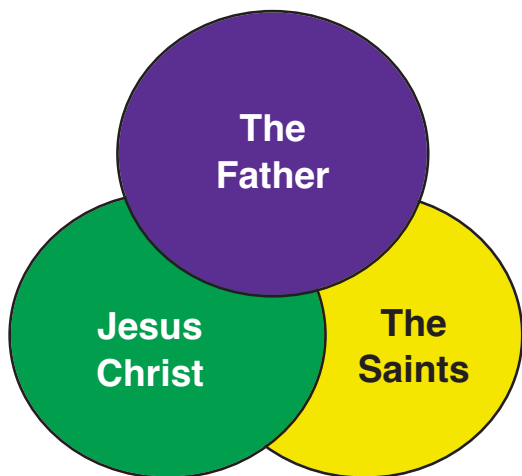
so He will place each of His resurrected elect into the heavenly Kingdom just as He has prepared for us. This is not to say that each one of the resurrected elect will have the same responsibilities in the Kingdom.

The Last Great Day: a Message About Government

We need to understand how this Last Great Day fits into God’s system of government, and by government I mean *the interrelationships we have with each other*. Government is about relationships, and we need to know the nature of those relationships ... and like everything else in our calling avoid the world and cling to what is right and good ... be *in* the world but not *of* the world (John 15:19; 17:14).

There are two opposing forms of government in the world — God’s and Satan’s — and since we are living in Satan’s world the examples we see around us are those of Satan. What are those characteristics? They come from a system of repressiveness and dictatorship, of hierarchies and control as pictured by a pyramid.

God’s government within the ecclesia



Satan’s government within the world



- The spirit of brotherhood, or each looking upon others as better than oneself (Matthew 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:2-15; 17:20-23; Romans 8:29; 12:10; Philippians 2:1-5; Ephesians 5:21; I Peter 5:5)
- Each is equally valuable, with “the least being the greatest” (Luke 9:48; Matthew 23:11-12)
- Service to others with one’s spiritual gifts, given at baptism and the laying on of hands, is one’s essential duty (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:6-8; I Peter 4:10)
- A spirit of love and forgiveness (II Timothy 1:7; Galatians 5:22-23; John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8; Ephesians 4:2; Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 18:21-22)

- The spirit of domination over others, looking upon others as more inferior down the pyramidal structure (Matthew 20:25; Luke 22:24-25)
- Value depends on position within the pyramid, with “the highest being the greatest” (Luke 22:25; *lordship = kyrieuo*, “to exercise control over: and *authority over = exousiazo*, “to exercise power or authority over anyone”; Mark 10:42; *lordship = katakurieuo*, “to control, subjugate; *authority = katexousiazo*, “to wield full privilege over”)
- Control over others to order them as slaves (see the references above)
- A spirit of self-centeredness and narcissism (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 1:28-31; Galatians 5:19-21)



What a stark contrast there is between these forms! Of course, there are gradations between, from a totalitarian concentration camp to the very heavenly Kingdom of God itself. We see democracy, theocracy, republics, kingships, socialism, and Communism have traits more or less of either extreme. The point we must emphasize is that we are to be striving toward God’s form of government, as typified in John 17:20-23. We live within the Father and Jesus Christ and each other, in love and perfect fellowship. What a far cry this is to the domination of people over other people in Satan’s system.

The Garden of Eden Again



The difference between Satan’s totalitarian rule and God’s family-style leadership is profound, and is typified by the difference between selfish ambition and personal liberty in loving family associations.

Look first to the perfect government within the Garden of Eden. Both Adam and Eve had direct access to Christ and the Father. Sin was unknown. Then sin entered in and cut off the connection with God, forcing them to leave the Garden and live through hard labor ... for the soil became cursed, and would bear thorns and thistles. Notice in Genesis 3:16 that the wife’s desire would be for her husband, and “... he shall rule over you.” The Hebrew word for *rule* is *mawshal*, meaning “have dominion, rule, have power over.” Suddenly the hierarchy of authoritarian rulership entered into people’s lives, and it has remained there ever since.

With God’s spirit working within you, however, such authoritarianism of man ruling over man cannot work. Our communication is directly to the Father, while Jesus Christ is our Elder Brother — ONE OF US — and expedites our prayers to our Father and His Father (I Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:26).

Down through the centuries men have ruled over men, fighting against the liberty and freedom that the Creator designed for people to live by, for “Whoever you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or obedience unto righteousness” (Romans 6:16). Before the Great Flood this selfish authoritarianism within human relationships was multiplied by

the sons of Elohim descending in human form to cohabit with women, and beget the Nephilim, those evil giants that polluted all of the genetics of mankind except for Noah and his family ... who were “perfect in their generations” (Genesis 6:9). The Flood wiped out these evil humans, but the post-Flood society soon descended into a civilization ruled by Nimrod, the arch-enemy of God. A one-world society concentrated in Babel and other cities, and had to be dispersed to the parts of the earth where they were supposed to inhabit. God had to confuse their language and force them to migrate.

Once again after the Flood the sons of God came down to earth (Genesis 6:4) and sired more Nephe-

lium— Goliath, Sihon, Og, and many others — who began contaminating the genome of mankind, so God began to unfold His plan to redeem mankind from the clutches of sin and death. He chose a man of great faith named Abraham, and gave him promises of greatness, as well as his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob whose 12 sons formed the foundation for the nation of Israel, a people destined to overspread the earth, and which was supposed to set an example of righteousness to all the nations.

Israel was sent into Canaan with several missions, one of which was to destroy the Nephilim. Israel eventually conquered Canaan, but in the course of years they demanded they have a king ruling over them as did the surrounding nations (I Samuel 8:7). Thence began the sad litany of Israel being ruled over by kings, developing the same sort of authoritarian rule to a greater or lesser degree as did the other nations. Eventually the nation split into a northern and a southern kingdom, both nations eventually falling into rampant sins, and were taken captive and deported to Assyria and Babylon. We know the story.

As the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon themselves disintegrated, many Israelites migrated north and west — as had others from Israel earlier — and began to populate parts of Europe, Britain, and Scandinavia. Eventually the westward push of these Anglo-Saxons, who fully adopted the governments of the gentiles, reached the shores of the Americas, and so we find ourselves dealing with the same issues of suppressive government hierarchies, which Jesus railed against so vehemently.

“The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves” (Luke 22:25-27).

Saturated With Hierarchies

So here we are in modern times. all nations practicing authoritarianism to a greater or lesser degree. We see this in government, religion, industry, the military, and everywhere. Corporations are formed for virtually all aspects of our society, and they are by definition top-down organizations. Even the United States Corporation, while not as strongly hierarchal as others, still has layers of authority — Congress, The Executive, and the Judiciary — but these were designed to minimize the development of a strong hierarchy by limiting the chances for a despot to rise. Even here in the U.S. we see that as sin proliferates so do laws that attempt to deal with that sin, and we sink deeper and deeper into a pit of slavery to man’s laws that God never intended: ***the more sin there is, the more laws that are passed that further restrict our liberties.***

Amongst all of these repressive systems of man ruling over man, God’s ecclesia is designed to stand



Throughout our society the rulership of men over men is rampant, as evidenced in religious and military organizations and other associations throughout society.

out as a beacon of light against the repressive darkness of Satan's system. That is why Jesus Christ came, to show us how to be organized as His people through the spirit dwelling in us ... to have our sins forgiven, and to return to the Edenic system that Adam and Eve had 6,000 years ago, **RIGHT IN OUR OWN FELLOWSHIPS!**

Government Within the Ecclesia

As we have seen throughout this discussion, God's people are to practice His form of government, based on love, joy peace, humility, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, patience, and self-control — fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Those fruits are a reflection of direct communication with our Father in heaven, with no barrier between us such as is practiced by the Roman Catholic Church, and frankly by governments around the world when they coerce citizens, through fear and force, into obeying the laws of the land, whether they comply with God's laws or not.

The means by which the ecclesia is to interact in fellowship is, of course, based upon agape love, so well spelled out in John 13 through 17. Note the following words of Christ.

John 13:34-35. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 14:15. "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

John 14:21. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

John 14:23. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.'"

John 15:9-10. "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

John 15:12-13. "This is My commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

John 17:22-23. "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

John 17:26. "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

This deep concern we must have for one another is clearly spelled out when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples.

John 13:12-16. "So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, '***Do you know what I have done to you?*** You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash

one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.”

While the world's system of government acknowledges that the teacher or leader is greater than the servant, in God's system the *servant* is the greatest. GOD TURNS THE WORLD'S SYSTEM UPSIDE DOWN! This is the same idea as Jesus gave the disciples a bit later that same night when the disciples were arguing about who would be greatest in the Kingdom. They were discussing power of rulership just like people of the gentile nations do; they did not get it! Jesus then straightened out their thinking.

Luke 22:25-27. “And He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.’”

This is the same idea as Paul stated in Philippians 2:1-5, who said the mind of Christ is to “... in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Truly, the least will be the greatest!



Fellowship — So Critical to Get It Right

Our manner of fellowship is so very important in exercising this agape love and Godly government to one another, to show the lives we have within the Father and Christ. In fact, **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROPERLY LOVE YOUR BROTHER HE IS IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY OVER YOU!** The apostle Paul gave us a sound template for how this should function in I Corinthians 14, but notice the entire context of his teaching.

Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet displayed the service we must offer to our brethren, considering others better than ourselves, even as Jesus Christ, the Creator of the earth, placed himself below the disciples in spite of being called Lord and Master.

I Corinthians 11. The Passover symbols and washing away of our sins in Christ's blood, making it possible to have the spirit of God in us

I Corinthians 12. Gifts of the spirit granted by His spirit within us, used to edify one another

I Corinthians 13. Love one another with fervor

I Corinthians 14. How we should fellowship

I Corinthians 15. The fruit of our being cleansed, receiving spiritual gifts, loving one another, and fellowshiping as we ought: the resurrection to eternal life!

Note that I Corinthians 14 begins with Paul pleading that all of the members in the ecclesia *prophesy* (*propheteuo*, “speak under divine inspiration”), and he ends that chapter in verse 39 with the same admonition. He even says “*covet to prophesy*” (*zeloo*, “to have warmth of feeling for”) in verse 39, and verse 29 says “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others *judge* (*diakrino*, ‘oppose, discriminate, cross-ex-

amine’).” *We are all to participate in our gatherings*, not always have a leader appoint speakers on a schedule; the spirit of God must actively guide the fellowship of God’s people

Moreover, it is the older members of the congregations — the *elders* [*presbyteros*] — that are the guides and overseers, the shepherds whom God directs to help the brethren grow towards the full stature of Christ (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-5).

Eternal Government and the Last Great Day

Now, notice a striking statement by Paul In I Corinthians 15:22-28.

“For in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

Notice verse 24, which states there will be an end to all rule, authority, and power when Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father. Verse 26 states that even death will be destroyed, and verse 28 states that God will be all in all. Is this not speaking of the Great White Throne period of Revelation 20:11-15? Revelation 20:14 states that death and the grave are cast into the lake of fire — utterly destroyed. Those not destined for eternal life are destroyed in the lake of fire (verse 15).

Notice what the *Concordant Commentary On the New Testament* (A.E. Knoch, Concordant Publishing Concern, Saugus, California, 1968, page 263) has to say about this section of Scripture:

“The reign of Christ is so beneficent, it brings mankind to such a state of perfection, that all further need of the restraints of government vanishes. Rule implies insubordination, and is unnecessary where there is perfect subjection. Rule is a temporary expedient to cope with evil. When evil is banished rule also retires. The effects of evil for mankind are concentrated in death. When the universe has been purged of all other evil, then death itself becomes inoperative and yields up its victims. Not till then is it true that all are made alive in Christ.”

The period of time after the millennium involving the Great White Throne Judgement will be characterized by the destruction of anyone not written in the Book of Life. Sinners will be gone, and the government of God will be found in its pure form ... Christ in the Father, the Father in Christ, and both of them in the brethren, who are now spirit, unable to sin. There will be no need, not even the slightest desire, for anyone to rule over someone else. Everyone will be sovereign, practicing the very relationship that Jesus Christ showed the disciples when He washed their feet. ***WE ARE THOSE DISCIPLES, brethren!***

We are today, in God’s ecclesia in the various groups we find ourselves, supposed to be practicing the sort of government that will be universal during the Last Great Day. This sort of loving government will also be present during the millennium, but during that time there will still be imperfections, as Scripture points out. Not so after Satan and the demons are defeated and burned up, after the White Throne Judgment.

Brethren, let us internalize a deep and abiding love for one another throughout this coming year, and realize just how wonderful our future really will be. Let’s not relax our hold on our calling, but carry through to the very end of this age to be true to our calling, and to help others along the way as we are able.

Paul W. Syltje — September 7, 2019