

# The Eighth Day

by: *Ronald L. Dart*

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I'll walk with God, from this day on, and sometimes I really wonder where he is going. One of the most exciting discoveries in my life was when I learned that the festivals of the Bible actually contained an outline of God's plan. An outline much more complex than I had at first imagined. And I know that those of you who have heard my sermons over some period of time know that I feel that the holy days, are like layers of an onion. In the sense that there is an outer layer and you peel that off and you find more and you peel that off and you find more. They are loaded with illustrations, with analogies, with symbols and types of the plan of salvation, the life and work of Jesus Christ, of end time events culminating in the kingdom of God and even events beyond the end of this world.

In the forty-one years since I have learned this truth about the holy days, I have study the days. Someone right at the beginning of my ministerial career impressed upon my mind that the command that you should proclaim these holy days in their seasons means that when the season comes and the time is here you should preach and teach about the holy days. So, I have tried faithfully all of these forty-one years to do precisely that and I have learned, and I have grown in my understanding year by year of these days. And once in a while, I can't stand it any longer and I feel moved to push the edge of the envelope of our understanding. Today is one of those days. *(The audience laughs)*

Would you agree with the premise that a person who thinks he has all the truth has all the doctrines nailed down, all the proof texts carefully in a row. That he has it all in a box tied up with a ribbon. That this person has ruled out any possibility of future growth? He already knows it all. Where is he going to go from here?

Now, this is not to say that people can't have a coherent vision of the truth and that it is true enough to be workable. If they didn't have that, well they wouldn't have any backbone to their faith. They would have no consistency, no coherency, and no stability in the way that they go. I don't mean to imply that at all. But most of us realize I think, that we see through a glass darkly, to borrow the expression from the Bible. And that there is so much. We look into the things of God and we always want to know more. And we grasp, and we try, we reach and we struggle. We have not been willing in some cases to leave some parts unexplained and so, we have created explanations which may or may not be true.

In our younger years we thought that it was important that we have all the answers and so, when somebody asked a question, we gave them an answer. If we didn't have an

answer, we made one. And the problem with this is we later improved upon our creative answers. We buttressed them with other answers and went merrily on our way. And others took our creative answers and built on them and that's the way things get started. That's the way an entire church group could think that they're all going to a place of safety in Petra. Because someone gave an answer when he really didn't have one and somebody else decided to build upon it. You know if we could be a little less western in our thinking, if we could leave some things unexplained for the time being. If we could just have the ability to say, "I don't know?"

One of the greatest liberating things that has happened to me in my life and it has been some twenty-eight years or so now that I have been in this frame of mind. I'm sorry it wasn't longer. One of the greatest liberties is the freedom to say, "I don't know?"

And when you're not the president of a church, and you don't have to defend a doctrinal statement, and you don't have a creed out there somewhere that you got to stand up for. It allows you to grow in understanding. It allows you to look deeper. It allows you to look further into the distance. I think we might be surprised of how much understanding could come our way, if we could just learn to say, "I don't know?" when we don't.

So, what we are looking for today and what I'm going to talk about today is NOT new truth. It is not new doctrine. And I don't want to hear something coming back to me now, from out there one of these days. Well, Ron Dart has changed the whole doctrine of the Last Great Day. If I do, then I'm going to blame all of you for it. *(An audience laughs)*

But there is a curious anomaly in this festival that we observe here today and at least a couple of different angles on trying to understand it. There are theories that have been advanced day through the years that we have observed it and we need to talk about it.

One question for example, "Is this really. Is the Feast of Tabernacles an eight-day festival?" Or is it a seven-day festival followed immediately by another one day festival which is today, which we call the Last Great Day?

Here's the problem, in Hebrew there is a curiously little means of expressing emphasis, for example, one of the prophets is talking about what is going to happen to Moab in the end time. He says, "For three transgressions of Moab and for four." And he goes on then to explain. Well this for three and for four is merely a way of showing emphasis in a prophetic utterance like that.

And there is also one of the proverbs that begins, and I am sure, you're familiar with this one. He says, "There are six things that God hates. No, seven are an abomination to him." It's a funny little rhythmic expression. It seemed peculiar to Hebrew and it's a way of working your way into the facts that there really are seven really important things that God hates.

So, there is a theory that the Feast of Tabernacles is an eight-day festival. That when it says there are seven days that you keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the eighth day is a special day. It's merely attaching the eighth day, it really is an eight day festival and not a seven day festival. It's an eight-day festival in which the tents come down on the eighth day. The eighth day is the Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles and therefore, no name is given to it. No special typology needs to be developed or symbolism for it because it is part of the Feast of Tabernacles.

But we have long taught that this is a seven-day festival followed by an eighth day which is a different festival and this is what I believe to be the case. Now here is the operative scripture. We'll take a look at it and you can be the judge of what God intended to say with Lev. 23 beginning in verse 33.

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The Fifteenth day of the seventh month will be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day there will be a holy convocation. You shall do no servile work therein. Seven days shall an offering be made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day shall be a holy convocation. You shall offer an offering made by fire. It's a solemn assembly. You shall do no servile work therein.”

So, the first day and the eighth day become Sabbaths. We call them annual Sabbaths as opposed to the weekly Sabbath. They are festival days. No work. You're supposed to get together and there is supposed to be a solemn assembly. We all understand this. Then in verse 39 it says this.

“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you keep a feast to the Lord seven days. The first day shall be a Sabbath. The eighth day shall be a Sabbath.” And it is right here in this little verse that the thought that perhaps it's an eight-day festival and this is just a little idiom of expression in it comes to mind. But listen as it goes on. “You shall take to you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees. Branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees, willows of the brook and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. You shall keep it a feast to the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations.”

You celebrate it in the seventh month and how long do you celebrate it? You shall dwell in booths seven days. All that are Israelite born shall dwell in booths. Why? So your generation will know I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

How long is the Feast of Tabernacles? How long do you dwell in booths? Seven days. And so the eighth day sounds like it is a separate festival. But it has no name and it has no discernable symbolism, no handed down typology that is connected with it. As far as I can tell there is not enough evidence to close this out. So, I suggest that we don't close it out. I suggest we be mature enough to say that there are two ways of looking at this and that

we maintain an open mind on it. So, we don't wind up closing ourselves out to further understanding in time, maybe months, maybe years that come ahead of us. That would be, to go ahead and lock yourself in on one, is what I call over explaining. It's going too far.

We call this day, the eighth day of the feast, the Last Great Day. Right? This is based on a scripture found in John 7:37. You can turn to it if you wish. You don't have to. It is a short one. Jesus is going down to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. He went down secretly at first. His brethren said lets go down and keep the Feast. He said, "You all go ahead. I'll come later." And as soon as they were out of sight he went on down. He just did not want to go with them. He was trying to be quiet about going down there for reasons, well, it wasn't time for him to get killed yet. In John 7:37 though, after he has been in Jerusalem for a while, "In that last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, "If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This he said about the spirit, which they who believe on him should receive. Now, the commentators tell us this particular day of the festival there was a kind of water festival going on, on the temple mount. The place was washed with water everywhere. I don't remember all the implications of this or where it came from. It didn't really come from the law of Moses. It was a custom that had developed through the years. But it is easy to understand with Jesus here with water everywhere and the emphasis on water that he should make this statement on this day. But and it is out of this that we see this statement, "He who believes on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of water, and if any man thirsts, let him come to Me."

This is seen by many as the opening up of the gate. So that anybody and everybody can at long last come to Jesus Christ. And so in the comparison of this with Revelation 20 and the Great White Throne Judgement we have over the years developed a fascinating theology having to do with the second resurrection. Which I have spoken about I don't know how many times on the Last Great Day down through the years. If you would like to have one of those other sermons about this day feel free to write or call the office and we will send you one free of charge.

But anyway we couple it with that, and this picture comes out of it. I think [Alfred] Edersheim is the one who said that there is a kind of water festival on this day. And that there was water everywhere which led to Jesus' illusion to the living water.

However, Edersheim says something else. He says that the last great day of this water festival, the day on which Jesus made this statement was not today, it was yesterday. Think about it, on the last day of the feast. Well now if that's the case, if it's that great day. For a day to be greater or to be a great day, for it to be the last of something, there have to be something to come before it. So, that if this festival is indeed a completely separate festival from tabernacles, then the last of the days had to be yesterday. Now, I don't know if Edersheim is right about this. I just want to tell you about it because I thought maybe you ought to know.

That makes a certain amount of sense as I say if we believe the eighth day is a separate festival. The eighth day cannot be the last day of that feast. Now, I want you to tread very carefully with me here. We have a bad habit of treating theories as though they were facts and analogies as though they were the truth. One of the great examples of theory elevated to fact is Darwinian evolution and we all know where that took us. Now, what I want us to do is to consider the implications of the alternate theories that we're talking about on this day. You can draw an interesting analogy actually and one that is not very often drawn between the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles and the seven thousand years of biblical history. I'm choosing my words carefully. The seven thousand years of biblical history and there is an interesting analogy between the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles and this period of time. Because there is throughout the Bible the imagery, the typology, the symbolism of tabernacles is of tents, temporary dwellings. You're in this for a period of time. This is not a permanent house. This is not a mansion. This isn't a place with stone walls. You're under boughs of trees. You're in a brush arbor or you're in a tent made out of animal skins and this thing isn't intended to last forever. In fact, you have to build a new one every so often. They wear out, rats get into them and eat them up, insects get in. You have to do things because they wear out.

So, the whole idea of the tabernacle thing is of the fact that things are temporary. And if that's the case then you got to look at a seven thousand-year situation in which everything that is there is temporary. These can be seen as the seven days or the time of man in the flesh. A good strong case can be made for the symbolism of the temporary nature of man being connected to Israel living in booths. And the millennium, even the millennium is a temporary thing, it only lasts for a thousand years, not forever. It is the government of God upon the earth to accomplish certain things within this time frame that man is here.

But, yet God himself dwells with us in a tabernacle even during the millennium. As long as there are flesh and blood people we are not home yet. Okay, so the analogy would allow and that's the case for the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles to be the millennium. In that context, six thousand years, one thousand years, a thousand years is as a day. You can make a neat little analogy out of that can't you?

So, the Great White Throne Judgement at the end of the millennium, the cumulating event of the seven days, could conceivably, even still be a part of it because the people who are involved in that resurrection, which we have always said the second resurrection, are still in the flesh. They are in tabernacles. Paul himself talks about the human body as though it were a tabernacle. So, even in the second resurrection the people who come up are physical and they come up for judgement. They're judged of God and yet after that there are certain things that have to be straightened out. Well, this leaves as we've done it, with the symmetry of God's plan being completed in seven days all really interesting. But it leaves the eighth day dangling and we can't do that can we? We just can't allow it to dangle out there. We've got to kind of deal with it in some way. So, I got my trusty little laptop computer out and I punched up all the references to the eighth day in the Bible and began to think about the things that I did and what I found was a fascinating bit of symbolism

connected with Aaron and the priesthood. And I really regret that I hadn't studied it more carefully before.

Now, I want to ask you to turn back with me to the eighth chapter of Leviticus and you're going to have to sit up straight and pay close attention here. This is difficult and this is the place in the Bible where most people who start reading the Bible with Genesis 1, trying to read the whole Bible all the way through. Right about here is where most of them give up, right? I'll bet you a lot of you in here have stopped somewhere in the early chapters of Leviticus and when you had really made up your mind. I'm going to read this whole thing from beginning to end and chances are you stopped before you got to something very important. The problem is you read through this section and your eyes are going to glaze over because there is a lot of repetitious, animals being killed, water poured here, washing of this, it's a little hard to follow. So, bare with me, brace up, pay close attention and let me see if I can show you something that you might have missed.

The Lord spoke to Moses saying, "Take Aaron and his sons with him and the garments, the anointing oil, a bullock for a sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread." I told you your eyes would glaze over. "Gather you all the congregation together outside the door of the tabernacle." Verse 6: "Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. He put upon him the coat, girded him with the girdle, clothed him with a robe, and put the ephod on him"; and all that stuff. In verse 12, "He poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head and anointed him, to sanctify him." Question, Is Aaron now ready to serve God? Answer, No. And this is something that's really easy to overlook if you're not careful. Aaron was sanctified from the first day of this process. When you are baptized and you received the laying on of hands and we pray that God will give you his spirit. Do you understand that the laying on of hands is an act of setting you apart for God and that the act of setting apart is the act of sanctifying? You become holy to God on that day and that is why Paul writes to all the churches and says to the Saints, all the Saints in the Church of Corinth, all the Saints in the Church of Ephesus for these are the people who are set apart for God. In the same way that from the first day of the process of the consecration of Aaron he was sanctified set apart on that day. God wasn't finished with him and he isn't finished with you either on the day that you are sanctified. Aaron was sanctified from the first day.

Now, I am passing over a lot of this again to keep your eyes from glazing over and keep you from dropping off. Notice that this ceremony now is being conducted not by Aaron. It's being conducted by Moses. This is important. "Moses took the anointing oil and the blood" this is verse 30. "He took the anointing oil, the blood upon the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on his sons' garments. And he sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons and all their clothes with them." This is all going on, on the first day.

So, they're sanctified, but they are not yet ready to serve God. Think about this. They are set apart but they are not ready to enter into their office as priests. Moses said to

Aaron and his son in verse 31, “Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and eat it there with the bread that is in the basket of consecration, like I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it. That which remains of the flesh and of the bread shall you burn with fire.” In other words you can’t give this to anybody else you guys have to eat it all. “You shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration is at an end, for seven days he shall consecrate you.”

Now, this is really interesting because they were sanctified on day one, which began the process of consecration. That is the final dedication of these men to enable them to step into the temple and actually act out as the high priest, the role of Jesus Christ. Which was what the high priest did. Now, then he said, “As he has done this day, (verse 34) so the Lord has commanded you to do this, to make an atonement for you.”

You know there have been a lot of questions and I know Leviticus is very difficult in places. But Moses has just dropped something very important on us here. We all know that Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, we know about it. It’s the fast day, the day that we don’t eat anything. Well, we sort of look forward to it with mixed emotions. We forget though in the process of trying to understand atonement, in fact the Torah is just sprinkled with atonements. I mean they’re salted with them. Every time you turn around somebody has to have an atonement for something. Have you ever thought about that? Notice it, Aaron was sanctified to God the first day. For seven days of consecration had to go by to make an Atonement for him. What in the world is that all about? Well, I think maybe we might get a clue to this as we proceed. Because it seems fairly evident that as you read through the Bible we keep coming across these atonements. An atonement must be made every time someone is about to enter into or upon the service of God, to offer a sacrifice, to go to the holy place, to actually engage in the ceremonial, the *cultus* to use the scholarly word, of Israel. An atonement had to be made first so that they could go do this. In this case, the atonement is the preparation for something very important.

He says in verse 35, “Therefore you shall stay at the door of the congregation of the tabernacle day and night for seven days.” Notice they could not leave the tabernacle and in a sense you and I, when we are sanctified we’re still in the tabernacle if you want to look upon our flesh that way. And we’re there for whatever period of time we are going to be there. “Day and night for seven days you keep the charge of the Lord that you die not.” Go out of the door of the tabernacle and you are a dead man. “So, Aaron and his sons did all the things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.” So, they were made holy on the first day. Then they had to be consecrated for seven days and during this time they were not allowed to leave the tabernacle.

Are you still awake? Okay. Chapter 9:1, “It came to pass on the eighth day” This is what we are wondering about. If there is any symbolism to be found in the eighth day, if there is something as clue somewhere that would give us some idea of what God is driving at, and the idea of the eighth day. “On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and

the elders of Israel. And he said to Aaron, Take a calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering without blemish, and offer them before the Lord. For today the Lord will appear to you.” There are a few verses that are missing in there because I’m moving along again to keep from slowing us down too much. Today is the day God is going to appear to you. You are going to see God today. “And they brought that which Moses commanded before the tabernacle.” Verse 5, “All the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commanded you shall do, and the glory of the Lord shall appear to you on this day. Verse 22, Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them and came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation and came out and blessed the people and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people and suddenly there came out a fire from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat which all the people saw. They shouted and fell on their faces.” And I should think so. I should think so. I would expect it loosened a few bowels in the process.

It occurred to me as I read this that we are sanctified at baptism when we enter on a life of consecration. And that only when the consecration is complete our eighth day can we enter into what God has prepared for us. As Paul said, Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for them that love him. Now, look consider these items and think about what they might suggest to you. Aaron and his sons were sanctified for seven days. On the eighth day they got to see the glory of God. They were able to enter into their duties and begin to perform from that day forward as priests. All the animal sacrifices that had to be offered, had been a minimum of seven days under the dam (Lev. 22:27) and only from the eighth day forward could they actually be brought to and offered to God.

A man who happened to have a running issue out of his flesh had to be purified for seven days. It didn’t make any difference when it stopped. He had to be purified for seven days. On the eighth day he was able to come in and make an offering to God and not before that. A leper whose leprosy was healed had to be purified and go through the process for seven days. On the eighth day he could join the congregation of Israel, approach unto God again and once again make sacrifice in the temple. A new mother of a male child that was in her purification for seven days and then the boy was circumcised. Guess when he was circumcised, the eighth day. It crops up again and again and again. Because of the basic importance of the number seven, of rounding things out, of the completion of things, of the fact that this is the number of wholeness of everything. Then when things are finished what day is it next? It’s always the eighth day, where we are now.

The eighth day is the first day of whatever it is that comes next. There are seven days in a week. The seventh day is a Sabbath the eighth day, that’s the first day of the next seven-day cycle. So, in what way is today the first day of anything? How is it possible that it could be? We think of it as the end not the beginning of anything. What could it possibly symbolize as a beginning? I thought the best place to look for this was toward the end of the

book of Revelation. Remember we see through a glass darkly. We can only make out the beginnings of an outline. Rev. 20 opens up with the binding of Satan. An event often connected with the day of Atonement. Then the vision introduces us to the idea of the millennium which we talk about a great deal. Oddly it never seems to occur to us that the thousand years may be symbolic and not literal. It may be a general number and not that they've got some kind of a stop watch running as we run to the end of the thousand years. But how do we know it's otherwise? It also reveals that the resurrection in question is only the first resurrection. We understand that it takes us to the second resurrection and the last business of the flesh is taken care of, what we call the Great White Throne Judgement. When all the millions and billions of people who never had a chance to know God, never heard of God are brought up before him and the books are open. And one of the most astonishing things you could ever imagine in your life, as it happens, the book of life is opened.

Everyone who was written in the book of life was in the first resurrection and the only possible reason for opening it again is to make entries. That those people who never had their chance. This is where they get it. Now, I remember I told you that we are sanctified at baptism and then consecrated for the rest of our lives until the time comes. What are we being consecrated for? What are we being consecrated for? I want to read you something fascinating. It comes from doctrinal statements of one of the oldest continuing Christian churches. And I want you to hear it for two reasons. 1) I want you to know that this is not some cockamamie idea dreamed up in this century by some religious nut. It is an old honorable and respected doctrine. And second, it is written and stated better than anything I have read on this idea and it answers many of the questions that we have had for decades about this doctrine.

The doctrine that we have had, in our church over the years we have had a kind of blunt and brutal way of expressing it which many have found offensive. It is that man is to become God as God is God. And a lot of people simply cannot handle that. And I think some people think that the idea originated in just the last sixty years or so. It is something that somebody came up with in the Bible and actually it is much, much older than that. It comes from the Orthodox Church and the statement that I'm going to read to you is published by the Orthodox Church in America which is the particular American branch of that ancient old Eastern Orthodox Church which finds it express in the Greek language, the Russian language, the Syriac languages. There is where these things originally come from. It comes from the doctrine of man as stated by the Orthodox Church in America and I have edited this particular statement about man down to stick to the ideas in question. I want you to kind of grapple with for a moment. "Man is God's special creature." He is the only one created in the image and the likeness of God. Thus, at the end of the process of creation to know God to have dominion over all that God has made, as the image of God, ruler over creation, co-creator with the uncreated maker. Man has the task (listen carefully) Man has the task to reflect God in creation. Man has the task to make his -that's God's presence, his will, and his powers spread throughout the universe, to transform all that exists into the paradise of God." That blows my mind. You know I have felt timid about expressing

similar thoughts in the past. I mean I have given sermons where I have said, “Fifteen billion light years in that direction we can see what might be looking like the edge of the universe. Fifteen billion years in that direction, fifteen billion light years, we can see the other edge. Which means that people sitting on that edge don’t even know that that edge existed. They can’t see that far. That’s thirty billion light years.

I know all about the fact that we are looking back in time and all that. But it is still a staggering thing to consider. This earth, this world, this universe has been here for fifteen billion years. Our earth they say is three or four billion out of that period of time. And man, and I don’t care how you look at it, man has only been here by even sciences designation only a few thousands of years. And here we are in this little tiny slice of an incredible time span that we can’t imagine. If we took all the people who ever lived on earth and put them one at a time on planets thorough out our galaxy we would not have enough people to put one on every planet. I know that is speculative because scientists are just now figuring out and demonstrating that there are other planets but they have known that they were there all along. It is impossible that they were not. They just haven’t been able to demonstrate it until now. We couldn’t even begin to populate this galaxy. Forget the billions of other galaxies that are out there. So, you have to understand that what these men are saying here is that God intends that man make God’s presence, his will, and his powers spread throughout the universe to transform all that exists into the paradise of God. So, if you are looking for me to apologize anytime in the future for having said something like that, forget it.

This doctrine is older than Martin Luther and older than the Southern Baptist Convention by something in the neighborhood of a thousand plus years. It is an old Christian doctrine. One of the finest intellects in all of Christendom, C. S. Lewis speaks of it in his book, “Mere Christianity.” If you want to know where it is, it’s the third chapter from the end on Counting the Cost. It’s a fine piece of work. “In this sense,” continuing the quotation, “Man is definitely created for a destiny higher than the bodiless powers of heaven, the angles. Thus we see the great dignity of man according to the Christian faith.” Think about this, the great dignity of man. Man is not just some teeny little mass of worms and maggots down here that anyone can treat any way they want to. We are not here to be burned. We are not here to be discarded. We are not here to used up and thrown away. God has bestowed upon man the incredible dignity that we are to be the ones through whom he is going to reach out and make the entire universe the paradise of God.

He says, “thus we see the great dignity of man according to the Christian faith we see man as the most important of God’s creatures. The one for whom all things visible and invisible have been created by God.” It is absolutely inconceivable to me that God would allow a waste of such a resource. That he designed and intended for the purpose that he intended it. “It is the orthodox doctrine that one can understand and appreciate what it means to be human only in the light of the full revelation” of guess who, “Jesus Christ.” It’s the only way that you can understand it, “being the divine word and son in human flesh, Jesus reveals the real meaning of manhood.” Of what it means to be a human being. According to Orthodox theology “to bear the image of God is to be like Christ.” “The

uncreated image of God and to share in all the spiritual attributes of divinity.” Get that? To share in all of the spiritual attributes of divinity. Man! We didn’t come up with this. It’s an old Christian doctrine and it comes out of the Bible as a reason why it was take up this way. It is in the words of the Holy Father’s “to become by divine grace all that God himself is by nature.” and I don’t even know how to try to explain something like that. By divine grace to become all that God himself is by nature. That is what man is all about. And you see it has to be by Grace when you understand what is at stake. How can anyone by works, law keeping, ceremony ever achieve the divine nature? It has to be something that God bestows upon us by his grace. And I’m not through, it gets stronger. “If God is a free spiritual personal being, so human beings male and female are to be the same.” What is it? Free, spirit, personal. “If God is so powerful and creative having dominion over all creation, so human creatures made in his image and according to his likeness are to exercise dominion in the world. If God” and catch this carefully, listen closely to what I’m saying. “If God exercises dominion and authority not by tyranny and by oppression but by loving kindness and by service, so are his creatures to do likewise.” Do you think we could live like that? Do you think we can live that way? Do you think we could govern that way? Not by tyranny, not by oppression but by loving kindness and service. “If God himself is love, mercy, compassion, and care in all things, so must his creatures, made to be like him also be the same.” You know I think we have lost something somewhere along the way. I don’t know where it went. I don’t know how it got away but I think we better get it back. What it means to be Godly is what it is talking about here.

Finally, “if God lives forever in eternal life never dying but always existing in perfectly joyful and harmonious beauty and in happiness with all of creation, so too are human beings made for everlasting life in joyful and harmonious communion with God in the whole of creation.” Believe it or not it gets better, it gets better. According to Orthodox doctrine human being in life is never completed and finished in its development and growth, because it is made in the image and according to the likeness of God. Never finished, always growing. “God’s being in life are inexhaustible and boundless as the divine archetype has no limits to his divinity so the human image has no limits to its humanity to what it can become by the grace of God its creator.” “Human nature therefore is created by God to grow and develop through participation in the nature of God for all eternity.” Those thoughts had only played around the edges of my mind in years gone by. They were there and I understood them because they’re implicit everywhere you turn in the bible. But I had never heard anyone state it quite so clearly.

When you come up in the first resurrection, when you appear before God, finally on your eighth day as it were and you’re able to come into his presence, you’re able to see his glory, you are not finished. You are not ready to go. You are not ready for all your service. There is a long period. How long is eternity? Of growth, development, strengthening into the full nature of God that will go on for all of eternity. Man they say is made to become more Godlike forever. “More Godlike forever.” Thus the holy fathers of the orthodox faith taught that whatever stage of maturity and development man obtains and achieve, whatever his power, his wisdom, his mercy, his knowledge, his love there continually remains before

him an infinity of ever greater fullness of life. The fact that human nature progresses eternally in perfection within the nature of God constitutes the meaning of life for man and remains therefore the source of his joy and of his gladness for all eternity. An a man or woman who can grasp this will finally understand what is going on around them.

Candidly, when I look at some of the theology I read in the world, when I look at some of what churches teach and denominations and the doctrinal statements of these people. I can't understand how they ever explain Auschwitz. I can't understand how they can explain (?). I can't understand how they explain what is going on in east (?). I can't understand how they would ever grasp the meaning of the sufferings of people in this life. I think it is only when you understand that we are first sanctified. We go through a process of consecration and the time comes whenever we reach our eighth day and we come into the presence of God. That is what all this is about. If everything having to do with the flesh is wound up in seven days. What on earth is the eighth day all about?

Well, I think we will find it in Revelation 21:1. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, Look the tabernacle of God is with men and he'll dwell with them and they'll be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying. Neither shall there be anymore pain for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the thrones spoke and said, look I make all things new."

What then might the eighth day be? Well, the eighth day is the first day of the rest of your life. God be with you 'til we meet again.

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