

Celebrating the Lord's *Feast of Tabernacles*

The Feast of Tabernacles (also called "*Sukkot*") is a seven day Festival of JOY, during which God's people did none of their regular work. It's all about celebrating the glory of God. It was first a remembrance of when the Israelites had come out of Egypt (a *land of bondage* to the enemy) on their way to the *Promised Land*, and they were dwelling in the desert in little tabernacles, or *tents*. God told Moses, "Build one for Me also and I'll come down and live with you." So they built a Tabernacle for God according to His exact instructions, and the glory of God visibly came down and dwelt in their midst. That's what we celebrate at Tabernacles: *God's glory*. For Believers today, it is also a feast of thanksgiving for delivering *us* from the *land of bondage* to the enemy and sin, and taking us into a *land of promises*. It takes place in the fall as a feast of thanksgiving for the agricultural harvest, which symbolizes the time of the great harvest of souls and Christ's 1000 year reign on earth, when He will reign in ALL HIS GLORY.

We would like to share with you some of this Festival's deeply meaningful symbolism. In God's instructions to His people concerning His Feasts, He called them "holy convocations." The Hebrew word means "*a rehearsal*." They are also called: "The Feasts of the LORD," meaning *to move in a sacred procession, to observe a festival*.¹ Under the New Covenant in Christ, we don't celebrate these Festivals as rituals, or only just as Holidays on God's Calendar. In Exodus 23:15, God made a reference to them as *appointed* times, which in the Hebrew understanding means: *divine appointments*. So they are like appointments that God has put on His Calendar to have a *special* meeting with us. God said, *Every year on this date, I want to meet with you, because there are some special ways I want to bless you*. They're not just for the Jewish people anymore. As God's people, we get to be included now too! Zechariah 14 reveals that they are for "all the nations," and that there are promised blessings for the *Gentiles* who observe the Feasts! We must remember that our Lord—the Man, Jesus Christ—is Jewish—and He will be forever. They are celebrations *of our LORD*. (See Handout: "Celebrating the Feasts of the Lord" for more information.)

The Original Meaning of Feast of Tabernacles and How it Revealed Jesus:

God's set celebrations are recorded in Exodus chapters 12 and 23, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16. The Feast of Tabernacles' specific instructions to God's children in the Old Testament are found in Leviticus 23:33-43 and Deuteronomy 16:13-15. He instructed His children to construct a temporary shelter called a "*sukkot*" and to stay in that during the seven day festival of Tabernacles. It was to remind them, and all their future generations, of the time they had to wander in the wilderness after coming out of Egypt. It was also a reminder that God came down to dwell with them, lead them, provide for their every need, and protect them.

God gave Moses very detailed directions on constructing a Tabernacle for Him to dwell in the midst of the people. So Moses built it according to the exact details and when they had everything in place, they took the anointing oil and anointed the priests, and the Tabernacle and everything that was in it. Then they lit the candles and the lamps, the sweet incense on the altar; they offered the offerings, they put water in the laver to wash them. And do you know what happened next?... "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34-35)!

Then when King Solomon built the Temple according to God's instructions to David, here's what happened (and this took place during *Feast of Tabernacles*)! After they had set the Ark of the Covenant in its place, 2

Chronicles 5:13-14 says: "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures for ever: that then the House was filled with a cloud, even the House of the LORD; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the House of God." Then Solomon prayed, "O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like You in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keeps covenant, and shows mercy to Your servants, that walk before You with all their hearts..." (2 Chronicles 6:14). He made long and great supplication to God. In chapter 7 it says, "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from Heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the House. And the priests could not enter into the House of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S House. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the House, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

Then came Jesus...(He was actually born on the first day of Feast of Tabernacles). It says of Him in John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The Greek word translated as "*dwelt*" among us means: "to tent or encamp, to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion – Strong's #4637)." Jesus was made flesh and *tabernacled* among us! Now listen to this...it also says in the New Testament: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16)! Our bodies are the Tabernacle of the Living God! And He wants to fill us with His Glory! So for Believers, the Feast of Tabernacles is also a festival of thanksgiving that God now dwells in *us*, and leads *us*, protects *us*, and provides for *our* every need!

There was a very important Water Drawing Ceremony during the Feast of Tabernacles that was also a beautiful revelation of Jesus. Water was drawn from the Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem every day of the Festival with great ceremony, then brought to the Temple. There the priests poured out the water and wine in honor to Jehovah. This ceremony has been traced back to Isaiah 12:3, which says, "With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation." When the Temple was still standing, great pillars like on a candelabra were erected and lit. Because the Temple stood atop a hill, the blazing candles illuminated the city below, so that all the people of Israel could see it from afar. This glorious blaze of fire recalled to the Israelites God's *Shekinah Glory*, the pillar of fire by day and smoke by night that accompanied them throughout their wanderings in the wilderness. Men of great skill danced bearing torches while the Levite orchestra played on. It is said of the Temple illumination that accompanied the water-drawing ceremony, "He who has not beheld this celebration has never seen joy in his life."²

Now look at what is recorded in John 7:37-38 (*this took place on the last day of Feast of Tabernacles...right after this water drawing ceremony had taken place*), it says: "In the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, 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." And in John 4:14, He had said: "...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst..." It does tie back to Isaiah 12:3: "Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation." The Hebrew word translated as "salvation" is *Yeshua*! It's drawing water out of the wells of *Jesus*!!

“Rehearsal” of Things Yet to Come:

If “holy convocations” are “a rehearsal,” what is the Feast of Tabernacles a rehearsal for? The Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 2:16-17: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a *holy day*, or of *the new moon*, or of the *Sabbath days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Paul wrote this AFTER Jesus had already come, died, and rose again, so those special celebration days were *not* only a shadow of His first coming. They are also a shadow ***of things still yet to come!*** This is one reason why we should *still be* observing them. The Apostle Paul obviously was; and so was the early Church for hundreds of years.

So, the Feast of Tabernacles must hold prophetic aspects as well. Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the ultimate FEAST—the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the Lord’s 1000 year reign on earth when He will once again come and dwell in our midst! He will tabernacle among us! And His GLORY will cover the earth! It will literally be a time of paradise on earth, as prophesied in Habakkuk 2:14: “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” And in Isaiah chapters 11 and 12: “And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;...with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be *glorious*” (verses 1-10). “And in that day you shall say, O LORD, I will praise You...Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall you say, Praise the LORD, call upon His Name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His Name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for He has done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, You inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you” (Isaiah 12:1-6)!

The Water Pouring Ceremony commemorated the smiting of the rock in the wilderness. That rock was a symbol of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4) whose death would cause STREAMS of salvation to flow. From Christ's throne flows the RIVER of life (Revelation 22:1). Revelation 22:17 says, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the WATER of life freely." As Isaiah 44:3 says, “For I will POUR WATER upon him that is THIRSTY, and FLOODS upon the dry ground: I will POUR My Spirit upon your seed, and My blessing upon your offspring. And Isaiah 55:1, "EVERY ONE that THIRSTS, come to the WATERS..." One name of the seventh month on God’s calendar, during which the Feast of Tabernacle falls, is "Ethaniam" and means "EVER-FLOWING STREAMS," because this was the end of the dry season, just before the early RAINS, when all but the permanent RIVERS were dry. Ezekiel 47:1 describes a RIVER that is flowing from the *rock* under the temple. In Zechariah chapter 14, which is prophecy of the 1000 year reign of Christ, it is written: “And it shall be in that day, that LIVING WATERS shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and His Name One” (verses 8-9).

It will be as it is written in the passages of the book of Revelation: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our

Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever! (11:15)” “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints...Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (19:6-9). And at the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ, it is written: “And 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 as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (21:1-3)... “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new...It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (21:4-6)... “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city...I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely...He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:13-17, 20). Come...

Feast of Tabernacles is all about great rejoicing in God’s mighty works, His majesty, His love, His plan for His people and the world, and His complete victory over satan and his kingdom. Rejoicing before God is an act of spiritual warfare that does tremendous damage to the works of the devil, as Psalm 149 so well describes:

“Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His Name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon *(the devil and his kingdom of darkness)*; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all His saints. Praise ye the LORD!”

¹ Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982, #2287.

² Information Adapted from: www.jewsforjesus.org