

The Feast of Tabernacles

October 4, 2017

This year the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) will begin on October 4, 2017, at evening, according to the Hebrew diaspora calendar, concluding on October 11 in the evening, according to the Hebrew diaspora calendar, and conclude 8 days later (evening). Tabernacles is the 3rd of a set of three fall holy feasts specified in the Torah for the month of Tishri. The Feast of Tabernacles (Yom Teruah) is a one-day event on 1Tishri with the sounding of shofars. It is also regarded as the “turning of the year”, and the beginning of the Jewish New Year (Rosh HaShanah). The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is observed not as a feast but instead as a fast on the 10th of Tishri. Then on the 15th of Tishri the Feast of Tabernacles is observed lasting eight days.

In ancient times, the fall feasts were very significant in the temple ceremonies. The Feast of Tabernacles was one of three pilgrimage festivals (the others were the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Weeks). The men of Israel would travel to the temple and build their booths (Sukkot) around Jerusalem. The greatest number of temple sacrifices were offered in the Temple at the Feast of Tabernacles. Four great lights were erected to light the temple at night for the Feast. King Solomon used the Feast of Tabernacles for the dedication of the temple he built in Jerusalem. The commandments given by Moses and the glory of Solomon’s Temple coupled to make Tabernacles in ancient times a very important time for all Israel.

On the first day of Sukkot thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs, and one male goat were offered up in addition to a meal offering and the daily offerings. On the second day of Sukkot, it was the same except the number of bulls was reduced by one to twelve. Each day of Sukkot that followed continued to reduce the bulls by one until on the 7th days of Sukkot, a total seventy bulls, fourteen rams, ninety-six Lambs, and seven male goats were offered. All throughout this week, the temple was not closed. Instead, great lights were set up in the court of women that would illuminate the entire temple area. This light was to remind Israel of how the Lord’s presence was a column of cloud by day and a column of fire by night to be a light in the camp. On the eighth day of the feast they had a special water ceremony for the altar. This day was called Hoshanah Rabah (the Great Salvation); it was the great day of the feast.

The special water ceremony served as the highest ceremonial element of the temple worship. Everything that had happened previously built to this day and this particular ceremony. The renown men of Israel—every priest, teacher scribe and leader—were in the temple to observe this one ceremony. It was a rare moment in the cycle of each year to see all of the leaders in the land assembled at the temple.

The sequence of the water ceremony involved a single priest being dispatched from the temple down to the Pool of Siloam. Siloam means *sent*. The priest was referred to *as he who is sent*, a reference to the one sent from heaven (the temple mount) down to Siloam, the lowest part of Jerusalem (the earth). Dispatched with a golden pitcher, the priest would draw water from the pool. These waters were called the waters of Salvation (literally the waters of Yeshua). The prophet Isaiah describes this moment: ***Behold, God is my Salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation*** (Isa. 12:2-3).

Once the waters were drawn, the trek back up to the temple would begin with a flute player leading the priest. The flute player was referred to as the *pierced one* because the flute was a tube with holes in it.

As the priest with the water entered the court of Israel in the temple, the silver trumpets were sounded to focus everyone’s attention. The water priest was then joined by another priest carrying a silver pitcher of wine. Together, they would walk up the ramp of the altar and position themselves atop of the altar at the southwest corner. Two funnel shaped goblets were set at the edge of the altar with the drain spout directing the flow down the side of the altar. One funnel was for the water, the other for the wine. In synchronous fashion, the priests would pour out their pitchers while keeping their aim on the funnels. Beginning low and slow, the priests would raise their pitchers while keeping their aim on the funnels. This was done for all to see the “outpouring.” Those witnessing the ceremony observed the parallel streams on the side of the altar of water and wine. So let us consider the prophetic picture outlined for us in the water ceremony that illustrates the Messiah. The process of descending and ascending (from heaven to earth) is a major prophecy of the Messiah. The writer of Proverbs

knew that this ascending and descending process was about God and His Son: *Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!* (Prov. 30:4).

The Messiah was the sent one from our heavenly Father to “see to the welfare of the brethren and the flock” (the first expression in the Torah for the story of redemption). The Messiah’s name was the same name given to the life-giving waters from the pool called *Yeshua* (Salvation). The Messiah was the pierced One from His Sacrifice. The Messiah will one day be heralded by trumpets and all persons will give attention to His return. The parallel streams down the side of the altar symbolize salvation and spirit: wine typifies blood or life and water typifies spirit or life. When *Yeshua* was pierced, He too had two streams of blood and water pour down His side. The Apostle John emphatically states this: *“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has borne witness, and His witness is true; and He knows He is telling the truth,, so that you also may believe”.* (John 19:34-35)

The water ceremony symbolizes God’s response to a daily prayer all during the Sukkot festival. The prayer to God was “Hosanna!” Hosanna!” (God save us), and for His Spirit to be “poured out” on all of them. All week this was prayed at the altar waving their leafy palm branches. Then, on the final day, the water ceremony would take place as the picture of God giving life and pouring out His Spirit. The Apostle John records for us what happened when *Yeshua* attended this ceremony at the Feast of Tabernacles: *Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified!* (John 7:37-39)

Yeshua associated the “waters of salvation” having His same name to God’s redemption. He was saying that He was the redemption—the **salvation**. Pouring out the waters symbolized the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who was a gift after *Yeshua*’s redemption. John qualifies *Yeshua*’s statement by saying that the Spirit was given later **(at the Feast of Weeks—which is Pentecost)**.

When blood and water flowed from *Yeshua*’s body, it matched the witness of the altar water ceremony, it symbolized God’s redemption in parallel with the outpouring of the Spirit. This double witness symbolizes the gift of eternal life!

Remember, the witness of the water and the wine was evidenced at *Yeshua*’s death while He was on the cross at Passover. Every feast has something to say about the Messiah, but the testimony of His death at Passover and His declaration at the previous Sukkot seals the great story of Redemption with the elements of both past and future.

Remember *Yeshua*’s entrance into Jerusalem for that last Passover? The people laid out palm branches, before Him and cried out, “Hosanna, Hosanna!” which means *God save us!* The palm branches and the cry of Hosanna comes from the Feast of Tabernacles. The people were still celebrating the previous Feast of Tabernacles on the basis of what *Yeshua* had said! But now it was Passover in the springtime. This shows you how powerful *Yeshua*’s declaration was from the Feast of Tabernacles! This is why the religious leaders told *Yeshua* to correct his followers (it wasn’t Tabernacles; it was Passover). *Yeshua* corrected those leaders saying that if the people were stopped, the stones would cry out!

What does the Feast of Tabernacles have to say about our future?

The Scripture does say much about the Feast of Tabernacles and our future. The reference to the tribulation saints described in the book of the Book of Revelation is about the Feast of Tabernacles!

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; (Revelation 7:9).

And I said to him, “My Lord, you know.” And He said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great Tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason,

they are before the Throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His Temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. ” (Revelation 7:14-15).

The Palm branches reveal the setting for the tribulation saints. They are gathered for the Feast of Tabernacles--the feast of ingathering. This is why the Lord's throne is spread like a tabernacle over them. This is confirmed by the prophet Zechariah. He says the first event upon The Lord's return to Jerusalem after the day of the Lord is the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles: *Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.* (Zech.14:16)

That makes sense because the Feast of Trumpets symbolizes the resurrection, and Atonement symbolizes the Day of the Lord. It follows then that Tabernacles is the true ingathering of all of His saints at Jerusalem.

Apparently, God intends to use the future Feast of Tabernacles in the kingdom as the reference counter for the number of years in the millennial reign. The Feast of Tabernacles therefore, will commemorate not only our ancestors' exodus from Egypt, but also our greater exodus (the Tribulation Saints—the final generation) leading into the promised kingdom. This is consistent with the Lord's promise concerning the Kingdom of David. King David served as the king of Israel for 40 years and held the greatest amount of territory in Israel's history. God's promise is to raise up David's booth (Tabernacle) in the same manner in the Messiah's kingdom: *In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches: I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My Name,*” declares the Lord who does this. (Amos 9:11-12).

What does the Feast of Tabernacles have to do with us in the present?

The Feast of Tabernacles is an important piece in the jigsaw puzzle for end times preparation. Many church brethren are aware of the Lord's second coming and believe God will gather us up in an event called the Rapture. This is a false expectation; it is not what the prophecy says. Instead, the prophecy speaks of another exodus, a greater exodus from all of the nations. It is not a rapture, it is following the pattern of the deliverance from Egypt. Moses described it for us in the future at the conclusion of the Torah: *So shall it be when all these things shall come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all Nations where the Lord your God has banished you, and you return to your Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you; and will gather you again from all the peoples where he Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord thy God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.* (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).

Also this future gathering is referred to us an exodus from the nations, greater than the exodus from Egypt. The Prophet Jeremiah describes it this way: *“Therefore behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “When it will no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘as the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.* (Jeremiah 16:14-15)

“Therefore behold. Days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when they will no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt, but, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ Then they will live on their own soil.” (Jeremiah 23:7-8).

The great gathering at the end of the ages is the gathering Paul refers to at the end of the age of the Gentiles when “all Israel” is saved; *for I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in: and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.* ” (Romans 11: 25-26).

Paul's quote from Isaiah 59:20 is in the context of when Zion will be glorified in the millennial kingdom. Paul is saying that the saving of all Israel comes at the end of an age (our present one) and just prior to the coming kingdom. It is in keeping with the promise of the land to Abraham called the "**Greater Israel.**" Only King David came close to seeing this kingdom described.

To best understand the events of the second coming, you would be well advised to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). This has been the Biblical pattern for how everyone comes to the Promised Land (*The future kingdom with the Messiah*).

When Jacob returned to the land of his fathers Abraham and Isaac, he first camped in Sukkot after resolving his conflict with Esau: ***And Jacob journeyed to Sukkot; and built for himself a house, and made booths for his livestock, Therefore the place is named Sukkot.*** (Genesis 33:17)

When the children of Israel first left Egypt in the Exodus, their first camping place was Sukkot: ***Then the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses, and camped in Sukkot*** (Numbers 33:5).

There is no idle word or sentence for the Scripture. This is not coincidental; this pattern of first going to Sukkot is consistent in the Scripture. Therefore, it foretells what will be happening to us. Learning about Sukkot and keeping it today prepares you for the end of the ages and the greater exodus.

What do we learn at the feast of Tabernacles?

It's about the past, our ancestors and how they were freed from Egypt by escaping to the wilderness. We learn about God's salvation! In the wilderness, they were led by the Lord. He was a cloud by day and a fire by night. He gave them bread to eat. He gave them meat and water. He gave them His instructions, the Torah. He made them a free people. They lived in booths and became a community of believers.

We learn the same spiritual things about our Messiah. We learn that the living waters come from the Rock of our Salvation, that the true bread of heaven was He who was sent by the Father. We learn that eating this bread satisfies all hunger and drinking this water satisfies all thirst. We learn how to assemble together and worship under the instruction of the greatest Torah teacher, Yeshua Ha Meshiach.

We learn practical things as well. We learn how to be hot, then cold, then sweaty, tired, shower in cold water, spill our coffee and drop our food, and still rejoice in the Lord. We learn that life is really being with God and that His presence is more important than things which are passing away. We learn how to cooperate with one another for practical things. We also learn to trust God for all our needs. Then, we learn about our future. We learn how to physically and spiritually prepare for the Great Tribulation, which will be like the great and terrible wilderness.

Many brethren today have a strong sense that we are at the end of the ages, that this is the time for the Lord to draw near. I believe we are the last generation. I believe we should prepare for His coming; but building a fortress in a remote country location, stockpiling it, and thinking that there is a huge government conspiracy against us is not preparing for the coming of the Lord. It is trying to save yourself. It is not following God's plan for failure. Only God can/will save us from terrorists. He has a plan to deliver us; that plan is Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. His plan is well documented in the Scriptures. It is simple, but I fear that many will not know of His plan for deliverance, or worse yet, will not be willing to follow it.

If you do not leave Egypt, you cannot go to the Promised Land. If you don't leave your house to join the camp of the righteous, then you should not expect God to lead you to safety and walk you into the kingdom at the end of the Great Tribulation. Instead, you should expect to be killed trying to defend your place or for the enemy to come after you, and take you into the Great Tribulation—instead you should expect to be killed trying to defend your place or for the enemy to come get you and take you into captivity. The Scriptures describes this alternative—positively! ***If anyone is destined for captivity to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the Saints.*** (Revelation 13:10).

The destiny that you should want is that of those who escape, endure, and survive to the very end. Those are the brethren who chose to learn and keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

I hope and trust that you are growing in your Messianic faith. I hope that you will plan to be part of a Feast of Tabernacles this year and in the future, especially the first one in the kingdom. We need to practice this feast though; we need to understand this gathering process. Personally, I don't think we have many more practices left before the real events begin to take place.

REMEMBER THIS BEFORE YOU GO TO SLEEP

If you will not leave Egypt, you cannot go to the Promised Land. If you refuse to leave your house to join the camp of the **RIGHTEOUS**, Then you should not expect God to lead you to safety and walk you into the Kingdom at the end of the Great Tribulation...find a place of intense; and powerful prayer in Christ Jesus before it's too late. Therefore, if you do not expect to carry your load of troubles which you will soon see, it may be too late to call upon the Saviour, Jesus. Delaying will only allow Jesus to bring forth your Judgment...

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