

The Feast of Tabernacles – Sukkot

“ You shall keep the Feast of Tabernacles seven days after you have gathered in your grain floor and your wine press. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your male slave, and your slave-girl, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow inside your gates. Seven days you shall keep a solemn feast to Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah shall choose. Because Jehovah your God shall bless you in all your increase, and in all the works of your hands, therefore you shall surely rejoice.” Deuteronomy 16:13-15

The Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot is the last and greatest feast of the seven yearly Feasts. It is celebrated for seven days from Tishrei 15 to 21. This feast is a joyous celebration, and is also known as the Feast of Ingathering, which refers to the summer harvest and the gathering of the crops into the barns. Yeshua told us that the harvest represents the end of the age (Matthew 13:39; Revelations 14:15 and Joel 3:13). The harvest refers to those who are ready to accept Yeshua as their Lord and Savior. We are living in the end time harvest, where the fields are ready for “ingathering” as never before. Yeshua said that we should pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the field. God is gathering both Jews and Gentile together at this time for the greatest harvest of souls, ever. This Feast was also a reminder to the Israelites during their time of sojourning through the dessert where they built “booths” for themselves to dwell in – these were temporarily dwellings on their way to the promised land.

Prophetically it points to a time coming when the Lord Himself will come to “tabernacle” amongst His people. God not only desires to tabernacle with us, but also to indwell His people – “indwelling” relates to a much deeper reality of God dwelling in us. There are numerous passages throughout scripture that reflects this reality of God’s heart and His desire to walk with man, the fulfillment of this was brought through God giving us His only Begotten Son, who came to earth, and dwelt among us, and now in us through the Holy Spirit. “in whom you also are built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:22

“And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God in the middle of the trees of the garden.” Genesis 3:8

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer is. 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 will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away.” Revelations 21:1-4

“And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth.” John 1:14

God also instructed Moses to start the building of the tabernacle during Sukkot. The materials to build the tabernacle was collected during the days before Sukkot, and the work began on it. (Exodus 35; 36:1-7).

“And let them make Me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8 Sukkot is also a reminder of God’s supernatural protection over Israel during their wilderness years. Today it reminds us prophetically of the Messianic Kingdom and the joy of that Kingdom.

Prophetically God is speaking a greater reality to us through His feasts – not only to bless us, but to make us constantly aware of His great love for us and for His plan through Yeshua for all of humanity. Yeshua has come in the flesh, He lived upon this earth and John speaks of this evidently, they have seen Him, and the disciples beheld His glory, just as we behold Him and behold His glory by Holy Spirit.

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in you, whom you have of God? And you are not your own, for you are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” 1 Corinthians 6:19

THE MEANING OF TABERNACLES

“A Sukkah”

The Hebrew word for tabernacle is sukkah, meaning a booth, a hut, a covering, a tent or pavilion. In the new testament the disciples speaks of Yeshua who tabernacle amongst them. The whole concept and understanding of a tabernacle or sukkot is a “temporary” dwelling place. The word speaks of us, as God’s children, being sojourners upon the earth and looking forward to a permanent place or residence. “A temple not build with human hands but whose builder and maker is God, Himself. And so Israel through their time of sojourning through the dessert for forty years understood this so well, as they longed for a permanent country to settle in. In the desert they lived a nomadic existence; they dwelt in tents, and always hoped for a more permanent place to settle.

God used this period to train them, and to show them that He alone is their provider. This concept of sojourning we can find throughout scripture, and many of the patriarchs lived out this reality. The book of Hebrews speaks clearly of those who sojourned and overcame through many trials and tribulations, enduring their circumstances (which many times seemed beyond hope), because they knew and looked unto the God of all hope, in whom their trust was secured and the promise of an eternal city in which righteousness dwells, a permanent dwelling place in the Presence of Almighty God.

“They were stoned, they were sawed in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise, for God had provided some better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us.” Hebrews 11:8-11

THE CONCEPT OF TABERNACLING THROUGH THE WORD

A TEMPORARY DWELLING PLACE

“And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth.” John 1:14

Peter spoke of his body as being a tabernacle. “But I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by a reminder,” 2 Peter 1:13

The Apostle Paul speaks of our earthly bodies as tabernacles.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our dwelling-place out of Heaven; if indeed in being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened; inasmuch as we do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so that the mortal might be swallowed up by the life. And He who has worked in us for this same thing is God, who also is giving to us the earnest of the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

Moses’ tabernacle was a tent of habitation for the glory of God.

“The tabernacle of witness was among our fathers in the wilderness, as commanded by God, speaking to Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen.” Acts 7:44

“For the first tabernacle was prepared, in which was both the lampstand, and the table, and the setting out of the loaves, which is called Holies. And after the second veil was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a

golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid all around with gold, in which was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. And over it were the cherubs of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat (about which we cannot now speak piece by piece now when these things were ordained in this way, the priests always went into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But once in the year into the second the high priest goes alone, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people) the Holy Spirit signifying by this that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing." Hebrews 9:2-8

The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in tabernacles.

(Hebrews 11:8-9)

The tabernacle of David was a tent or dwelling place.

"After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen down; and I will build again its ruins, and I will set it up," Acts 15:16

"In that day I will raise up the booth of David that has fallen, and close up its breaks; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old;" Amos 9:11

Yeshua entered the temple on the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles). "And the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near." John 7:2

"However, we know this one, from where he is; but when Christ comes, no one knows from where He is. Then Jesus cried in the temple as He taught, saying, You both know Me, and you know from where I come. And I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He has sent Me." John 7:27-29

The Word of God speaks not only of a temporary tabernacle but always refers to a heavenly tabernacle that will come to earth.

'Now the sum of the things which we have spoken is this: We have such a High Priest, who has sat down on the right of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:1-2

"And it opened its mouth in blasphemy toward God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those dwelling in Heaven." Revelations 13:6

"And after these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was opened in Heaven." Revelations 15:5

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer is. 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 will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God." Revelations 21:1-3

From this scripture above we can see how the Spirit is prophetically pointing toward the future Messianic age, the Millennium, and so our present life here is one of sojourning and a reminder that we are but pilgrims upon the earth, and that this is truly our temporary dwelling place. Every believer in Yeshua can be assured that at the coming of the Lord, we will receive a new and heavenly, glorified body.

The Lord, Yeshua Himself, was a picture of an earthly tabernacle in which God's glory is dwelling in fullness.

The disciples testified to this in their encounter on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James and John saw the Lord's glory. As a body of believers who are filled with the Spirit of the Lord (Ruach Ha Kadesh), we are corporately and

individually a dwelling place for His glory. We are that living stones, which Yeshua is building, into a spiritual house, in which He dwells.”

I love the scripture in 1 Peter 2:5, which so expresses this truth. “you also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5

“Then being always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are away from home from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight, then we are confident and we are pleased rather to go away from home out of the body, and to come home to the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:6

“For we say this to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall not go before those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of our temporary dwelling (the flesh), and that we should never make this our home, as we are only passing through, and should constantly look forward to our eternal home.

When we depart from earth, we will find our city whose builder and maker is God. We will for all eternity dwell in His tabernacle.

“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 will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away.” Revelations 21:3-4

SUKKOT IN ISRAEL

In Modern Israel, families will build themselves temporary dwellings or “booths’.

They will eat and dine in these booths for seven days. In Leviticus 23, the Lord instructed them to come with exuberant worship before Him. The worshippers would wave branches and fruits before the Lord. The branches of these trees were branches and fruit of four different species, called in Hebrew the Lulav and Etrog (the palm branches, myrtle, willow and citron. This Feast was a joyous feast of celebration, and is still celebrated in such a manner. In the days of the Temple, vast priestly choirs accompanied by instruments would praise and sing the Psalms of Ascent to the Lord in worship, while they waved leafy boughs with joy before the Lord.

According to Numbers 29:12-39 the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, was also a time where animals was sacrificed. Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord during the Feast of Tabernacles and we know how the Lord answered Solomon’s prayer and answered with fire from Heaven. “

“And 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 Jehovah filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah because the glory of Jehovah had filled Jehovah's house. And when all the sons of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of Jehovah on the house, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised Jehovah, saying, For He is good, for His mercy endures forever.” 2 Chronicles 7:1-3

And so God desire to fill our hearts of worship with His glory. God delights in the offerings of the sincere praise and worship of our hearts to Him. God delights in our offerings of praise, thankfulness, holiness, worship, having a heart for the poor and destitute and a heart of humbleness before Him. Once we understand and desire to be filled with the fullness of who He is, we will have the manifest presence of God in our midst, in our meetings. We will see and experience the fire of God and the cloud of His glory, in our midst.

THE CELEBRATION OF WATER POURING

One of the themes of Tabernacles is the joyful Water-Drawing Ceremony and the prayers for rain. This ceremony dates back to the time of Ezra, and we read about it in the Book of John.

“And in the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (But He spoke this about the Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.)’ John 7:37-39

The prophet Isaiah recorded it as a prophetically in his writings, referring to Yeshua who became for us “salvation.”

“And with joy you shall draw water out of the wells of salvation” Isaiah 12:3

Simchat Beit HaShoevah, “the rejoicing in the house of the water pouring” is a ceremony included in the temple services, although not mentioned in the Torah. This ceremony became the focus of joy that the Torah commands for Sukkot. On no other festival were the people commanded to be joyful.

During the water pouring ceremony the High Priest, followed by hundreds of Levites, would walk down the Temple to the Pool of Siloam, the Levites would worship to Psalms 113-118 (also known as the Hallel). The High Priest would fill the pitcher with water, and the joyful throng would wave the willow branches and palm branches before the Lord.

Once they arrived at the inner court of the Temple, the high priest would pour the water into the basin of the altar, which was designed for this drink offering. This water offering was unique as it was only pour out during Tabernacles. Normally they would recite Isaiah 12:3 as the Priest poured the water and prayers were made for the autumn rains.

Yeshua spoke of Himself as “the living waters”, and identified Himself to the Feast of Tabernacles. In John 4, Yeshua had the encounter with the Samaritan woman, and spoke to her in the same prophetic language, as the “being this life giving water.”

“Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give Me to drink, you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water. The woman said to Him, Sir, you have no vessel, and the well is deep. From where then do you have that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his children and his cattle? Jesus answered and said to her, Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:10-14

Anyone who was and is familiar with the scriptures will understand and know that the Lord throughout scripture by the Holy Spirit make reference of the reality of the waters of life, the river of God, the river of justice and streams of righteousness.

“And He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the Water of Life freely.” Revelations 21:6

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let the one hearing say, Come! And let the one who is thirsty come. And he willing, let him take of the Water of Life freely.”Revelations 22:17

“And with joy you shall draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Isaiah 12:3

THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Each night during the Festival of Tabernacles four huge lamp stand were lit in the temple courts. The lamp stands were so tall, that the priests had to climb ladders to fill the bowls with fresh olive oil every evening. The wicks of these lamp stands were mad from the old linen garments of the priests. Everyone in the near vicinity of the Temple could see these flickering radiance of the light shining forth from the Temple. This seven day light festival was a joyous occasion. Just as

Yeshua announced that He was the source of living waters, at the end of the morning service, just so He appeared and ministered the following day in the Temple, making the following statement:

“Then Jesus spoke again to them, saying, I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12

The Scriptures seem to indicate that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Tabernacles. It is amazing how in each of the Feast of the Lord, He has so intricately interwoven the reality of His plan and heart for each one of us. God is showing us through His Spirit prophetically His plan in and through Yeshua. We are never to fall into legalism, even when we celebrate these Feasts, but to enjoy the blessing they bring, realizing God’s heart for us. Everything seen and unseen have been created by Him, for Him and in Him, and it is for us as God’s people to celebrate His greatness and love for us through each and every occasion.

May the Lord bless you and your families as you joyously celebrate the times and season and His Feasts.