

Feasts of the Lord



September 24, 2018

Feast of Tabernacles

Feast of Tabernacles / Feast of Booths

Sukkot Leviticus 23:33-43

Feast of Tabernacles:

- This is the most joyous of all the feasts because it is a celebration of the presence and glory of God, dwelling among His people.
- The main point we want to grasp with this feast is that the very essence of God's people is that they have a relationship with Him. Not just His law, but God Himself. The fullness of this relationship, through Jesus, is that a time will come (with the New Heavens and the New Earth) when God will dwell with His people (Revelation 21)
- Feast of Tabernacles is the historical backdrop for John chapters 7, 8, 9
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (First Coming)

Leviticus 23:33-36,39-43

The Feast of Booths

³³ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. ³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ³⁶ For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.

³⁹ “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

The Ceremony

- The people were to live in booths and rejoice before the Lord with branches (for a week with a sacred assembly or Sabbath as the first and eighth days)
- There were to be many daily, sacrificial offerings (Numbers 29:12 – 39): Each day one goat, 14 lambs, two rams, and a number of bulls (13 on the first day, decreasing by one each day) were offered in the temple
- Each of the sacrifices was offered with its appropriate meal offerings (flour and oil) and drink offerings (wine)
- All 24 divisions of priests shared in the sacrificial duties during the week

Looking Back: Root of the Feast

Exodus and the Forty Years in the Wilderness

- The primary symbol of the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths is the *sukkah* or tabernacle
- This was an annual reminder to the nation of Israel of God's provision during the forty-year wilderness sojourn
- It is also known in Scripture as "the Feast of Ingathering" (Exo. 23:16 and 34:22) for it was observed after all crops had been harvested and gathered (effectively Israel's "Thanksgiving")

A Feast Celebrating the Goodness of God in the Past, Present, and Future

- Past Goodness of God:
 - the provision during the 40 years in the desert
- Present Goodness of God:
 - completion of the harvest (Thanksgiving)
- Future Goodness of God:
 - one day, God would gather all His People to Himself and dwell with them

Looking Back: Historical Observance of the Feast of Tabernacles

- 2 Chronicles 5:3 “ And all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast that is in the seventh month”
 - one of three feasts that all men are to attend; Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks
- 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 7:1-10

The Ark Brought into the Temple

1 Kings 8:1-11

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. ³ And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ And they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵ And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

⁶ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁸ And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. ⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Solomon Blesses the LORD

1 Kings 8:12-21

¹² Then Solomon said, “The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ¹³ I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” ¹⁴ Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. ¹⁵ And he said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, ¹⁶ ‘Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there. But I chose David to be over my people Israel.’

¹⁷ Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁸ But the LORD said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ ²⁰ Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹ And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

1 Kings 8:22-27

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, ²³ and said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; ²⁴ you have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. ²⁵ **Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.’** ²⁶ Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.

²⁷ “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

Significance of Feast of Tabernacles and the Davidic Covenant

- In the sovereignty of God, Solomon completed the temple to house the Ark of the Covenant and dedicated the temple at the Feast of Tabernacles
- It was in this context that further promises were made to David regarding him never ceasing to have a descendent upon the throne (where the Greater David is, of course, Jesus)

Extra-Biblical History: Context for John 7, 8, and 9

- Two Further Pictures Associated with the Feast of Tabernacles: Water and Light

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Extra-Biblical Ceremonies of Water and Light:

For each of the days of the Feast, it was the tradition of the Israelites (at least 100 years prior to the “birth” of Jesus) to engage in a light ceremony at night and a water ceremony in the morning.

Water:

- The Feast of Tabernacles occurs at Israel’s change of seasons and marks the beginning of the winter rainy season.
- In the Hebrew Scriptures the people of Israel depended upon God to water Israel (and so the people would pray for rain at this time).
- During the Feast of Tabernacles, a tradition arose (not set out in scripture) as the intense anticipation of rain came to be reflected in the Temple services. Each morning, a sacrificial pouring out of a liquid was offered to the Lord as a visual prayer for rain.
- The Water Gate was named due to its involvement in this ceremony.
- The greatest day of this “water” ceremony occurred on the last and final day of the Feast (John 7:37)

The Gospel According to John (D.A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary), p321-322

“On the seven days of the Feast, a golden flagon was filled with water from the pool of Siloam and was carried in a procession led by the High Priest back to the temple. As the process approached the watergate on the south side of the inner court three blasts from the ... [shofar]— a trumpet connected with joyful occasions – were sounded. While the pilgrims watched, the priests proceeded around the altar with the flagon, the Temple choir singing the *Hallel* (Psalms 113 to 118) ... When the choir reached Psalm 118, every male pilgrim took ... willow and myrtle twigs tied with palm) in his right hand, while his left raised a piece of citrus fruit (a sign of the ingathered harvest), and all cried ‘Give thanks to the Lord!’ three times. The water was offered to God at the time of the morning sacrifice, along with the daily drink-offering (of wine). The wine and the water were poured into their respective silver bowls, and then poured out before the Lord. Moreover, the ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles were related in Jewish thought both to the Lord's provision of water in the desert and to the Lord's outpouring of the Spirit in the last days. Pouring at the Feast of Tabernacles refers symbolically to the messianic age in which a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth...”

The Gospel According to John (D.A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary), p321-322

Carson quote continued:

Although the water rite was not prescribed by Old Testament law, its roots go back at least a couple of hundred years before Christ, and perhaps earlier ...

The water-pouring ceremony is interpreted in these traditions as a foretaste of the eschatological rivers of living water foreseen by Ezekiel (47:1-9) ... the water miracle in the wilderness (Ex. 17:1-7 ...) is in turn a forerunner of the water rite of the Feast of Tabernacles.

John 7:37-44 (during Feast of Booths)

It is in the context of a water ceremony that reached a climax on the last day of the Feast of Booths (and this background of water metaphors in the Bible), that John 7:37-44 records, while Jesus is in Jerusalem for this feast:

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ **Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”** ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 7 – Water Ceremony (con'd)

- The priests were likely conducting their water ceremony and the people praying for blessing in the form of water and then Jesus states that **“whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”**
- Connection here is made as well to Isaiah 55:1, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink”**. Jesus fulfills this prophetic statement.
- Debate then ensues in the following verse as “some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.”
- Having interrupted the feast and apparently this water ceremony by making this statement, Jesus appears to have been claiming divinity. Obviously, to the religious leaders this is a shocking, threatening statement. Consequently, as recorded in John 7:44, “Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.” The officers that should have arrested Jesus answered (as to why they did not arrest him) in John 4:26, “No one ever spoke like this man!”

[Jesus also makes a similar reference to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:10, Jesus answered her, **“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”**]

Two Further Pictures, Water and Light, con'd

Light:

- During the Feast there was the tradition of a light celebration each night
- The light celebration is said to have been reminiscent of the descent of the Shekinah glory in Solomon's day and looked forward to the return of the Shekinah in the days of the Messiah

Ezek 43:1-5,

Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. ² And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. ³ And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. ⁴ As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, ⁵ the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

The Gospel According to John (D.A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary), p337

“ ‘He who has not seen the joy of the place of water-drawing has never in his life seen joy’: this extravagant claim stands just before the description of the lighting of the four huge lamps in the temple’s court of women in the exuberant celebration that took place under their light... ‘Men of piety and good works’ danced through the night, holding burning torches in their hands and singing songs and praises. The Levitical orchestras cut loose, and some sources attest that this went on every night of the feast of Tabernacles, with the light from the temple area shedding its glow all over Jerusalem. In this context Jesus declares to the people, *I am the light of the world.*”

The Israelites were trained to sing, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation' (Psalm 27:1)

John 8 – Light Ceremony (con'd)

From the context of John 8:2 (following on John 7:2 and 7:37), John records that on the day after the Feast of Tabernacles (the eighth day, a Sabbath) Jesus returned from the Mount of Olives to teach in the Temple. The scribes and Pharisees try to entrap him by bringing him a woman caught in adultery. After this exchange, John 8:12-13 states,

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.”

- It is noteworthy that the Pharisees did not question the meaning of His statement. They knew that it was a messianic claim (as many scriptures ascribe *light* to the Messiah), for they immediately called Him a liar.
 - “Star out of Jacob”, “light of Israel”, “light of the nations”, “refiner’s fire”, “burning lamp”, and the “Sun of righteousness”

John 9 – Light Ceremony (con'd)

Later that day (still the Sabbath as identified in John 9:14), Jesus reinforced the same truth when he healed the blind man. As he did so, he stated (John 9:5):

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

In this instance, the Pharisees attacked Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, as recorded in John 9:16,

Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”

Given the statement of Jesus in 9:5 (calling Himself the “light of the world”), which are his only recorded words in this healing, we can infer from this the Pharisees once again are concluding that Jesus is calling himself the Christ as John 9:22 reads (in reference to the blind man’s parents distancing themselves from their healed son):

²² (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)

Isaiah 49:6

- More than just a messianic claim, Jesus' claim to be the "light of the world" carried a clear reference to the Temple light celebration that had just been celebrated for 6 nights.
- Of course, the light that Jesus offered (i.e. salvation) would light not just the Temple, but the whole world.

Isaiah 49:6

he says:

"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a **light for the nations**,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Other “Feast of Tabernacles”

Scriptural References

- Nehemiah 8 and 9
 - reading of the Law and discovery of the Feasts in the Seventh Month; confession and renewal)
- Matthew 17 – the Transfiguration
 - when Peter wanted to build booths for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus) may have occurred during the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - this portion makes reference to Peter’s Confession 6 days earlier (“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” in Matt. 16:16) to Jesus (which would make this confession coincide with the Day of Atonement)

Future Fulfillment

Future Fulfillment: The Bible often speaks of the Final Judgment as a Harvest (Hosea 6:11; Joel 3:13; Matthew 13:39)

Revelation 14:15

¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."

Malachi 4:1-2

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

- It is a future "*Day of Ingathering*" when God gathers his people unto himself and burns the wicked like the chaff and stubble

The Tabernacle

- The Lord will not only gather His people, but he will “tabernacle” in their midst
- tabernacle:
 - as a noun, “a house of worship”
 - as a verb, “to take up temporary residence” or “dwell”
- Looking at the Bible through the lens of “temple” or tabernacle, we see that God placed Adam in a garden (temple), later God gave the “tabernacle” where his glory dwelt, now in our day the Holy Spirit resides in His People (and yet so does sin), and so finally (in heaven) with sin put away and death defeated, God can finally dwell with His redeemed and purified people face-to-face (Revelation 21)

Revelation 21:1-8

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, **“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”** ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Revelation 21:22-27

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Application: Feast of Tabernacles

- Though the believer truly has “eternal life” in Jesus, there is yet a consummation
- There is a Wedding Banquet (Marriage Supper of the Lamb) awaiting us when the Bride gets to look directly into the face of the Groom/Christ
- Prepare yourself today, walking in the Spirit, for that Wedding Banquet – this is what you were made for!
- Tabernacles / Booths
 - remember you are just “passing through”
 - you are an alien; this is not your country