

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles pictures the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ over the earth after His second coming (Revelation 20:4).

This Feast also reflects the "rest" symbolized by the weekly Sabbath (Hebrews 4:1-11) that celebrates the great harvest of humanity when all living people will learn God's ways. Humanity will at last be restored to a right relationship with God (Isaiah 11:9-10).

The name of the Feast of Tabernacles derives from God's command to ancient Israel to build temporary "tabernacles," also called "booths," to live in during the festival.

The Bible emphasizes that, as with booths or temporary dwellings, our physical life is transitory.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." [2 Corinthians 5:1-2](#)

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord." [Leviticus 23:34](#)

"Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine." [Deuteronomy 16:13](#)

The Feast of Tabernacles or the festival of "Booths," occurs for seven days, from Tishrei 15 to 21. There is therefore a quick transition from the high holidays, with their somber mood of repentance and judgment, to a holiday of rejoicing and celebration, for which the people are commanded to build a hut and make it their home. The Bible identifies the booth with the temporary dwellings in which the Israelites lived in the wilderness after they left Egypt on their way to the Promised Land (Leviticus 23:42).

God desired that the tabernacle in the wilderness be built because He wanted to dwell with his people (Exodus 29:44-45). Spiritually speaking, this physical tabernacle was given by God to teach and instruct us that He desires to live and dwell with His people by means of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:1).

UNDERSTANDING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The Feast of Tabernacles completes the sacred festivals of the seventh month. In contrast to the somber tone of Rosh HaShanah and the Day of Atonement, the third feast of Tishrei was a time of joy. Israel had passed through the season of repentance and redemption.

The Feast of Tabernacles is called the "Season of Our Joy." One reason the Feast of Tabernacles was a time of joy was that after the season of repentance and the redemption of Yom Kippur came the joy of knowing your sins were forgiven and the joy of walking with God, knowing God, and being obedient to God. Historically, the Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the days in the wilderness of Sinai after coming out of Egypt. According to all natural laws, the Israelites should have perished, but were instead divinely protected by God. Prophetically, the Feast of Tabernacles is the festival that teaches on the Messianic Kingdom and the joy of that Kingdom.

The word tabernacle refers to a temporary dwelling place, which is the purpose of the booth. The booth symbolizes man's need to depend upon God for his provision of food, water, and shelter. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. The booth is the physical body, which is a temporary dwelling place for our souls and spirits (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We need the food that the Word of God provides (Matthew 6:11, 4:4, John 6:33-35), the cleansing, rinsing, and washing that the Word of God brings to our lives (Ephesians 5:26), and the shelter of God's protection over our lives from the evil one (Matthew 6:13, Psalm 91). Our physical needs will be provided for by God if we seek Him spiritually (Matthew 6:31-33).

The observance of the Feast of Tabernacles described in Leviticus 23:40-41 can be seen in Nehemiah chapter 8. The temporary dwellings or booths are described as a part of the festival. This is in remembrance of when the children of Israel dwelled in booths during their time in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:43).

Isaiah talked about the tabernacle in Isaiah 4:4-6. The divine order declares that after judgment, the Day of Atonement (Isaiah 4:4), comes a tabernacle for a place of refuge (Isaiah 4:5-6). The command to rejoice at this time is given in Deuteronomy 16:13-15.

A tabernacle is a temporary dwelling place. In First Kings 8:27, at the dedication of Solomon's temple during the festival of Tabernacles, Solomon asks, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?"

The Scriptures say that Jesus became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us (John 1:14). He came to earth at His first coming and temporarily dwelt among men.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF BOOTHS OR TABERNACLES

The Hebrew word for tabernacle is 'sukkah'. It means "a booth, a hut, a covering, a pavilion or tent." The Greek word for tabernacle is 'sk'en'e', which also means "a tent, hut, or habitation."

With this in mind, let's look at the context by which the word tabernacle is used in the New Testament:

1. Jesus tabernacled among us (John 1:14)
2. Peter spoke about his body being a tabernacle (2 Peter 1:13-14)
3. The apostle Paul told us that our earthly bodies were earthly houses or tabernacles (2 Corinthians 5:1-5)
4. The tabernacle of Moses was a tent of habitation (Acts 7:44, Hebrews 9:2-8)

5. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in tabernacles (tents) (Hebrews 11:8-9)
6. The tabernacle of David was a tent or dwelling place (Acts 15:16, Amos 9:11).
This tabernacle was the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 5:2-5, 8:1-21)
7. Jesus entered the temple on the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2,27-29)
8. The Bible speaks of a heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 8:1-2, Revelation 13:6, 15:5). This heavenly tabernacle will come to earth (Revelation 21:1-3)
9. Jesus was the true tabernacle of God (Hebrews 9:11)

So, the booth or tabernacle was a temporary dwelling place. Historically, it was to remind the people of their exodus from Egypt as described in Leviticus 23:42-43. Prophetically, the tabernacle points toward the future to the Messianic age, the Millennium. Spiritually, a tabernacle is supposed to remind us that we are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth, this being a temporary dwelling place. So the believer in Christ is but a stranger and pilgrim on this earth (Hebrews 11:8-10,13-16, Genesis 23:3-4,47:9, 1 Peter 1:17, 2:11).

The Feast of Tabernacles is the fall harvest festival. It begins on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Tishrei. Like the other pilgrimage festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles has an agricultural element. It marks the time of the harvest, the final ingathering of produce before the oncoming winter. Hence, it is also called the festival of Ingathering. "And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field." -Exodus 23:16

As just stated, the Feast of Tabernacles is called the Feast of Ingathering. Jesus told us that the harvest represents the end of the age. This is found in Matthew 13:39, Revelation 14:15 and Joel 3:13. The harvest refers more specifically to people who choose to accept Christ into their hearts and lives (Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 10:1-2, John 4:35-38 and Revelation 14:14-18).

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

One of the most outstanding truths of the Feast of Tabernacles involves the seasonal rains in Israel. The prophet Joel tells us that the former and latter rain would come in the first month (Joel 2:23). This is because Passover is the first month in the religious or sacred calendar, and the Feast of Tabernacles is the first month in the civil calendar. So Israel has two first months in the same year because of the special calendar that God set up in Exodus 12:2.

Hosea 6:3 tells us that the coming of the Messiah will be as the former and latter rain on the earth. His second coming will also be in the first month of the civil calendar, Tishrei. Jesus will return to earth during the fall of the year.

The fullness of this feast in the seventh month will be experienced at the coming of the Messiah when He will rule and reign on the earth during the Messianic age, the Millennium. This will be a time of joy for all believers in Christ and will be the age of Israel's glory.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVALS TO THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS AND HOW THEY RELATE TO HIS LIFE

God designed the agricultural and weather seasons in Israel to parallel the life of every believer in Christ who seeks to love Him and serve Him with all his heart. With this in mind, let us examine how this is true.

Every time a person receives the Lord Jesus as his own Savior, he spiritually experiences Passover. He is to flee Egypt, the world's evil system and ways, trust in the Lord, the Lamb of God, and allow Christ to be the doorpost of his heart. As believers, we are then to seek to live holy lives before God and experience Unleavened Bread. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, we are to consider our former ways dead to us and experience the newness of life in the Lord. Once we

do this, we can be immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit and have the power of God (the anointing) in our lives. Spiritually, we have experienced the spring harvest of Israel in our lives. When we accept Jesus into our hearts and lives, He begins to teach us the Bible and show us how much He loves us, and we begin to grow in the knowledge of Him.

At that time, God will begin to take us on a spiritual journey through the wilderness of life. Spiritually, we will begin to experience the dry summer season of Israel. Many things in our lives will not go the way we expect them to or how we trust God for them to go. In the process of experiencing life's bitter disappointments and struggles, if we keep our eyes upon God, He will take us from Passover to Pentecost. There He will reveal His ways and His Word, the Bible, in a deeper and more progressive way. By keeping our eyes on the Messiah through life's struggles, God will not only reveal His Word, the Bible, to us in a greater way, but He also will refine our faith like fine flour, just as was done to the wheat during the days of counting the omer between Passover and Pentecost. Meanwhile, if we put our entire trust in Jesus while on our spiritual journey in the wilderness of life as God refines our faith and reveals Himself to us in a greater way, then our spiritual journey will not end in the wilderness of life. Instead God will take us forward to spiritually experience the fall festivals and our spiritual promised land.

It is when we spiritually experience the fall festivals -- especially the Feast of Tabernacles, and enter into our spiritual promised land that God will anoint our lives for Him in an awesome way, as we live and serve Him, and we will then experience the greatest joy in our entire lives. Joy unspeakable! But we will experience not only joy, but also dancing, praise, victory, peace, and the power of God in our lives. Spiritually, we will be experiencing the fall harvest of Israel. The rain in the Bible speaks of two things: the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and an in-depth understanding of Jesus and His Word, the Bible, in our lives. Both the anointing of the Holy Spirit and great knowledge of spiritual truths will be present in our lives in order that we may accomplish the purpose God has for every one of our lives. Therefore, we have the anointing of God upon our lives so we may help to do our part to build up the Body of Christ to full maturity and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth until we come to that day when we will

rule and reign with the Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords on earth during the Messianic age, the Millennium, and for all eternity.