

Welcome, brethren, to the Feast of Tabernacles 2013.

Today we will go back into the Old Testament, New Testament, and on into the future concerning God's commandments of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles to learn the importance *of* the Feast of Tabernacles. We will look in the Old Testament at the command that the Feast was to be kept year by year. We will look in the New Testament as the Feast *continued* to be kept, Jesus keeping the Feast. We will look at our present age of keeping the Feast and on into the future of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles.

Let us start in **Exodus 23:14 - Three times thou shalt keep a Feast unto Me in the year.**

Verse 15 – Thou shalt keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread; (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days as I commanded thee, in the time appointed in the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before Me empty:) which we know, that is an offering to God.

Verse 16 – And the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the Feast of Ingathering, which is the end of the year when you have gathered in your labors out of your field. We know the first of the harvest mentioned is the 144,000 spiritually raised up to usher in the Kingdom of God. We also know, as the crop harvest was larger, that the spiritual harvest at the end will be very large. The children of Israel, they understood the two harvests, but only in the physical aspect as gathering of crops. Very few understood the spiritual aspect, only those that God had called.

We look in **Exodus 34:22 – we find, And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.** We now call it the Feast of Tabernacles.

God repeats over and over to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, as we see in Deuteronomy 16.

Deuteronomy 16:13 - Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after you have gathered in your corn and wine: And thou shalt rejoice in the Feast, you, and thy son, thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within *thy* gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn Feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and all thy works of thy hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

As we see over and over, God instructs us to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. How many on earth today keep the Feast of Tabernacles? And only a very few, only God's Church keeps it as it should be kept. These days, as we have been taught, were *appointments* God wanted us to attend where we can be taught what God wants us to understand year by year and to be blessed in keeping them. God wants us to be excited, joyous, and to look forward year by year by keeping the Feast.

A fulfillment of these days will be truly exciting. Let's look at a definition of the Feast – 'sukkoth' means Feast of Booths, a plural word; Feast of Tabernacles celebrated on the 15th day of the month of Tishra - which falls in September/October of our calendar today. Sukkos was a small structure covered with plant material such as leafy tree branches, myrtle, palm trees, willow trees. The Sukkot was a place of

prayers and a reminder of the type of dwelling during the forty years of travel in the desert after the exodus from slavery in Egypt.

There have been occasions at the Feast God wanted further instructions to be given as we can see in Deuteronomy 31. **Deuteronomy 31:10 - And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the Feast of Tabernacles...**

Verse 11 – When all Israel is come to appear before thy LORD God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. God through time revealed more about booths which were temporary. They were used for prayers and meditations. We too are temporary dwellings as our God...our lives are short. God and Christ can live in our temporary bodies. We, like the booth, will cease to exist, but God will raise us up in His time.

Let us look at **James 1:10 – But the one who is rich in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withered the grass, and the flower thereof follows, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.**

Let us turn to **Ecclesiastes 9:5 – For the living know that they will die: but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and every memory of them is forgotten.**

To look further about our temporary physical existence we see in **Ecclesiastes 12:6 – Remember him -- before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well. And the dust returns to the ground it comes from and the spirit returns to God who gave it.**

We understand there is spirit in man God gives, but also God gives *His* spirit to whom He calls. We can see this in John 14. **John 14:23 – Jesus replied, If anyone loves Me he will obey My teachings. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.**

Turn to **1 Corinthians 3:16 – Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple, and that God's spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.**

So as we can see, the Israelites making booths that were temporarily a place to pray and meditate in. We today can see that we are a temporary booth as well. God and Christ are living in our temporary bodies and will deliver us into a spiritual body in our time.

Now let us look at more scriptures in the Old Testament that mentions the Feast of Tabernacles. Let's look in **Ezekiel 45:25 – And in the seventh *month*, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the Feast of seven days according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil.**

Nehemiah 8:8-18 - So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the word of the law.

Verse 10 - Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto the LORD: neither be you sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be you grieved.

Verse 12 - And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared to them. And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

Verse 14 - And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the Feast of the seventh month: And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths as it is written.

Verse 16 - So the people went forth and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts... and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths... for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

Verse 18 - Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the Feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly accorded unto the manner.

Now let's turn to Kings 8:2 - And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the Feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

And skipping down to verse 65 - And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days.

Then we look in 2 Chronicles 5:3 - Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the Feast which was in the seventh month.

We look in 2 Chronicles 8:13 - Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn Feasts, three times in the year, even in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles.

Let's turn to Ezra 3:1-4 - And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings therein, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

Verse 3 - And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening.

Verse 4 - They kept also the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the customs, as the duty of every day required...

Now let us move up in time and see Christ observing the Feast of Tabernacles. Let us turn to **John 7:1 – After this Jesus went around Galilee: He did not want to go about in Judaea because the Jewish leaders were looking for a way to kill Him.**

Verse 2 – But when the Jew's Feast of Tabernacles was near Jesus' brothers said to Him, Leave Galilee and go to Judaea so that your disciples there may see the works You do. Therefore Jesus told them, My time is not yet here; for you, any time will do; the world cannot hate you but it hates Me because I testify that it's works are evil.

Verse 8 – You go to the Festival. I am not going up to the Festival because My time has not yet fully come.

Verse 9 – After He had said this He stayed in Galilee.

Verse 10 – However, after His brothers had left for the Festival, He went also, but not publicly, but in secret. So the Jewish leaders were looking for Him at the Feast asking, Where is He? There was a lot of grumbling about Him among the crowds. He is a good man! But others, He deceives the common people!

Verse 13 – However, no one spoke openly about Him for fear of the Jewish leaders. When the Feast was half over Jesus went up to the temple courts and began to teach. Then the Jewish leaders were astonished and said, How does this man know so much when He has never had formal instructions? So we can see in the Old Testament the Feast was commanded by God, and now in the New Testament Christ is observing the Feast just as His Father had commanded for the Feast to be kept.

Paul tells us we should follow Jesus Christ's examples. We find in **1 Corinthians 11:1 – Be you followers of me as I also am of Christ.**

Then **Acts 18** starting in verse 18 – **And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren and sailed thence unto Syria, with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.**

Verse 19 – And he came to Ephesus and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

Verse 20 – When they desired *him* to tarry longer, a longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell saying, I must by all means keep the Feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

And now a promise if we do follow and obey and are called by God. We find in **1 Thessalonians 5:10 – He died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with Him.**

In our present age Herbert W. Armstrong began to understand the meaning of the Holy Days as God gave it and the Feast of Tabernacles...and the Church started to keep the Feast. The Church was small in numbers at first but as God called more and more the number of brethren grew and grew... to add Feast sites not only in the United States but other countries as well.

I can remember the very first Feast my wife and family attended. It was in Big Sandy, Texas. Over 15,000 attended at this location. We were so excited! We wanted to meet as many as possible, to share how God called us and how God called those we met. I remember at the Feast a minister would ask, "How many of you are observing the Feast of Tabernacles for the very first time? Please hold up your hand so all can see." Everyone would look around to see hands in the air and all was exciting. And then he would continue, "How many of you are attending two years?" Hands would go up. "Five years?" Hands would go up. "Ten years?" Hands would go up. "Fifteen?" "Twenty?" "Twenty-five?" "Thirty?" "Forty?" "Fifty years?" We were so excited when our first year was declared and we would wave our hands.

There were all kinds of ways God calls us and many brethren told about how, and how they have been taught. Here is a story I remember – a new member of the Church was baptized and was saving his second tithe. He was single and he earned a very good income. The Feast was almost here and he was figuring out his expenses for the Feast, and after figuring his expenses he found out he had a quite a large sum left over, so he remembered that in **Deuteronomy 14:25 ...If the way be too far, turn your tithe into money and bind up the money in your hand... and shall go to the place where the LORD thy God shall choose.**

But **verse 26** was the verse that he zeroed in on, and in that verse it says, **And you shall bestow that money for whatever your soul lusts after, for oxen, or for sheep, for whatever your soul desires.** Well, we know that that is basically food, restaurants in today. So this new member thought, "What do I lust for?" He thought over and over and found that he *really needed* a new large colour television, the best he could find with all the bells and whistles, and the largest...and he bought a very large TV with his second tithe. Some time later he understood that what he had done was wrong and he repented. Each year afterwards at the Feast he would look around and find a large family to take to 'Johnny Caces Steakhouse'. He would invite a family out every night at the Feast. He would make the meal and the evening very enjoyable. He carried on conversations with the adults and he talked to the children...and I know made a very memorial time for *a lot* of families throughout the years. I know, because *we*, my family, was one of those large families he invited. I think in the back of his mind he wanted to make up for his wrong decision in buying that colour television.

We can all look back at different Feast sites of some special things we have done, such as riding in a helicopter, parachute rides over the ocean, horseback riding, enjoying visiting caves, and many other memories. God *wants* us to be excited and joyous at His Feast!

Another experience that occurred during the Feast: That year we were going to Mexico at a resort that was quite large; in fact, it has steel fences at least 10 or 12 feet high with security guards at the gates with sub-machine guns and with proper identification one could enter and leave. So we felt safe in this environment. As we were getting ready for services one day a earthquake occurred (this was kind of the first of the Feast) and it was a 7.2 on the Richter Scale. It lasted over a minute but it seemed much longer than that. This earthquake was termed 'a rocking chair' type as the earth moved up and down like a rocking chair, and some estimated the floor and the walls moved up 2 ft, like a rocking chair. No one was injured and all ran out of our condos and could not go back into the buildings because they

were to be inspected, so they sent us to the swimming pools to await. Well, when we walked to the swimming pools the earthquake had dashed *almost all* of the water out of the pools. The establishment had begun to fill them again but took some time to do so. No Feast goer left for home although we had over 50 aftershocks during the Feast. Of course, that Feast we will remember always.

Another Feast that I remember, we went to Florida for the Feast. There in the Gulf of Mexico a large hurricane became larger and larger – actually it was as large as the Gulf. It came closer and closer to our Feast site. Of course, we were all praying to God about this. The storm moved away from Florida. The weatherman on local TV commented that this was a very, very unusual event for a hurricane to move back into the Gulf, and we will remember this special Feast of Tabernacles.

So I am sure many of you have had things to happen at the Feast that you will always remember. God wants us to remember and to be happy and be joyous during this time of year as He can give us each day at the Feast something to be learned and remembered.

The Millennium pictures 1,000 years of rest, a physical rest compared to 6,000 years of Satan's rule over this earth. The Feast of Tabernacles will be kept during the 1,000 years with more being taught and people understanding. We all look forward to the 1,000 years and the 100 years, Christ ruling on the earth. The *whole world* being changed by God's Government and powers, Satan and his demons no longer influencing mankind.

We can see further in time to see a glimpse of this time; turn to **Zechariah 8:4 – This is what the LORD Almighty says: Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.** The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Millennial rule of Christ and the 144,000 resurrected and are changed at His coming.

They are to be kept forever, and as we have seen, God's true servants did keep these days. Christ will set up God's Government, a world-wide government with many, many changes, only one true Church, an entirely new way of living in almost everything. God's true Church will continue on as before. Only then can we understand the whole world is changing toward the good.

In the 100 years, some or all, animals will be changed during this time. In **Isaiah 11:6** we find – **The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, and the calf and the lion and the yearling together with a little child will lead them.**

Verse 7 – And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the vipers nest.

Verse 9 – They shall not hurt nor destroy in My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

As we can see in God's blessings, in **Amos 9:13 – The days are coming, declared the LORD, when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter, and the mountain shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills melt.**

In this age we live in only a few keep the Feast of Tabernacles, but only one small Church of God – PKG keeps it as it should be kept. In God's Kingdom to come, all people, all nations will be taught about these days. In the future many will be excited to be able to go to the Feast of Tabernacles.

We can find in **Zechariah 8:23** – **This is what the LORD Almighty says, In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew, by the hem of his robe, and say, Let us go with you because we have heard that God is with you.** Yes, in the Millennium there will be much to be taught and learned. It will take some time to teach and to learn all that will be given. To have one Church, a new government, new schools and what is taught in them, this Babylonian system will be completely changed in Christ's rule here on earth.

Look at the conclusion of Gods plan in **Revelation 21:1** - **Then I saw a new heavens and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no more sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from God. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwellings of God is with men, and He will live with them, they will be His people and God will be with them and be their God.**

In **Zechariah 14:16** we find, cutting into the point I want to make in 16... **then all who survives from all the nations, which would be representative, that came to attack Jerusalem, will go up annually to worship the King, the LORD who rules over all, and to observe the Feast of Tabernacles.**

Verse 17 – But, if any of the nations anywhere on earth refuses to go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD who rules over all, they will get no rain.

Verse 18 – If the Egyptians will not do so, they will get no rain; instead there will be kind of plague which the LORD inflicts on any nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse 19 – This will be the punishment of Egypt, of all nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

We know Christ will rule with perfect righteous and glorious conditions. Some will, nevertheless, be unhappy, they will come to the point of bitterness and dissatisfied of God's rulership on earth and will rebel against the Kingdom in the end... as Satan will be released for a short time and stir up those who are bitter and dissatisfied.

So we can see the Feast of Tabernacle is very, very important to God. God teaches us for seven days things we need to know and understand. The Feast of Tabernacles 2013 will be a joyous time to keep and remember what God taught us this year. As we wait for Christ's return, have a happy and joyous Feast of Tabernacles.

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