

## A Tabernacle, A City, A Family

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Feast of Tabernacles Sermon

Today, we are going to take a closer look at what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about. We're going to look at several places where the Feast is mentioned, and then stop and think about what it is that God wants us to consider.

As we know, all of God's Feast and Holy Days have been set up so that we can begin to understand what God has planned for mankind, and in addition to further understanding God's plan, these days also are used to drive home some important messages that God has for us.

So, today we are going to concentrate on some of those messages that we should be remembering, and we're also going to take a closer look at what we are building together with God. God wants us to share in everything with Him, and that starts with sharing in this building project together. This project is what is represented in the fruition of the Feast of Tabernacles, and it points to God's ultimate goal for mankind.

The title of today's sermon is *A Tabernacle, A City, A Family*.

Let's begin today by turning over to Deuteronomy, and here it's commanded that we keep these days. So, we're going to turn over to **Deuteronomy 16:13—You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in your grain and your wine. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates. Seven days shall you keep the Feast unto the LORD your God in the place which the LORD shall choose. Because the LORD your God shall bless you in all your increase, and in all the works of your hands, therefore you shall surely rejoice.**

There is a lot being said here. Obviously, we are being told to keep and celebrate the Feast for seven days, but let's go into some real basics here. What is a "Feast," even? Is it just a time for stuffing your face with food? That's what I think of when I hear the word feast. I think of kings and royalty and, you know, they're feasting on the best food and eating lots of it, probably in excess.

But it's interesting that this word for Feast actually has much more to do with gathering than it does with actual eating. It's about coming together, and that makes sense. This is the time of the year that the people were to gather together, not just themselves, but also their crops, and as it says here, they were to gather in their grain and their wine.

Now, we aren't an agrarian society today, so we aren't gathering in our crops, but we do set aside money so that we're able to use it at the Feast, which is, you know, our equivalent today. That money is a part of

what we have earned based on our work, and it says God will bless us in our increase and in the works of our hands.

That's what God does. God has allowed us to work, to have the means by which we can prosper. This time of the year was the biggest harvest and it's a time when we can really see and be thankful for what God has allowed us to share in with Him, and so it says, we should rejoice.

Let's turn over next to Leviticus 23:40. This is speaking of the Feast of Tabernacles here in **Leviticus 23:40** and it says, **And you shall take you on your first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.**

We'll skip to **verse 42—You shall dwell in these booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.**

We're being shown another aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles that God wants us to think about. He wants us to remember His works. Look what He did for the children of Israel. He brought them out of physical slavery and gave them a temporary physical structure that protected them in the desert.

But not only that, He also provided everything for them there – water from a rock, manna from the heavens. In this example, it is easy to see that they would not have survived in the physical wilderness without God. God is the one who provides, and that is something that should not be lost in these days. Without God's creation, what grains would have been able to be harvested, or wine, or livestock, or anything for that matter? He is the one who has created the building blocks of life.

So, if God is the one who provided for them in a physical wilderness, then we should really be thinking about how God provides for us in this spiritual wilderness of the world that we are living in. If it wasn't for God, then we would be caught up in the stupidity of the world. We would be just like them.

Just look at how many educated and intelligent people think some of the most ridiculous things these days. Many of them claim to be the ones who aren't sleeping, if you know what I mean, which is really quite an oxymoron.

But really, some of these people have gifted minds. They might be a genius in their respected fields and have an understanding of math or science or whatever, but they are stuck in this world of confusion, and they get wrapped up in the latest trending topics and their minds become mush. I know a lot of people like this, and they aren't able to have sound reasoning and they contradict themselves without even having the slightest idea of what they're doing.

So, we see that God has offered us a protection from the world and from that kind of thinking. He delivered the children of Israel, and He is offering to do the same for us. So, during the Feast, God wants us to remember that and then be glad about it, be glad that you aren't caught up in that stuff.

Let's look at another scripture here that gives some insight about what the Feast is about, and that's Exodus 23:16. We're just jumping into the flow here where it's talking about the Holy Days that are commanded. And in **Exodus 23:16** it says, **And the Feast of harvest, the firstfruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field: and the Feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors out of the field.**

So, here we know that the first part of this verse is referring to Pentecost, and we know it's talking about the Feast of Firstfruits, it's speaking of the 144,000.

But, as we know, there is a much larger harvest that will occur. This is what the second part of the verse is about. It's speaking of the Feast of Tabernacles, but here it is being referred to as the Feast of Ingathering. It's the biggest harvest and it takes place at the end of the year.

What a happy and momentous time of the year! No wonder God tells us to rejoice. He shouldn't even need to tell us that; should be pretty much automatic. But He tells us anyway so that we don't ever lose focus. But this is the time when we can reap the reward of our hard work and take pleasure in it.

You know, there is a lot of pleasure that comes from working hard. That's so often why we do work. Maybe we have hobbies that some might consider to be a little bit crazy, and we do them without pay.

Some years back I got into building dry stone walls. For those of you who don't know, that is just a stone wall that only uses stone. There is no mortar or concrete. And in my case, these were retaining walls. The stones were probably, I don't know, between 30-150 pounds each. So, they were quite a bit of work to maneuver them around and it's kind of like putting a puzzle together, and it's time-consuming. But probably the hardest part is getting the stones to where you want to place them and doing all that without getting a hernia or smashing your fingers.

But anyway, most of the people thought I was crazy for doing that, for building these walls, and especially because I did a lot of them. Some were probably even eight or nine feet tall even. And you know what, they were probably right! The last one I did I didn't really want to touch another stone after that. But now I get to look at them and I think they're really beautiful. I get pleasure out of just seeing them stand – and especially that they are still standing! Because that means that, you know, all the videos I watched on YouTube and the internet research I did paid off. It's pretty awesome how you can do that these days by looking anything up and getting a new skill.

But anyway, that kind of hard work that we do in life, like building these stone walls, a lot of times the harder it is the more pleasure we get from it. It seems like in this day and age this is being completely lost in the world.

And if you think about it, you know this kind of work or work in general is really a kind of a sacrifice. We are sacrificing now to get a reward later. Overall, I mean, I enjoyed the process of building those walls. But in the end, it was still very hard work, nonetheless. When you are out in the heat, you're getting baked by the sun, you're eating dust, you're smashing fingers, having back pain, well, that is quite a sacrifice of comfort and time.

I could have just stayed inside and watched TV with a cold beverage, and that's what most of the world chooses to do. Take it easy and the comfortable way out is the best. I'm not saying you shouldn't be staying inside and watching TV ever, don't get me wrong, but what I am saying is that the world today often doesn't see the value that comes from hard work. The problem with that is that people can rob themselves of the opportunity of having that reward and satisfaction, and that's too bad.

So again, the Feast is about gathering in the fruits of the labor. Yes, physical labor, but it's also about our spiritual labor and growth, overcoming self. That's so much more difficult than even building physical stone walls. That's what our commission is to do. We should consider that during the Feast. How much have you sacrificed of yourself to achieve that growth? How much have you learned since last year? How much more have we been given?

You should see that growth and appreciate what you have learned. Are you happy with the results? If you don't see the positive results then that's a whole other story that needs to be addressed. But we should be able to see the growth and we should be able to rejoice in it.

I am not going to go there in this sermon, but you can jot it down in your notes if you want. But in Numbers 29:12 the Feast of Tabernacles is referenced again. Almost this whole chapter describes the sacrifices and offerings that were made during the Feast. And to that point, there isn't much purpose in reading through it as it's just a list of all that they were sacrificing and all that they offered up, but what is important to note is that the number of sacrifices was very great. There were a ton of them, probably more than any other time of the year.

And so, the question is, why did they do that? Well, it's because it was the biggest harvest. It is when they had the most. They had surpluses in food and those surpluses had to last them through the winter. That is what happens here at the Feast too. God gives us much more in these days than He does at other times of the year. He fattens us up spiritually, if you will, so that we can make it to the next season.

So, let's consider that during the Feast too, and rejoice in the fact that we can all come together and be separated from this world and be really fed.

Let's turn over to 1 Kings 8:1 and we are going to look at a progression in what God has been building. Again, part of the Feast is about reflecting back on what God has been working out with His plan. Here in 1 Kings, we see that Solomon's temple is being dedicated during the Feast of Tabernacles.

So, this is **1 Kings 8:1—Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.**

So, of course, we see that they are no longer in the wilderness and living in those temporary shelters. Instead, they are in the city of Jerusalem. We're going to talk about Jerusalem more later in on this sermon. But we see that God's plan is moving towards something more permanent, but still physical as we will see.

Let's go to **verse 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 they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.**

What a momentous time this must have been! From being in a tent in the wilderness to finally having a spectacular physical building. Just think of all the hard work and the precious materials that were put into creating such a beautiful structure. Now, they had materials that came from all over the Mediterranean – from really far off lands – and this was really the best of the best.

And so, the people were ecstatic. What a Feast of Tabernacles this must have been. It says that they offered so many sacrifices that they couldn't even be numbered. So, pretty incredible.

We'll continue in **verse 12—Then spoke Solomon, The LORD said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built You a house to dwell in, a settled place for You to abide in forever.**

Let's skip to **verse 27—But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house that I have built?** So, Solomon clearly understood that the Almighty God could not be contained in an earthly building, including this temple. They didn't have any more of the story yet, just like we don't know all of the story now. We're still getting it, you know, as time progresses. In a hundred years or a thousand years from now, it's going to be much of the same. Because that's how God reveals His plan. He isn't giving it to us all at once and it is a building process.

Let's finish up this part in **verse 66—On the eighth day, he sent the people away. And they blessed the king and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David His servant, and for Israel His people.** Again, joyful, and glad of heart. Why? Because of all the goodness that God has done for them.

After all this had come to pass, coming out of Egypt, and building this spectacular temple, what do we see that happened in the years that followed? This is a story of mankind, and it just repeats itself time after time.

2 Chronicles is full of stories of disobedience. They bring in other gods, worship them, and then they get plundered. They have to continually be restoring this temple every time that happens. Little by little they lost what God had given to them; they stopped looking back and thinking about what God had done for them. They became rich and in need of nothing. They forgot that God is the one who provides, and they lost sight.

We say that every year at the Feast here too, that some won't be here next year. And it's sad, but that's what happens.

So, when we leave the Feast this year, after we have been fattened up, and I mean spiritually, although it may also be physically, but fattened up spiritually, we need to stay on guard so that we never get taken into captivity, into Babylon. Because that's what happens to some, and their mind turns to mush.

Let's go back to Deuteronomy 8 and read what Moses had warned the people of once they had arrived in the promised land. Because if they had only heeded His warning, then it would have been a different story.

This whole chapter gives examples and details all the things God did for His people. Even the difficult things He allowed them to go through, He did it as a benefit to them. He humbled them many times. It wasn't fun for them to go through, but God allowed for it because it was the best thing for them.

So, here in **Deuteronomy 8:2—And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, and to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments, or not.**

Think about it, God was leading them to a land full of milk and honey, as it says. That is exactly what God is doing in our lives now. He is working with us but in a spiritual way instead of a physical way as it was with them. He was about to give them great physical wealth, and that is one of the reasons why He had to humble them and to prove them, as it says. Because after He gave them those things, He wanted to know that they would still obey Him. Because that is our temptation and our problem. If we are fully satisfied then we think we don't need God anymore. We stop seeking Him and then we stop obeying Him.

Obviously, God knew what was going to happen. But we should see the parallels here with the Church now. God is preparing to give us great spiritual wealth, and He's already begun to do that, in fact. But as soon as He sees that we aren't handling it properly then He will take it away – and He takes it away much faster spiritually than He did physically with these people.

God allowed for the physical temple to be destroyed, just as He lets for our physical bodies to come to an end. But that will not be the case for His spiritual Temple, so we have to be tested to an even greater level in a spiritual sense than these Israelites were tested on a physical level.

Let's go to **verse 3—And He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, and neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD man does live.**

They were supposed to learn to rely on God. He is the sustainer of everything. And we know that God had promised them much more, and so has He with us. God wants to give us everything, but we have to be ready for it. We have to be prepared. Because the temptation is that once we have a lot we take it to ourselves, we don't see God as our partner in this project. Then He takes it away from us so that we might remember.

Just because we have been given something doesn't mean that we have it made. It doesn't mean we can't easily lose it. It's like winning the lottery. That doesn't mean you are set financially. Although, it might seem like it. But even with the lottery, the statistic for losing your money is pretty stark. It's estimated that around seventy percent of all lottery winners lose it all within five years, and a third of those have to declare bankruptcy. It doesn't matter if it is \$1 million or \$500 million, it's all the same.

So, if we think about money and winning the lottery it would make sense that we are prepared to handle it before we are given it. Well, that is essentially what God is trying to do with us. He is working with us to prepare us so that He can give us more and so that when we have it, we won't be stupid and throw it all away.

Let's continue on in **verse 11—Beware that you forget not the LORD your God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you this day. Lest when you hast eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and dwelt therein, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.**

This is all saying that we need to remain humble and not lose perspective. If you are having success in your life, whether it be physical or spiritual, don't let it go to your head. Don't forget where it all comes from. Don't forget that it is God that allows you to share in it just like the harvest pictures during the Feast. Don't let something good that is being built in you be the reason that leads to you quit the race.

**Verse 18—But you shalt remember the LORD your God, for it is He that gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto your fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if you do at all forget the LORD your God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you to this day that you shall surely perish.**

That's a story that is repeated over and over in the Bible. You get something, it goes to your head, you forget God and then lose whatever it is that He let you have in the first place.

Moses warns against walking after other gods and worshipping them. This could be stated simply another way, simply that we put other things before God, and whenever that happens we have no life with God and our spiritual life perishes.

But God keeps giving us another chance and another chance and another chance. We have the opportunity to overcome, we just have to grab ahold of it.

We can see from these scriptures over and over that God wants to give us so much. But it is not so simple as just handing it to us on a platter, like winning the lottery. It should be pretty clear to us what the results of that would be – and it wouldn't be a perfect creation. It would be a deeply flawed one. God has to work with us, and it is done in a staging arena that is this world and in these carnal bodies and minds. They are temporary. They have to be that way for what is being created. There is no other way.

But that's not the end goal as we know. The booth was a temporary dwelling. The temple that Solomon built was also temporary. But we know that God is creating permanent dwelling places for both us and Him. Right now, we are of course in these temporary bodies.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1, which we're going to turn to right now, it makes the comparison of our bodies to tabernacles and also to God's permanent building. So, let's take a look over there at **2 Corinthians 5:1—For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a 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; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.**

So that should be the desire of all of us. This body is temporary. It's not forever. What we look forward to is an eternal body. We are groaning or sighing. We want it to happen already. We want this world to change. We are tired of man's rule and stupidity.

Let's continue in **verse 4—For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us or made us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest or the downpayment of the spirit.**

Here it's explaining that we groan, not because that we are unclothed. Instead, we understand that God has a plan, and that He has made us this way temporary, and that someday we will be able to be fully clothed.



So, we aren't fully clothed yet, and that's because God has only given us of His spirit. He has given us some of His mind to help guide us and to mold us, but He hasn't given us everything. The spirit is just an earnest or a downpayment as it says. It's a small taste.

Continuing on in **verse 6—Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.** Now this word "absent" isn't the best translation. Instead, it really has to do, this word has to do with being away from home, and to be more exact, about being in exile.

**Verse 7— (For we walk by faith, not by sight.) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.** That is how our attitude should be. We should be seeking God. We want to make this transition and to be exiled from our carnal bodies that hold us bondage.

So, we can see that we are pictured as dwelling in a physical tabernacle now, but we should be working to exile ourselves from the temporary and work towards the eternal. That's what God is offering us.

Let's read some scriptures now that speak about where God dwells, and more specifically, about Jerusalem. Because if we can grasp that, then we can better understand what these days of the Feast of Tabernacles pictures and what God is creating.

As we are familiar, God is often pictured as dwelling in Jerusalem and Mt. Zion. Not the one from today of course, that one has been fully corrupted by man. That is a physical city that is full of confusion, and that corruption came from man, and it began when the Israelites turned away from God.

Jerusalem was a physical city that God set up and where His temple was, and it was corrupted, and God allowed it to fall. That is why New Jerusalem is spoken of because it pictures something spiritual.

All of these things that God did with the Israelites just go to show that without God, His perfect creation cannot be made. Really, so much of the Old Testament are stories of failure over and over again. Man wants to do things his way and not God's. The result: failure. "You want a king? Perfect, have one." Result: failure. "You insist on having other Gods? Okay, take em." Result: big failure. He even allowed them to be destroyed.

The history could have been all success instead of failure if they would have just stayed with God and followed Him. But we know that mankind is incapable, that is, without any extra help, as in the spirit.

So, God has taken all of those failures and presented them as a hope for us for something that He is building with us through His spirit. That spirit is the extra help that makes it possible for us to build something greater. Whereas with the Israelites, they didn't have access to the spirit like we do. So, by themselves, it was impossible to build anything that could last forever. Look at the kingdom they built,

for example. It didn't end too well. It split apart because of all the chaos that they built. Same with their city.

But what a hope God has given us with His building. It's going to be perfect. This should make us exceedingly confident and glad if we think about it during the Feast of Tabernacles.

You don't have to turn there but you can jot it down in your notes if you like, but in **Psalms 76:2 it says, In Salem also His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion.** We know the Melchizedek was the King of Salem, and they translated that in the New Testament as the King of Peace.

Of course, there are other scriptures that state the same thing about Jerusalem, but we know that they are referring to the same place. Salem or Shalom is about peace. The Bible uses this same word to describe many numbers of things that have to do with harmony, health, prosperity, and making whole. If you take all those words together, you get a really great description of what this city is supposed to represent.

Let's look now at a few instances where Jerusalem is mentioned. First, let's go over to Hebrews 12:18. Here Paul is making a comparison between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, and he is contrasting how the relationship with God has changed. Coming before God was completely different.

**Hebrews 12:18—For you are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.**

God was first beginning to appear to the children of Israel on Mt. Sinai, and we know the stories. There were earthquakes. The people were fearful. They couldn't get anywhere near God's presence, and if they even touched the mountain where God appeared to Moses then they would die. There was, in essence, a huge distance put between the people and God.

Let's continue in **verse 22—But you are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Joshua the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.**

After Mount Sinai, they had a physical temple in physical Jerusalem. But Paul is showing how God's plan had developed even more because of Christ. Now the City of the living God has begun to be built – heavenly Jerusalem – and it is allowing for a closer relationship with God.

But as we will read a little bit later on, this New Jerusalem is going to continue to develop. It is already more developed now than it was in Paul's time, and we are about to see another huge leap forward in its construction when Christ returns with the 144,000.

Let's turn over to Luke 24:46. Here, Christ after he had died, he appears to the apostles and is talking to him. We will jump into verse 46. **Luke 24:46—And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you: but tarry (or sit yourself down) you in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.**

This word for "endued" here means "to clothe." It's the same word that we read about back in 2 Corinthians 5 just a moment ago when it spoke about "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon our house which is in heaven."

Let's skip to **verse 52—And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.**

So, as we just read here through these scriptures we can see that the apostles essentially set up shop in Jerusalem. We know the "power from on high" that Christ was speaking about, that that power came down to them and clothed them on Pentecost when the Church began. As we know, you know, there were people there from diverse backgrounds speaking different languages, and God allowed them to understand one another, even though they didn't particularly, you know, they didn't speak that particular language.

And so, that was the beginning of God's word beginning to go out into the world, starting in Jerusalem. That's when they were "clothed from the power on high," as it says there. That's exactly what is going to be happening here again once Christ returns, but the word is not going to be going out on a small scale like it has through these past two thousand years. It's going to be going out to the entire world because God is about to call the entire world.

We know that this New Jerusalem is going to play an important role in the Feast of Tabernacles in the future as well, so let's read a scripture here back in Zechariah 14:9. This is speaking about once Christ has returned.

**Zechariah 14:9—And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day shall there be one LORD, and His name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem, and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.**

**And shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought**

**against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.**

So, New Jerusalem will be established and those that fight against it will be destroyed.

**Verse 16, it says, All those who survive of all those nations that came up against Jerusalem shall make a pilgrimage year by year to bow low to the King Yahweh of Hosts and to observe the Feast of Booths.**

Here we see Jerusalem being depicted as a place where God has chosen. It's hard to believe since we are so small now, but sometime in the near future, the entire world is going to be celebrating the Feast.

**Verse 17 says, And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.**

So, there's going to be incentive to come to the Feast, and it will be known. Not only is God not going to bless those that disobey Him, He is going to punish them. Just like how He did when the Israelites were taken into captivity. You know, they didn't listen to Him when He sent His prophets and then He didn't listen to them when they had problems. But that was at a time when Satan was around and when they were not offered God's spirit, as will be the case in the future. So, God is going to have less patience because at that time there is not going to be excuse not to listen to Him.

But this is really going to be such a joyous time. God is going to be offering His spirit to the entire world. Just think of what a Feast of Tabernacles will be like. That is something we can think about these days during our Feast, and that's something we should really rejoice in, something that we should look forward to.

And then, once we actually live in that time, we will be able to look back, and again, be so thankful for God's amazing plan that we are so lucky to be a part of. That's why the Feast should be such a joyous occasion.

Let's look at some verses now in Revelation. There are so many scriptures in this book that speak about New Jerusalem and explain a great deal about the part of God's plan that is yet to come. It's like a lot of the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament that spoke about a Messiah that would come. So much was written about Christ before he was even born, and it is something that they looked forward to, but they didn't understand it all. Then in Christ's time, so much of that scripture finally came to life. God gave so much understanding through His spirit to the apostles after Christ had died. They were able to understand what those scriptures meant and how they were fulfilled.

Well, we are living in another time like that. Revelation gives us a look into what God is still working out and He is revealing it to us, little by little. And once Christ returns, we are going to understand so much more. So how thankful are you that you are able to live in a time like this?

Let's start off here in **Revelation 3:11**, and this is speaking to the Church of Philadelphia. It says, **Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which you have, that no man takes your crown.** So, we know that this message was directed to the Philadelphia Church era, but it applies to us now as well. How many people fall by the wayside every year from Feast to Feast? You know, we need to be on guard, now more than ever. Every day that passes we need to be on more guard than the day before. Because time is getting closer and closer, every day.

Continuing on in **verse 12—Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God. And I will write upon him my new name.**

Jerusalem is very much about God's Kingdom coming to this earth. For those that have been called to be a part of the firstfruits and overcome, it's showing that you will be made into a pillar of the Temple. You will have a vital role. All of the 144,000 are going to have a huge role to play for helping the rest of the world to overcome.

Since we are here, we should read the message to Laodicea. Let's skip down to **verse 15—I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.**

This verse says a lot. God has given us so much and yet He always wants to give us more. But this is one of those age-old problems with mankind. It's the same as the story of the Israelites. God gave them so much and they became rich and increased with goods. They didn't need anything.

If we have our needs met, we should never feel as though we don't need anything anymore. Because what is it that we always need, that we always need more of? It's something that never changes. Well, if you haven't guessed it, I'll just tell you – it's God and His spirit. We always need it, and we can never get enough of it. He is the sustainer of everything. You want to be sustained, don't you? Well, then you are going to need the sustainer. How can you ever stop needing Him?

That is part of what we are to learn at the Feast of Tabernacles. God had the children of Israel dwell in booths while they were in the desert. You know, the booths had a strong connection to agriculture. The Feast of Tabernacles is also known as the Feast of Ingathering. These booths are similar to structures that you will find all over the world where farmers work in the fields. It's common to build a small

temporary structure that would be set off in your field that was far from your permanent house. It is a place where you could take a break in and have a rest. It's a place where you could seek refuge from the hot sun. Maybe you could store some tools there, maybe some of your harvest. It was used for many different things but all having to do with agriculture.

So, if you think about the booth in that manner, it is interesting to see that God had them dwell in something like that while they were in the desert, in the wilderness. But they weren't surrounded by crops; there was no agriculture there. But they still ate. God fed them and He provided everything they needed.

That is something that should never be lost on us because once we forget that the seeds of the crops, of all our food, came from God, then we have forgotten Him and He isn't in our thoughts.

The Feast of Tabernacles should be a celebration for both us and God. We work together to gather in our fruit, and God doesn't want to be left out of the celebrations.

Finally, in this chapter let's read **verse 21—To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.** Again, this shows how God and Christ want to share with us and give us so much. Obviously, though, we have to be tried and tested to make sure that we can handle these great things that they want to give us.

Let's next go over to **Revelation 7:14**. This part here speaking of the 144,000. It says, **And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.**

Take note of the word "dwell." In Greek, there are two completely different words that are translated as "dwell." But this is not the typical word that's used for "dwell" here. This word for "dwell" is only used in the book of Revelation and it's only used one other time outside of that book. That other time is in John. It's in **John 1:14**, and that's when it says, **And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.**

The word for "dwell" here comes from the word "tabernacle." It is just a verb form of the word. It's like saying "I tabernacled at the Feast" instead of "I dwelled at the Feast." So, John 1:14 is essentially saying, "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us."

The Word was made flesh for a temporary amount of time in a temporary being that was Christ. He was not made eternal. He was made of flesh and bone just as we are.

So, if we look at verse 15 again, it's saying that Christ is going to dwell in—not "among" as the translation says—but he is going to dwell in the 144,000, in the Temple, but it is a dwelling that is depicted as taking place in a tabernacle.

The difference here between dwelling “among” and “in” is pretty important. When Christ was on this earth as a man, the Word of God could only dwell “among” us. But as we see here in the 144,000, they are going to have different access to the word. It’s going to fully dwell “in” them.

The Feast of Tabernacles is really so much about God being able to dwell in us. His spirit is able to come into our lives now. That spirit, like we’ve mentioned so many times, is often described as a helper. It is there to give us guidance and to lead us. But we do not have the full word of God dwelling in us by any means. That is reserved for spirit beings that have been tried and tested and have overcome. Again, God wants to give this to us, but we have to show that we are ready for it.

So, are you ready for it? Well, that’s what we should be preparing for. We should ask ourselves what improvements do we need to be making in our lives so that we can be better prepared for it.

Let’s turn to **Revelation 21:2—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 shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.**

What a momentous time this will be! Christ and the 144,000—the newest addition to the City of God—will come down from heaven and set up a Kingdom on this earth. Finally, New Jerusalem. It says that “the tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell (tabernacle) with them.”

Now, we don’t understand exactly how all this will be done, but we do know that the 144,000 will be priests and they’re going to have a lot of work to do. That is why they have been prepared. They are a part of the first harvest, but they will be busy working to produce more increase for the father.

During the days of the Israelites, God offered them to be their God and them His people. But they ultimately declined His offer. But this go around, New Jerusalem will have Christ as the King and the 144,000 as priests and they will be able to more actively pour out God’s spirit onto mankind.

As we read further down here in **verse 6** it states, **And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that thirsts of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.**

It is ultimately about becoming part of the God Family. He is offering us the chance to be counted as His sons and daughters. That is what we are being offered and that will soon be offered to all of mankind. God is building the Holy City of New Jerusalem, and the firstfruits and the 144,000 are just the start of a massive harvest of ingathering that is all a part of God’s incredible plan. We are the booths and the tabernacles and if we fight to overcome God will fully dwell or tabernacle in us and add us to His Holy City.

So, let's rejoice this Feast of Tabernacles as we are told to do, and let's continue to work at overcoming so that God can bless us in all of our increase and works.