

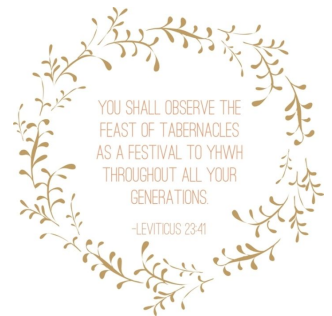


Sunday 18 October 2020

Going Camping - the phrase tends to either fill you with dread or with bubbly excitement ... a bit of a Marmite experience! A friend of ours so dislikes the whole idea that she won't even contemplate camping in a luxurious caravan with all mod cons ;) ! However camping was one of God's ideas when He gave Moses instructions for His people in the book of Leviticus as to how they were to live in the Promised Land.

These instructions included an annual calendar with a special day - the Sabbath each week (1 in 7) and special holidays / Holy Days and weeks (7 in all) which God wanted His people to celebrate so that they would always remember what He had done for them and what He was going to do in the future. In fact some of them God considered so important that He called them 'permanent ordinances' ie they had to be celebrated year in and year out for ever.

So today we are going to be thinking about one of those special holidays which takes place each year in the Autumn and, in fact, was only celebrated 10 days ago - the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering and sometimes called Sukkot.



But first let's just stop and be still for a few moments to remember that we are in God's Presence and that He wants us to be there. (Pause)

<https://youtu.be/A8TtOIMaKKA> Know (Be Still) by Jeremy Riddle

Now we shall join together praising the Lord as it's always good to come into His presence with thanksgiving and praise. We can speak or shout these out as well as join in the praise songs!

1. <https://youtu.be/e3RRU25dpPg> Raise a Hallelujah!
2. https://youtu.be/CUBBIddm_rM?t=6 What a Beautiful Name
3. <https://youtu.be/rNOLwKGgGWQ> Be the Centre

So, a week camping is God's idea ! Let's read what He has to say about it.

Leviticus 23:39-43 ESV 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.”

I wonder if you were struck with the numbers mentioned in this passage? How many times is the number 7 mentioned? Have you counted?

^{six} times in such a short passage. So that makes us realise that the Number 7 is very important in God’s thinking.

- First of all it was to be a **whole week** that the people were to celebrate the feast - no short instant ‘take away’ here!!
- It was to come at a very specific time in the annual calendar - the 15th day of the **7th month** - when all the produce of the land had been gathered in - so it was a harvest festival after all the hard work labouring in the fields and the Lord recognises that by starting the celebration off with a Sabbath day of rest and ending all the celebrations with another Sabbath day of rest. How good is that! Just as in the Creation when He made everything then created Man and gave him a Sabbath day of rest to appreciate and enjoy it all.
 - *? Do you take time to rest so that you can be refreshed and restored and have a time to appreciate all that the Lord has made and given?
Take time to enjoy the Lord and all His benefits.*
- For **7 days** the people had to dwell in booths or tents or tabernacles. Now that’s where the week of camping comes in. They had to make the tabernacles themselves not buy a ready made tent from the shop. It was to be a creative adventure for the whole family as it was constructed and decorated. Now compared to a house a tent is a very flimsy structure no matter how well it’s been put together. It doesn’t give much protection against gales and downpours. It is quite fragile really. But God wanted them to live in these fragile structures for a whole week to remember that that was how they lived when God rescued them out of Egypt and took them on what became a 40 year journey to Israel, the land of Promise.
- Recently, because of Covid 19, I have been more conscious than ever of the fragility of life and even everyday living. There are the constant questions we are being faced with - should I go here or there? have I remembered to take my mask? what can I do to help a friend in need when I can’t visit them? And so it goes on. The interesting thing is that when the people were instructed to make their tabernacles they were instructed to make the roofs partially open so that they could see the heavens through the gaps. The very fragility of the structure has within it a lifting of the eyes up and beyond the fragility to the Lord who made the heavens and the earth. Just as He provided for the people for their every need all the 40 years in the wilderness, **Deut 29: 5 I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet.**so He is reminding us that He is still the same and will provide for us when we look to Him and don’t put our trust in the so called more permanent structures. This Covid situation that we’re in has stirred up a seeking after God and different Christian organisations such as Prayer 24/7 and One for Israel have noted many more turning to prayer and searching for answers. The time of shaking is helping us seek security in the Lord, the unseen realm rather than trying to find it in the seen.

Take some time now to thank the Lord for who He is and what He’s done for you.

Many of the Psalms were written starting each line with a new letter of the alphabet.

Perhaps that could help you think of a different aspect of God e.g. Thank You, Lord, You are awesome big compassionate etc etc

Tabernacles was one of the 3 Festivals where God's people were asked to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate it and it was so important that it became known down the centuries as The Feast. Jesus also celebrated Tabernacles and went up *secretly* to Jerusalem to celebrate it because the Judeans were looking out for an opportunity to kill Him. However at two very important points in the week long festival Jesus made Himself known to everyone in a way that shocked everyone.

Here is an article I read by Emily Emanuel which tells us all about it very clearly -

1. Jesus used the festival to reveal his messianic identity

Jesus not only celebrated the feast but also declared one of his most famous messianic revelations during it.

During the time of Christ, the Feast of Tabernacles had come to be known as simply 'The Feast'. The celebrations pointed toward a future time of messianic hope and salvation. This was especially seen during the 'water libation' and 'illumination' ceremonies.

During the water libation ceremony the temple priests gathered a pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam and poured it out on the altar inside the Temple. The pouring out of the water expressed Israel's hope for future rains to produce an abundant harvest. However at the time of Jesus, Israel was spiritually destitute. They were living under Roman rule. Even the Holy of Holies was empty and dry. This moment in the feast wasn't just a cry for physical rain, but a desperate cry that God would pour out his spirit - the 'living water' they longed for.

It was during the height of this ceremony, on the final day of the feast, that Jesus chose to stand up and say in a loud voice: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (John 7:37-38).

Jesus was telling them the solution to their spiritual drought is found in him, the true water of life – **what a declaration!** No wonder when he said this, some declared, "This is the Messiah" (John 7:41).

2. Jesus used the festival to reveal himself as "the light of the world"

The 'illumination of the temple' was another important ceremony during the Feast. It involved the lighting of four golden oil-fed lamps in the Court of Women. These lamps were 75 feet high menorahs and candelabras that were lit in the temple at night to remind Israel of the pillar of fire that had led them in their wilderness journey. The light was so bright that it is said to have illuminated the entire city.

This ceremony was also a reminder that God had promised to send a light to renew Israel's glory, release them from bondage, and restore their joy. This was the context for Jesus' declaration: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12).

The people knew that the promise of light was intrinsically linked with the messianic hope. The light of this ceremony only lit up Jerusalem and would eventually be extinguished. But Jesus claimed to be the **eternal** 'Light of the world'.

In this statement he was implying that he was not just a good teacher, or a prophet but the light of God - the same light that led them through the wilderness in Sinai; the shekinah glory of God that they were crying out for. **The very real presence of God.**

3. The Feast points ahead to Christ's return

The Feast of Tabernacles is also a prophetic feast that looks to the future age. The end of Zachariah alludes to this truth by placing the Feast of Tabernacles at the centre of God's future kingdom on earth where **all nations** will worship him (Zechariah 14:16).

It points towards a time when God will again *tabernacle* on earth, when Jesus comes and restores all things.

"Look! God's tabernacle is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

Revelation goes on to describe the New Jerusalem, which contains two features of the feast's theme of water and light. There is a 'river of life' and the city has no need for the sun or moon because the Glory of God is its light. The lamb (Jesus) is its lamp.

So, when the Lord commanded His people to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles throughout the generations He knew that it would not only help His people remember what had happened in the past and how He had saved them, but it also became a picture of how He would continue to be their caring Father year after year and even pointed forward to the coming of Jesus and how Jesus was the living water and the light of the world. But it doesn't stop there ... it goes on and on throughout history until He returns for that final harvest and ingathering at the end of the age and the fact that already since 1980 non Jewish believers (gentiles) have been celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem with their Jewish brothers and sisters is a sign that the prophecy of Zechariah 14:16 is now being fulfilled. [Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.](#)

So, in this time of shaking, take heart that He knows the end from the beginning and He wants to tabernacle with us in it. Simply listen to the following song and let it minister to you.

<https://youtu.be/PElqjW798iU> Simple Pursuit

The Lord bless you and keep you
The Lord lift His face to shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you
And give you His peace

If anyone has a prayer request please send it either to Jen Lennox jen.lennox1947@gmail.com or myself lambblanchland@gmail.com as a small group of us meet on Tuesday morning to pray for the church and community. All requests will be treated confidentially by the small group.

POSTSCRIPT

For those of you who love a puzzle or two here are some puzzles relating to today's theme of Camping or Tabernacles.



Bible Pathway Adventures

WORD SEARCH

TABERNACLES - SUKKOT

A Y O S C I J E R U S A L E M S Z P B J
C P V N A G H A R D L B R H D T M W W Z
F I O I K B W S B G A X O A O K M Y E Z
W L G D S R B J D K Q R R R V N L W D S
L G E I U R Q A E T C M F V S I S T D N
B R V U D Y A M T F H O K E U Q C W I F
A I B S R R O E Z H J S A S L G O A N R
J M U Y Q B C I L X J E O T Y I J T G G
V A J P A Q O E M I F S H F X O R E F D
K G B D V U N F M S T Z M V U S Y R E G
Z E Z A R G M U F U G E S F J E A O A T
E R O J K L L I B E O U S K P V H C S F
F E L L O W S H I P R E W D C E W O T Y
G D V E E J W H W K V I M P H N E E L W
V I O A G A E N O A O X N N M D H T K U
I V F A L L F E A S T C D G Y A S I H H
C G G Y T A B E R N A C L E S Y M Y A D
I B D E U T E R O N O M Y A J S Y G N U
M L K O R Y P E G Y P T Z F D P W M B T
H Y E S H U A N B O O T H S V F M N O J

MOSES

WEDDING FEAST

FELLOWSHIP

PILGRIMAGE

EGYPT

WATER

YAHWEH

FALL FEAST

HARVEST

SABBATH

TABERNACLES

ISRAELITES

BOOTH

DEUTERONOMY

OFFERING

JERUSALEM

YESHUA

SEVEN DAYS

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SUKKOT - TABERNACLES

Sukkot Review

Match the questions with the answers on the right.



1. ___ Which Feast did Yeshua secretly attend?
(John 1)
 2. ___ In Nehemiah 8, what did the people do every day during Sukkot?
 3. ___ Where did Solomon offer burnt offerings to Yahweh during Sukkot?
 4. ___ For how many days do people honor Sukkot?
 5. ___ What did the Israelites live in during Sukkot?
 6. ___ What were the Israelites told to do on the first and seventh day of Sukkot?
 7. ___ In Zech 14, where will the people celebrate Sukkot?
 8. ___ In Lev 23, how did God tell the Israelites to celebrate?
 9. ___ In Lev 23, how long were the Israelites told to honor Sukkot?
 10. ___ In Acts 18:21 (KJV), why did Paul want to return to Jerusalem?
- A. read the Torah
 - B. seven
 - C. sukkahs
 - D. Tabernacles
 - E. no ordinary work
 - F. forever
 - G. with fruit, palm fronds, thick branches & river-willows
 - H. on the altar in the temple area
 - I. Jerusalem
 - J. to keep one of God's Feasts



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WORKSHEET

DECORATE YOUR SUKKAH

Have fun decorating your Sukkah. Common sukkah decorations include colorful flowers, fruit, vegetables, palm branches, gourds, Indian corn, lights, artwork, bunting and lanterns.

Use your creativity and color the page!



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