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# APPENDIX<sup>1</sup>

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Volume 2, Apostolate Paper # 50-2

by

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<sup>1</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).  
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# **The Whitefield Seminary Papers**

## **“Law & Religion Forum”**

Volume 2, Apostolate Paper # 50-2



### **“The Feast of the Tabernacles: A Prologue to the New Testament”<sup>2</sup>**

by

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<sup>2</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).  
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*“I am a Jew, and Jesus is my Rabbi!”*

*-- Messianic Judaism*

*“Life is a fleeting state, a tent for a night....”*

*-- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Experience (1844)*

## Appendix to Apostolate Paper # 50

### Introduction

This paper is an “appendix” to Apostolate Paper # 50, titled “Jesus of Nazareth in Fulfillment of the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread,” within this series.<sup>3</sup> Here, Reformed theology pays homage to the ancient Jewish laws and customs.<sup>4</sup>

The subject of this paper is the **“Feasts of Tabernacles”** or *Sukkot*. It is somewhat reminiscent of the spiritual laws set forth in Ralph Waldo Emerson’s celebrated essay *Experience* (1844), notably where he writes: “... *life is a fleeting state, a tent for a night*....” The plight of refugees from bondage and war; the plight of the homelessness of refugees; and the usage of make-shift shelters and tents to gain reprieve from the weather—all of this, and more, as the bedrock of

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<sup>3</sup> Jesus of Nazareth in Fulfillment of the Jewish Feast Days,”  
[https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hspart=domaindev&hsimp=yhs-domaindev\\_vaultsafesearch&p=Is%20Pentecost%20connected%20to%20Feast%20of%20Weeks&type=100331\\_alt\\_ddc\\_search\\_vaultsafesearch\\_com&grd=1](https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hspart=domaindev&hsimp=yhs-domaindev_vaultsafesearch&p=Is%20Pentecost%20connected%20to%20Feast%20of%20Weeks&type=100331_alt_ddc_search_vaultsafesearch_com&grd=1)

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 238-239, regarding Israel and the Jews, stating:

This same nation, too, was afterwards dispersed through the nations, in order to testify to the scriptures in which eternal salvation in Christ had been declared. For not only the prophecies which are contained in words, nor only the precepts for the right conduct of life, which teach morals and piety, and are contained in the sacred writings—not only these, but also the rites, priesthood, tabernacle or temple, altars, sacrifices, ceremonies, and whatever else belongs to that service which is due to God, and which in Greek is properly called *hatpeia*—all these signified and fore-announced those things which we who believe in Jesus Christ unto eternal life believe to have been fulfilled, or behold in process of fulfillment, or confidently believe shall yet be fulfilled.

ancient Hebrew religion, as exemplified in the “Feast of Tabernacles” within the Law of Moses, designed to instill holiness within the Israelites. There is some theology which holds that Christ himself (i.e., “the Angel of the Lord”) was present among the ancient Israelites. See, e.g., Exodus 23: 20-22, stating:

**“Christ as an Angel of the LORD”**

**Exodus 23: 20-22**

**20** Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

**21** Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.

**22** But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

As the children of Israel walked in the wilderness, Christ himself was with them in the form of “an Angel... [b]eware of him, and obey his voice... for my name is in him.” During their forty-year sojourn in the dessert, while living in make-shit huts (i.e., booths or sukkahs), while being led by this Angel of the LORD (i.e., Christ). Here we may find Christ himself in the Feast of the Tabernacles!

Indeed, in Leviticus 23: 42-43, the LORD God’s commandment is that:

**Ye shall dwell in 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.

Indeed, when the LORD God commanded the children of Israel to commemorate the Feast of Tabernacles, His primary objective—without a doubt—was that the Jewish people would always remember, even within the midst of their material prosperity, the challenges and hardships which their ancestors encountered in the dessert during their 40-year sojourn from Egypt to the Promised Land.

We begin this discussion by reminding Christians—and not just Messianic Jews—that this Feast of Tabernacles is also a part of the history of the Christian churches. Accordingly, it is important to state emphatically that Jesus of Nazareth was a “rabbi”<sup>5</sup> and “master” of the Law of Moses,<sup>6</sup> and that in the Gospel of John, Jesus utilized the “Feast of Tabernacles” to proclaim himself as the Messiah and son of God.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the Book of Hebrews reminds us that Christ established a “more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,” viz:

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<sup>5</sup> John 1: 38 (“Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, **Rabbi**, (which is to say, being interpreted, **Master**,)...”)

<sup>6</sup> See, generally, Roderick Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Moses* (Tampa, FL.: Xlibris Pub., 2015).

<sup>7</sup> John 7: 1 – 53.

### Hebrews 9: 11-14, 24-28

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

...

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; **but into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

In the Christian religion, there is thus a “heavenly” tabernacle not made with hands—and it is this “heavenly” tabernacle which Messianic Jews still commemorate in the “Feast of Tabernacles.” For the earthly

tabernacle that was set up by Moses and the ancient Hebrews prefigured, and point our attention to, the “heavenly” tabernacle not made with hands. Hence, to the Messianic Jews, the Old Testament “tabernacle” and the New Testament “tabernacle not made with hands” have the same theological and spiritual meaning and should be commemorated simultaneously in the “Feast of the Tabernacles.”

Moreover, as Rabbi and Master, Jesus taught in the public synagogue throughout ancient Judea: “[a]nd Jesus went about all the cities and villages, *teaching in their synagogues*, and *preaching the gospel of the kingdom*....”

Jesus’ ministry appears to have been strictly confined to the Jews only—and not to the Gentiles.<sup>8</sup> His commission to the twelve apostles was for them to minister only to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.”<sup>9</sup> His commission of 70 additional disciples was for ministry in those same Jewish towns and cities, “whither [Jesus] himself would come.”<sup>10</sup>

Here, one can deduce that Jesus was practicing a form of “Messianic Judaism” that also reflected the political government of the Old Testament:

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 10: 5 (“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, ‘Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’”)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 10: 1.



1. Jesus of Nazareth = Moses or King David
2. 12 Apostles = Twelve Princes of ancient Israel
3. 70 Disciples = Seventy (or 72) Elders of ancient Israel
4. \* All Males = \* All Males (Patriarchal structure)

Moreover, in John's gospel, Jesus soon acknowledges and accepts the title "King of Israel."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, as the "King of the Jews,"<sup>12</sup> Jesus's ministry was a political ministry that fell within the ancient Hebrew-Deuteronomic political tradition— Jesus' commission came straight from the Law of Moses. Moreover, as a Rabbi, Jesus was practicing Jewish law within the public synagogues of ancient Judea;<sup>13</sup> and he stayed strictly within Jewish customs and traditions.

Those Jewish customs and traditions developed over time; for when Moses lived, there were no Jewish "synagogues"; there was the tabernacle and, later, the First Temple was established by kings David

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<sup>11</sup> John 1: 49 ("Nathaniel answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.")

<sup>12</sup> John 19: 21.

<sup>13</sup> See, also, "Jesus in the Synagogue" <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/magazine/jesus-in-the-synagogue/> ("As the local town hall and place of Jewish law, public synagogues also served other civic functions, especially that of a court of law and justice. The Gospels and Acts mention this on a number of occasions (Mark 13:9; Matthew 23:34; Luke 12:11-12; Acts 22:19).... Similar hints at the judicial function of synagogues appear in the Mishnah as well (Makkot 3:12; Shevu'ot 4:10).") [See, e.g., Luke 10: 25-37 (Jesus tested by "expert in the law" (NIV) or "lawyer" (KJV)); Luke 11: 45-52 (Jesus' debating "experts in the law" (NIV) or "lawyers" (KJV))]. Hence, Jesus of Nazareth "discussed and debated the interpretation and practice of Jewish law in synagogues (Mark 3:1-6; Luke 13:14-17; John 6:30-59)."

and Solomon. Under Moses, there had been a system of judges or rulers over 10s, 50s, 100s, and 1000s, “able men out Israel... heads over the people.”<sup>14</sup>

The Jewish “synagogue” grew up from this system of judges, and was thus construed to be a functional component of both the Jewish judicial and religious constitutional system.<sup>15</sup> From that point of view, the ancient Jewish “synagogues,” where Jesus preached, were local governmental units, where local Jewish “rulers,” such as Nicodemus<sup>16</sup> and Crispus,<sup>17</sup> who presided and governed over local Jewish affairs.

Therefore, the “type” of Christianity which Jesus taught and practiced was “Messianic” Judaism, because Jesus explicated and practiced the same laws and ordinances within the Law of Moses, as was being practiced amongst the Jews of his day.

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<sup>14</sup> Exodus 18: 25.

<sup>15</sup> See, generally, Roderick Ford, *The Apostolate Papers*, “The Ancient Jewish Synagogues Presbyterian and Congregational Model for the Early Church,” Vol. 2, Paper # 2, stating:

The Jewish synagogue arose up in response to, and as a remedy for, the collapse of ancient Israel’s and ancient Judah’s constitutions. Such episodes of collapse were usually preceded by either a moral decline or political subjugation to foreign powers. Thus, the Jewish synagogue functioned as a “mini” civil government—as a “mini” republic. In other words, the Jewish nation-state—which had collapsed or come under the dominance of foreign powers— was folded down and repackaged in the form of the Jewish synagogue, without priest or prophet or king! Priests and prophets joined the synagogues, but the synagogues remained, fundamentally, “lay” Jewish organizations.

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/6243146762478485901cb50341a50555?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

<sup>16</sup> See John 3: 1-36.

<sup>17</sup> Acts 18:8.

From this viewpoint, Christ's "Messianic Judaism" *predates* present-day Rabbinic, Orthodox Judaism, because the latter did not come into existence until about a century after the fall of the Second Temple in 70 AD!<sup>18</sup>

While it is widely presumed that present-day Rabbinic Judaism arose up from the Pharisees,<sup>19</sup> there were many Pharisees—such as Nicodemus and Paul—who converted to the Christian faith.

For example, there were converted Pharisees within the Early Church at Jerusalem, and many of these raised important questions about

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<sup>18</sup> See "Rabbinic Judaism History Beliefs & Traditions," <https://study.com/academy/lesson/rabbinic-judaism-overview-history.html#>, stating:

Rabbinic Judaism originated around this time in Jerusalem and became what is known as Judaism today. Before the destruction of the temple, there had been four major sects of Judaism. They were the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. The biggest differences between these sects were their views on the afterlife, physical resurrection, and end times.

After the temple was destroyed, there could be no sacrifices on behalf of the nation of Israel. This meant a departure from biblical Judaism as it had been practiced before. Rabbinical Judaism grew out of the teachings of the Pharisees and had a heavy emphasis on scholars and rabbis. By the 6th century, it had become the dominant form of Judaism.

Non-Rabbinic Judaism vs. Rabbinic Judaism

In the 9th century, several sects arose that denied the existence of the oral Torah.

They were known as Karaites, which means "people of the scripture."

Karaites maintain that all of the commandments were handed down from God to Moses, and were written without additional oral explanation. They do not accept the teachings of the Talmud as authoritative or binding.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

whether the newly-emerged Christian faithful must retain several ordinances, such as circumcision, that was within the Law of Moses.<sup>20</sup>

The Church of Jerusalem set the tone.<sup>21</sup> It allowed for some leniency in ordinances and rules for the newly-emerging Gentile churches.<sup>22</sup>

<u><b>Church of the Jews</b></u> (Jerusalem) <sup>23</sup>	<u><b>Church of the Gentiles</b></u> (Ceasarea <sup>24</sup> ; Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch). <sup>25</sup>
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For this reason, two broad types of Christian churches emerged during the First Century—those that were “Jewish” in tone, content, and structure, and those that were “Gentile” or Greco-Roman-Egyptian-Ethiopian, etc. Notably, even though the rules had been relaxed to accommodate the new Gentile Christians, the Apostle Paul and other converted Jews continued to practice a form of Messianic Judaism—and

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<sup>20</sup> See, generally, Acts 15: 5.

<sup>21</sup> See, generally, Acts 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The Church at Jerusalem: Acts 2:1-47; Acts 3: 1-26; Acts 4:1-37; Acts 5:1-41; Acts 6: 1- 15; Acts 7: 1-60; Acts 8: 1-40; Acts 9: 1 – 43.

<sup>24</sup> The Church of the Gentiles: Acts 10: 1-48; Acts 11: 1- 30.

<sup>25</sup> The Church of the Gentiles (Greeks): Acts 11: 19-30.

continued to acknowledge and practice all of the Jewish customs and feast days.<sup>26</sup>

The central theme here is to point out how Christ himself practiced a form of “Messianic” Judaism, which the Apostle Paul and other first-century Jewish Christians also practiced.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Acts 18:21 (Apostle Paul saying, “I must by all means keep this feast [of the Pentecost] that cometh in Jerusalem...”). At Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul himself acknowledged two denominations of Christian faithful: one for the Jews (i.e., Messianic Judaism), and another for the Gentiles (i.e., the Christian church). See, e.g., Acts 26: 17-26 (NIV), stating:

**Paul’s Arrival at Jerusalem**

17 When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly.

18 The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.

19 Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law.

21 They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.

22 What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, 23 so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow.

24 Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.

25 As for **the Gentile** believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.”

26 The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Jesus of Nazareth, while he walked in the flesh upon the earth, himself practiced and fulfilled all of Jewish holy days; his example justifies why all Christians (i.e., the “*Church of the Gentiles*”)—as do the Messianic Christians (i.e., the “*Church of the Jews*”) — should keep and acknowledge these holy days as well, on there Christian calendars.

Again, in Reformed-Protestant theology, the “Messianic Jews” (i.e., the House of Judah) and the “Gentile Christians” (i.e., the House of Israel) are one and the same people in the eyes of God and his Christ.<sup>28</sup>

### A.

#### “What is the Feast of Tabernacles?”

The **Feast of the Tabernacles** (Sukkot) is a seven-day feast that occurs during the Autumn part of the year (i.e., 15th day of the month of Tishrei).<sup>29</sup>

This festival commemorates “last harvest” of the agricultural harvesting season, beginning with the First Fruits in the Spring, until the end of that harvesting season.

This feast appears to have a two-fold objective: *first*, it is a holy festival of thanksgiving to God for the harvest (e.g., Exodus 34:22); and, *second*, it is a commemoration of the Lord’s grace and provision

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<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Hosea 1:10-11 (“Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves on head....”); and see St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634 (“Let the reader but call to mind the corner stone and those two walls of partition, the one of the Jews, the other of the Gentiles, and he will recognize them, the one under the term sons of Judah, the other as sons of Israel, supporting themselves by one and the same headship, and ascending from the earth.”)

<sup>29</sup> “Sukkot,” *Wikipedia* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukkot>

following exodus from Egypt during the 40-year sojourn in the desert (Leviticus 23: 33-44; Numbers 29: 12-40; Deuteronomy 16: 13-17).

## **B.**

### **“Feast of Tabernacles in the Law of Moses”**

The **Feast of the Tabernacles** is explicitly set forth, and explained, in the Law of Moses as follows:

The Book of Exodus 34:22, states: “And thou shalt observe... the feast of ingathering at the year’s end.”

The Book of Leviticus 23: 33-44, states:

33 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

34 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.**

35 On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

36 **Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you;** and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.

37 These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day:

38 Beside the sabbaths of the Lord, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the Lord.

39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath.

40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.

41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

42 **Ye shall dwell in booths seven days;** all that are Israelites born shall **dwell in booths:**

43 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.

44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.

The Book of Numbers 29: 12- 40, states,

12 And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep **a feast unto the Lord seven days:**



13 And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish:

14 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams,

15 And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs:

16 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

17 And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

18 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

19 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offerings.

20 And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;

21 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

22 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

23 And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

24 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

25 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

26 And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

27 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

28 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

29 And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

30 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

31 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

32 And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

33 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

34 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

35 On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein:

36 But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish:

37 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

38 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

39 These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings.

40 And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the Lord commanded Moses.

The Book of Deuteronomy 16: 13- 17, states:

13 Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:

14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.

15 **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 in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

16 Three times in a year shall **all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose**; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty:

17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

Hence, the “Feast of Tabernacles” is a major directive within the Law of Moses.

### C. “Jesus Kept the Feast of Tabernacles”

The Gospel of John sets forth the Feast of Tabernacles as an important Jewish holy festival in which the Jews travelled to Jerusalem to commemorate.

Jesus of Nazareth both acknowledge and participated in the Feast of the Tabernacles. For example, the Gospel of John describes a series of events which occur during the “feast of tabernacles.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John 7: 2.

During this time period, “the Jews sought to kill [Jesus].”<sup>31</sup>

For this reason, Jesus “abode still in Galilee,”<sup>32</sup> while directing his disciples to proceed up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the tabernacles without him.<sup>33</sup>

Afterwards, Jesus himself went to Jerusalem to attend this feast of the tabernacles—“not openly, but as it were in secret.”<sup>34</sup>

During this feast, “there was much murmuring among the people concerning [Jesus]: for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of hi for fear of the Jews.”<sup>35</sup>

Suddenly, during the middle of this feast of tabernacles, Jesus went into the Temple and began to teach.<sup>36</sup>

From this Gospel’s description, Jesus’ teaching was quite erudite, because “the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”<sup>37</sup>

But then, during this feast of tabernacles at Jerusalem, and while teaching in the Temple, Jesus of Nazareth goes right into the heart of the spiritual strife and murmuring of the moment, and he says to the Jews:

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<sup>31</sup> John 7:1.

<sup>32</sup> John 7:9.

<sup>33</sup> John 7:8 (“Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.”)

<sup>34</sup> John 7: 9.

<sup>35</sup> John 7:12-13.

<sup>36</sup> John 7: 14.

<sup>37</sup> John 7:15.

“Why go ye about to kill me?” and “**Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?**”<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, Jesus used this platform to argue one of his most important points about the Law of Moses—namely, that this sublime Law must at all times be interpreted to do equity and justice.

Here at this feast of tabernacles, Jesus thus explained the LAW OF EQUITY<sup>39</sup> to the Pharisees: "If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*"<sup>40</sup>

Jesus here placed a very great importance upon “judicial construction” and (or) “biblical hermeneutics”—his admonishment was that the interpretation of the Law of Moses [which was the secular and sacred constitution of Israel] always lead to equity and justice. This is even more evident because even though the Jews who were in attendance at this feast of tabernacles were actually “keeping the Law of Moses” by virtue of their attendance, Jesus admonished them to do much more—namely, equity and justice!

Finally, the Gospel informs us that on “the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying...”:

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

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<sup>38</sup> John 7: 19.

<sup>39</sup> NOTE: "Law of Equity" here means "real" Justice (i.e., making a person healthy or "whole"; here equity "fulfills" the underlying objective of the Law (e.g., "circumcision")).

<sup>40</sup> John 7: 23-24.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.<sup>41</sup>

These words were uttered during the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles. At that time, “there was a division among the people because of him.”<sup>42</sup>

### **D. “Paul Kept the Feast of Tabernacles”**

From this passage of Scripture, we find Jesus’s example as to the Feast of Tabernacles—he directed his apostles to keep this feast; and he himself honored and kept this feast.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John 7: 37-38.

<sup>42</sup> John 7: 43.

<sup>43</sup> Herman L. Hoeh, “What New Members Should Know about the Feast of Tabernacles,” *Herbert W. Armstrong* <https://www.hwalibrary.com/cgi-bin/get/hwa.cgi?action=getmagazine&InfoID=1393158640>

#### **Christ's Example in the New Testament**

The last autumn before He died, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Tabernacles!

The entire seventh chapter of the Gospel according to John is devoted to what Jesus said and did at that Festival. Because of the Jews, Jesus did not go to Jerusalem with his family, but separated from them (verses 8 and 10). He did not appear publicly to teach in the temple until the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles (verse 14). John records parts of the special sermon of Christ delivered on the last great day of the Feast, beginning with verse 37.

Did Paul follow Jesus' example?

#### **Paul Kept Feast of Tabernacles**

Paul obeyed Jesus Christ. Paul kept the Holy Days Jesus commanded. That included the Feast of Tabernacles. Where, in Scripture, do we find Paul keeping this festival? Turn to the book of Acts for the answer! Notice the sequence of events. God used Paul to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel. In 50 A.D., Paul crossed over from Asia into Europe and began to preach the gospel at Philippi "on the day of weeks" — Pentecost — according to the inspired original Greek (Acts 16:13). Pentecost is also called the "feast of weeks" in the old Testament (Deut. 16:10).

Most versions render the Greek expression "on the Sabbath day"; but the original inspired Greek is in the plural — and means "the day of weeks." This was exactly 19 years to the day since the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost in A.D. 31 (Acts 2).

Jesus' example may be described as directing this church to honor the Law of Moses by keeping the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, Jesus may be described as having interpreted the Feast of the Tabernacles to be all about truly honoring the LORD God through righteousness, holiness, and justice (i.e., "[j]udge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.")<sup>45</sup>

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After a few weeks at Philippi, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), Berea (Acts 17:10) and at Athens (verse 16), Paul came to Corinth in the late summer of A.D. 50. After spending several Sabbaths teaching in the synagogue (Acts 18:4), Paul continued to hold meetings in the house of Titius Justus (verse 7) for "a year and six months" (verse 11). This brings us to the spring of 52 A.D.

After a riot stirred up against the Apostle was quelled, we read the following about Paul: "And Paul after this tarried there A GOOD WHILE, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria" (Acts 18:18). It was now well into the summer of A.D. 52. The Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost — the two festivals near the beginning and end of spring — were now past.

To continue with Paul's journey. On his way from Corinth to the port of Syria, "he came to Ephesus" and "entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, I MUST BY ALL MEANS KEEP THIS FEAST THAT COMETH IN JERUSALEM: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus" (Acts 18:19-21).

Paul planning to keep the feast with the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem? Indeed! That is what the Scripture says!

Which Feast? Obviously the Feast of Tabernacles!

The spring festivals were already past. The two late summer or early autumn Holy Days, the festivals of Trumpets and Atonement, were held at any of the local congregations. Yet here was a major festival being held at Jerusalem IN THE AUTUMN. The only major festival that occurs in the autumn is the Feast of Tabernacles! Paul told the Ephesians that he "MUST BY ALL MEANS KEEP THIS FEAST" with the Headquarters Church in Jerusalem. Paul had just completed his first journey into Europe with the gospel. He felt he had to report the progress of the work to the Headquarters Church and the brethren in Palestine (verse 22). What better time than to do so while keeping the Feast of Tabernacles!

Here is the example of Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. After years in the New Testament ministry he is still KEEPING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> John 7:24.



Both of these very reasonable interpretations are part and parcel of Messianic Judaism's approach to the Feast of Tabernacles.

### E.

#### **“Feast of Tabernacles—a Reminder of Hardships and Divine Blessings During 40-Year Sojourn in Wilderness”**

The 40-year journey in the wilderness—where there was trial, hardship, tests of faith, and miraculous blessings—is the major theme of the Feast of Tabernacles.

For this reason, present-day Jews commemorate this festival by building makeshift huts or sukkah in their back yards, patios, or next to their synagogues, and sometimes they sleep inside these structures, and host guests and eat meals in them as well.

A Sukkah is a **temporary, outdoor hut built** and used during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. It's a symbol of the Israelites' dwellings during their 40 years of wandering in the desert after leaving Egypt. During Sukkot, Jews are traditionally encouraged to eat and spend time in their Sukkah, treating it as their temporary home.<sup>46</sup>



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<sup>46</sup> “Sukkah,” Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukkah#>.

Why Christians ought to commemorate this Feast of Tabernacles it primarily two-fold: first, the Old Testament of the Jews prefigured the New Testament Christian Church, and thus this Jewish history is a part of the history of the Christian faith.

The second reason why Christian should commemorate the Feast of Tabernacles is mostly “spiritual” in nature. For one thing, the three-year ministry of Jesus was a reflection of the “Feast of the Tabernacles,” particularly where Jesus thus responded to one scribe in Matthew 8: 19-20 as follows:

And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but **the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.**

Similarly, Jesus alludes to something similar in his “Parable of the Rich Fool,”<sup>47</sup> where he forewarns the Christian faithful against “laying up treasures” without being “rich toward God.”

#### **Luke 12: 13-21**

**13** And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

**14** And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

**15** And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: **for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**

**16** And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

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<sup>47</sup> Luke 12: 13-21.

**17** And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

**18** And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

**19** And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

**20** But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

**21** So is he that **layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus again emphasized the same spiritual maxim, stating:

**Matthew 6: 19- 21**

**19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

**20** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

**21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

This emphasis upon the spiritual life—spiritual values— as being far superior to the material world, and the accumulation of material possessions, cannot be overemphasized in Judea-Christian teachings.

According to Jesus, the core of the problem is the “sinful, corrupt heart,” where evil formulates, grows, and ultimately causes harmful

actions (i.e., injustice) in the material world—e.g., greed, materialism, theft, murder, etc., etc.

**Mark 7: 21-23**

**21** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

**22** Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

**23** All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

What, then, the “Feast of Tabernacles” reminds Jews and Christians is that God shall provide for us if we keep our trust and faith in Him. This feast says to us, “Remember how the LORD took care of us when we were in the wilderness?” “Remember when we were poor and had nothing, and yet we were still blessed?”

Such an exercise in spiritual self-analysis and renewal is extremely important—not only for religious sects, but for individuals, families, racial groups, and entire nations.

## CONCLUSION

This Appendix covered the “**Feast of Tabernacles**” within this series on Christ’s fulfillment of the Jewish holy days, to wit:

Feast Day	Old Testament Scripture	General Judaism <sup>48</sup>	Messianic Judaism ✡	General Christianity <sup>49</sup>
<b>Feast of the Passover</b>	Leviticus 23: 5-8; Numbers 28: 16-25	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged but not celebrated
<b>Feast of Unleavened Bread</b>	Leviticus 23: 5-8; Numbers 28: 16-25	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Not acknowledged or celebrated
<b>Feast of Pentecost</b>	Leviticus 23: 5-22	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Not acknowledged or celebrated
<b>Feast of Trumpets</b>	Leviticus 23: 23-25	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Not acknowledged or celebrated
<b>Feast of Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)</b>	Numbers 29: 7-11	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Not acknowledged or celebrated
<b>Feast of Tabernacles</b>	Leviticus 23: 33-44	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Not acknowledged or celebrated
<b>Feast of First fruits</b>	Leviticus 23: 9-16	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Acknowledged; and celebrated	Not acknowledged or celebrated

<sup>48</sup> The term “General Judaism” includes all of the various denominations and sects within the Jewish religion.

<sup>49</sup> The term “General Christianity” includes all of the various denominations and sects within the Christian religion.

The Book of Hebrews reminds us that Christ established a “more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands.” See Hebrews 9: 11-14; 24-28. In the Christian religion, there is thus a “heavenly” tabernacle not made with hands—and it is this “heavenly” tabernacle which Messianic Jews still commemorate in the “Feast of Tabernacles.” For the earthly tabernacle that was set up by Moses and the ancient Hebrews prefigured, and point our attention to, the “heavenly” tabernacle not made with hands. Hence, to the Messianic Jews, the Old Testament “tabernacle” and the New Testament “tabernacle not made with hands” have the same theological and spiritual meaning and should be commemorated simultaneously in the “Feast of the Tabernacles.”

For these reasons, this paper concludes that the Reformed Christian churches may commemorate—together with the Jews and the Messianic Jews—the “Feast of Tabernacles,” without violating the central tenets of the Reformed theology.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 238-239, regarding Israel and the Jews, stating:

This same nation, too, was afterwards dispersed through the nations, in order to testify to the scriptures in which eternal salvation in Christ had been declared. For not only the prophecies which are contained in words, nor only the precepts for the right conduct of life, which teach morals and piety, and are contained in the sacred writings—not only these, but also the rites, priesthood, tabernacle or temple, altars, sacrifices, ceremonies, and whatever else belongs to that service which is due to God, and which in Greek is properly called *hatpeia*—all these signified and fore-announced those things which we who believe in Jesus Christ unto eternal life believe to have been fulfilled, or behold in process of fulfillment, or confidently believe shall yet be fulfilled.

**THE END**

