**Lesson: Feast of Tabernacles**

Also known as Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*), this observance occurs on the Jewish calendar during the month of Tishrei, 15–21. This is the seventh and last of the major feasts God commanded Israel to observe; it begins near the end of the fall harvest, five days after the Day of Atonement. This celebration is often associated with the rebuilding of God’s house, reflected in the assembly and disassembly of the tabernacle every time the Israelites relocated while in the wilderness of Sinai. This was a temporary dwelling for the Holy Spirit who traveled with them; the sojourners also built temporary dwellings, or booths. This is a time for fellowship, when the congregation together looks forward to living permanently with the Lord in heaven where He dwells. Traditionally, the men of Israel (males over twenty years old) made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast, where they housed in temporary dwellings or booths. Like the week of unleavened bread, this feast begins and ends on a high sabbath.

* LEV 23:34–36, 39–42 ~ The fifteenth day of the seventh month begins the seven days of the feast of tabernacles. There will be a holy convocation on the first day so there will be no work. For seven days make sacrifices by fire, until the eighth day when you will have another holy convocation, a solemn assembly. After you have gathered the fruit of the land, keep this feast, beginning and ending on a high sabbath. On the first day, collect boughs of large trees, willow and palm branches from the stream, and rejoice seven days, with a holy convocation on the eighth day. You will dwell in booths for seven days.
* PSA 76:2 ~ In Salem is God’s tabernacle; in Zion is His home.
* PSA 118:15–16 ~ Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tabernacles of the righteous saying, “The right hand of the Lord is lifted high; His right hand has done mighty things.”
* JOH 1:14 ~ The Word became flesh and lived among us. And we witnessed His glory, the glory of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.
* HEB 8:1–2 ~ In summary, we have a High Priest, who sits at the right hand of God in heaven and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord and not by man.

The Israelites took the tabernacle wherever they went, breaking it down and setting it up countless times. The inner sanctum was the Holy of Holies which held the Ark of the Covenant, containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. Only the high priest could enter the holiest chamber. The connection between the Old and New Covenants is the Holy Spirit, who is connected to the Father and to the Son in an eternal triad. We ourselves are temples, or booths, where the Holy Spirit of the Lord can dwell. A gathering of Christians is like a church filled with booths, each a part of the collective body of Christ. The entirety of those alive and dead in Christ comprises His Church, analogous to a bride being prepared for nuptials, the groom being the only begotten Son of God: the Lamb of God, the New Covenant.

* EXO 26:33 ~ Hang the curtain and place the Ark of the Covenant behind it; the curtain will separate the holy place from the most holy place.
* JER 31:31–33 ~ The days are coming when I will make a New Covenant with my people. It will not be like the covenant I made when I brought my people out of Egypt, which they broke. The New Covenant will be this: Instead of writing my laws on stone, I will write my laws inside the hearts of my people.
* MAT 26:26–28 ~ As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and said, “Take and eat, this is my body.” Then He took the cup, gave thanks and said, “Take and drink, this is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you for the remission of sins.”
* HEB 9:2–4 ~ A tabernacle was erected, containing a candlestick, a table, and the twelve loaves in the sanctuary. Inside the second curtain was the holiest place. It held the Ark of the Covenant with the tablets of the covenant (Ten Commandments).
* HEB 9:11–16 ~ Christ came as the high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by human hands. It was not dedicated by the blood of animals, but through His own blood, Christ entered into the holiest place, having obtained eternal redemption for sins. If the blood of sacrifices could sanctify and purify in accordance with the old covenant, how much more the blood of Christ can purify and sanctify, purging our consciences from dead works to serve the living God! He is mediator of the new covenant, that by His death there is forgiveness of sins committed under the old covenant, so we might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.
* HEB 9:18–21 ~ Even the first covenant included blood, for after Moses read from the Book of the Law, He sprinkled blood from the offering on the book and the people, saying, “This is the blood of the everlasting covenant which God has commanded for you to keep.” Moses also sanctified the tabernacle and the vessels in this manner.

Both the first and the last Jewish feasts continued for a period of eight days, one week plus one day, during the early harvest season and the late harvest season. These two festivals revealed a harvesting of God’s people Israel in the Old Testament, and a harvesting of Christians who have been grafted into the Branch in the New Testament (ZEC 6:11–13; JOH 15:1–6). God’s feasts started with Passover and a week of unleavened bread, and ended with Tabernacles after a week of sacrifice followed by a high sabbath day, representing the first and the last, the alpha and omega. You know, we have a calendar filled with holidays, but few are actually holy like this one.

The first coming of Christ is represented in the late harvest, when He came as a baby. His departure from earth is depicted in the early harvest, when He died and rose again. After forty days, He ascended to sit at God’s right hand, leaving behind His Holy Spirit to continue building His Church on earth. The faith of Christians also is built by the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us. He is our life force forever, which we possess by claiming the blood of Christ. His blood covers us like the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on the people by Moses after reading from the Book of the Law. Messiah will return before you know it, to claim us, for we are His, the true Christian Church, the seed of Abraham, the body of Christ: those sanctified by His Holy Spirit.

* ACT 2:42 ~ And they continued conscientiously in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
* HEB 10:24–25 ~ Let us encourage one another to promote love and good works. Let us never cease to fellowship with one another in God’s house as others are in the habit of doing.
* 1 JO 1:3–4 ~ That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you can become one of us; for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write to you so that you may be filled.

Father, we praise and thank you for giving us your Word so we could know you, and we praise and thank you for sending your Son so we could live with you. We praise and thank you for your Holy Spirit who teaches us your will and your wisdom, and who brings us all the way home. We proclaim Christ who is the resurrection and the life, and we claim His blood as a covering for our sins. Let your Holy Spirit indwell us as we now open our hearts and minds to receive Him. May we be temples of your Holy Spirit on earth; let us not defile that temple with the wicked ways of the world, or be influenced by demons and Satan. Instead, let your Spirit drive them from our midst wherever we go. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we pray, Amen.

By Andrew V. Barber (posted 10/01/2023)