

## THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

John 7:1-3, 8-11, 14, 37-38

**(John 7:1-3)**, “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. {2} Now **THE JEWS' FEAST OF TABERNACLES** was at hand. {3} His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.”

**(V. 8-11)**, “Go ye up unto **THIS FEAST**: I go not up yet unto **THIS FEAST**: for my time is not yet full come. {9} When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. {10} But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto **THE FEAST**, not openly, but as it were in secret. {11} Then the Jews sought him at **THE FEAST**, and said, Where is he?”

**(V. 14)**, “Now about the midst of **THE FEAST** Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.”

**(V. 37-38)**, “In **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. {38} He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”



**S** ONE OF THE MOST **INTERESTING STUDIES** IN SCRIPTURE IS FOUND BY EXAMINING **THE SEVEN FEASTS OF ISRAEL**. THE SEVEN FEASTS ARE DESCRIBED IN **LEVITICUS 23**.

#1 — THE FEAST OF **PASSOVER** (v. 5)

#2 — THE FEAST OF **UNLEAVENED BREAD** (VV. 6-8)

#3 — THE FEAST OF **FIRST FRUITS** (VV. 9-10)

#4 — THE FEAST OF **PENTECOST** (VV. 15-17)

#5 — THE FEAST OF **TRUMPETS** (VV. 23-25)

#6 — THE FEAST OF **ATONEMENT** (VV. 26-27)

#7 — THE FEAST OF **TABERNACLES** (VV. 33-44)

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**CONSIDER SEVEN GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE FEASTS FOUND IN LEVITICUS 23:**

### #1. THE FEASTS ARE CALLED “CONVOICATIONS” (v. 4)

**S** THE WORD “**CONVOICATION**” (“mik-raw”) means “**GATHERING,**” or “**ASSEMBLY.**”

**S** Each of the seven feasts INVOLVED SOME TYPE OF **GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE**.

### #2. THE FEASTS ARE CALLED “HOLY”

**S** FOUR TIMES in Leviticus 23 the seven convocations are CALLED, “**THE FEASTS OF THE LORD**” (VV. 2, 4, 37, 44). These feasts **were not born** in the hearts and minds of the Jews, but in the heart and mind of God.

**S** THESE FEASTS ARE CALLED “**HOLY CONVOICATIONS**” (v. 4). The word “**HOLY**” (ko'-desh) indicates something that is **set apart** from the world and that is **dedicated to God**.

### #3. THE FEASTS ARE SEVEN IN NUMBER

**S** THE NUMBER **SEVEN IS SIGNIFICANT** IN SCRIPTURE. **Seven** is used so often in Scripture that some people have referred to it as **THE DIVINE NUMBER** (or God’s favorite number). Consider **A FEW USES** of **seven** in Scripture:

- 1) God established **THE WEEK** and it consists of **SEVEN DAYS**.
- 2) Out of those seven days, **THE SEVENTH DAY** was set apart for a day for **rest** and **worship**.
- 3) God declared the **SEVENTH YEAR** to be **A SABBATICAL YEAR**. The **land** was to lay fallow and all **Hebrew servants** were to be set free (Exo 21:2).
- 4) The **YEAR OF JUBILEE** came every fiftieth year. In other words, it followed seven sets of seven years.
- 5) The **CANDLESTICK** in the tabernacle had **SEVEN lights** (Num 8:2).
- 6) Israel was told to march around **JERICHO** for **SEVEN DAYS**. On the **SEVENTH DAY** Israel marched around the city walls of Jericho **SEVEN** times. **SEVEN PRIESTS** blew **SEVEN TRUMPETS** (Josh 6:8ff).

- 7) NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S **MADNESS** lasted for a period of **SEVEN TIMES** (Dan 4:16,23,25,32).
- 8) LEPROUS **NAAMAN** was told to **DIP SEVEN TIMES** in the Jordan river (2 Kin 5:10).
- 9) THE BOOK OF **REVELATION** uses the number SEVEN repeatedly.
  - C **SEVEN CHURCHES** (1:4)
  - C **SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS** (1:12)
  - C **SEVEN STARS** (1:16)
  - C **SEVEN ANGELS OF THE CHURCHES** (1:20)
  - C **SEVEN SCROLLS** with **SEVEN SEALS** (5:1)
  - C **SEVEN ANGELS** with **SEVEN TRUMPETS** (8:2)
  - C **SEVEN BOWLS OF THE WRATH** of God (15:7)

**S** All that to reiterate that the number seven has GREAT SIGNIFICANCE in Scripture. It has been suggested that the number **SEVEN REPRESENTS COMPLETION**. If that is an accurate assumption, is it possible that **the seven feasts** present **a complete picture** of something?

#### #4. THE FEASTS WERE OBSERVED ANNUALLY AT THEIR APPOINTED TIME

**(Lev 23:4)**, "These are the **FEASTS** ("MO`ED` ") of the LORD, even HOLY CONVOCATIONS, which ye shall proclaim in their **SEASONS** ("MO`ED` ")."

- S** You would **never guess** by reading most translations that the Hebrew **word** for "**FEASTS**" and "**SEASONS**" is the same word. The Hebrew word for both is "**MO`ED**" (mo-ade'). "**MO`ED**" literally means "**APPOINTED TIMES**" (or "**fixed times**").
- S** The **NEW AMERICAN STANDARD** clearly conveys the duplication of the word "**MO`ED**"
  - (NASB V. 4)**, "These are **THE APPOINTED TIMES** ("mo`ed` ") of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim **AT THE TIMES APPOINTED** ("mo`ed` ") for them."
- S** **YEAR AFTER YEAR**, God wanted these seven feasts **to be observed at their "fixed time."** The specific time set by God was of great **significance** as we will discussed later in this message.

- S** These feasts were also to be observed by the Jews year after year throughout their generations.
  - C **(V. 14)**, "... It shall be **a statute for ever** throughout your generations . . . "
  - C **(V. 21)**, "... It shall be **a statute for ever** in all your dwellings throughout your generations."
  - C **(V. 31)**, "... It shall be **a statute for ever** throughout your generations in all your dwellings."
  - C **(V. 41)**, "... It shall be **a statute for ever** in your generations: . . . "

#### #5. THE FEASTS HAD SPECIFIC OBSERVANCES ASSIGNED TO THEM

- S** **EACH FEAST WAS DESIGNED to communicate some truth** regarding God's dealing with His people. It is an exciting and rewarding study to examine the details associated with each feast. In this particular message **we will examine the details** related to the **Feast of Tabernacles**.
- S** Minute details can sometimes be **BORING**. But in the case of the feasts, **it is in the details that God reveals His message**. If we miss the details, we will miss the message. Be careful to look for God's message in the details.

#### #6. THE FEASTS WERE TO BE OBSERVED AT PRESCRIBED LOCATIONS

- S** FOR EXAMPLE, THE **FEAST OF PASSOVER** was to be observed IN **HOMES WITH FAMILIES GATHERED** to eat the Passover lamb. Because the *Feast of Passover* preceded the pilgrimage *Feast of Unleavened Bread* by one day, worshipers often celebrated *Passover* in Jerusalem.
- S** THE **FEAST OF ATONEMENT** specified certain duties for **the High Priest** to perform at the temple. Jews throughout the land participated by personally **FASTING**.
- S** **THREE FEASTS** were called **PILGRIMAGE FEASTS** because every able-bodied male of age was required to travel to the temple to observe those feasts. **THE THREE PILGRIMAGE FEASTS WERE:**

- (1) **THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD**
- (2) **THE FEAST OF PENTECOST**
- (3) **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES** (Deu 16:16).

**S** OUR TEXT is an example of Jesus' making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the purpose of observing the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

JESUS SAID TO HIS BROTHERS:

**(John 7:8, 10)**, "GO YE UP unto **THIS FEAST**: . . . {10} But when his brethren were **GONE UP**, then **WENT HE ALSO UP** unto **THE FEAST**, . . . ." (IT WAS TERMED "GO UP" BECAUSE THE CITY OF **JERUSALEM** was higher in elevation than was Galilee.)

**S** GOD'S REQUIREMENT OF **MANDATORY ATTENDANCE** FOR THE THREE PILGRIMAGE FEASTS **GUARANTEED THAT A HOST OF PEOPLE** WOULD BE PRESENT EACH YEAR FOR THEIR OBSERVANCE. **GOD'S DESIGN** was that the city of **JERUSALEM BE FILLED** with worshipers for these three feasts.

- (1) The city of Jerusalem would have been full at the *Feast of PASSOVER* to observe Jesus' **CRUCIFIXION**. That was by God's design.
- (2) The city of Jerusalem would have been full at the *Feast of PENTECOST* to observe **THE HOLY SPIRIT COME** upon the disciples as the church was born. That, too, was by heaven's design.
- (3) **DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU WONDER** what God has in store for the fulfillment of the *Feast of Tabernacles*?

## **#7. THE FEASTS ARE PROPHETIC IN NATURE**

**S** It is suggested that THE SEVEN FEASTS OF ISRAEL **PAINT A PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF JESUS' MINISTRY**. THAT IS **EASY TO CONFIRM** in relation to **THE FIRST FOUR FEASTS** because their prophetic fulfillment has already come to pass.

- #1 JESUS WAS **CRUCIFIED ON PASSOVER** – (Jesus was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. John 1:29)
- #2 JESUS WAS **BURIED ON UNLEAVENED BREAD** – (As bread without leaven pictures the absence of sin, so Jesus was the perfect lamb **without spot or sin**. Heb. 4:15)
- #3 JESUS WAS **RESURRECTED ON FIRST FRUITS** – (Jesus was the 1<sup>st</sup> fruit. 1 Cor 15:20, 23)

- #4 **GOD SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT ON PENTECOST** – (The church was born. John 16:7)

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 WITH THE FINAL THREE FEASTS IN MIND, **WE NEED TO ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS:**

**(1) QUESTION #1 — IS IT POSSIBLE** that just as the first four feasts **painted prophetic pictures of Jesus' ministry**, so **the remaining three feasts** paint prophetic pictures of Jesus ministry, too?

**S** One reason to believe the final three feasts have **just as much prophetic implication** as did the first four feasts is, the final three feasts are **LINKED TOGETHER WITH THE FIRST FOUR FEASTS IN A SERIES OF SEVEN**. That linkage in the series of seven suggests A PICTURE OF **COMPLETION**.

**S** The seven feasts are **ALSO LINKED TOGETHER BY ASSOCIATION WITH THE AGRICULTURAL SEASONS OF ISRAEL**.

#1. THE FIRST THREE FEASTS are associated with **THE EARLY GRAIN HARVEST OF BARLEY**. They fall in our months of **MARCH or APRIL**. They are **SOMETIMES CALLED THE SPRING FEASTS**.

#2. THE FOURTH FEAST of *Pentecost* is associated with **THE WHEAT HARVEST**. It commonly falls in the months of **MAY or JUNE**.

#3. THE LAST THREE FEASTS fall in our months of **September or October** and ARE **SOMETIMES CALLED THE FALL FEASTS**. They are celebrated at the end of the **HARVEST SEASON**. The *Feast of Tabernacles* is sometimes referred to as **THE FEAST OF INGATHERING** (Ex 23:14-16). At this feast the **grapes, dates, pomegranates** and **figs** would have already been harvested. The **olives** would have been hanging heavy in the trees.

**S** **IS IT POSSIBLE** that these last three feasts speak prophetically of God gathering His people in the final spiritual harvest? Many Bible students believe the final three feasts will be fulfilled in their entirety in the events associated with **JESUS' FUTURE RETURN TO EARTH**.

It will be at that time that God's final harvest will be complete.

- (2) **QUESTION #2 — IS IT POSSIBLE** that just as the prophetic fulfillment of the first four feasts **CAME TO PASS ON THE DAY** of their annual observance, that the **prophetic fulfillment** of the last three feasts will be fulfilled **ON THE DAY** of their annual observance? **ONLY GOD KNOWS THAT ANSWER FOR CERTAIN**, but it seems logical to conclude that such is at least a possibility.

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We approach the suggested prophetic interpretations for the remaining three feasts with a great deal of humility. We acknowledge that only God can see the complete and final picture.

#### #5—THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

- C TRUMPETS WERE USED FOR **TWO GRAND PURPOSES IN THE O.T.**
- (1) Trumpets were sometimes used to **ASSEMBLE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR CELEBRATION**. On occasion, God's people were called to the temple for worship by use of the trumpet.
  - (2) Trumpets were also used to **WARN OF IMPENDING DANGER**. Trumpets were used to **ASSEMBLE ARMIES for battle**. Trumpets were also used to announce the advance of an army into battle.
- C IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT **THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS PAINTS A PICTURE OF GOD ASSEMBLING HIS PEOPLE FOR BOTH CELEBRATION AND BATTLE**.
- 1) Trumpets will be used to assemble God's people for the **CELEBRATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE RAPTURE/ RESURRECTION: (1 Cor 15:52)**, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last TRUMP**: for **the TRUMPET shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
  - 2) Trumpets will be used to warn of **DANGER ASSOCIATED WITH THE GREAT TRIBULATION**. In fact, **seven** of the twenty-one judgments in the Book of Revelation are **TRUMPET JUDGMENTS**.

#### #6—THE FEAST OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kippur)

- C During Old Testament days, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and offer a sacrifice for the sins of the nation during *The Feast of Atonement*. His sacrifice was offered so that Israel as a nation might **escape God's judgment** of sin.

- C Certain elements of the *Feast of Atonement* **have already fulfilled**. When Jesus, our High Priest, entered the Holy of Holies once and for all, He offered the perfect sacrifice for our sins on the cross. He fulfilled certain aspects of the *Feast of Atonement* (Heb 10:10; Luke 23:45).
- C Some Bible students believe that the *Feast of Atonement* has **further fulfillment**. They point to the time prophesied in Scripture in which **the nation of Israel** will recognize and accept Jesus as their **Messiah**. The prophet **ZECHARIAH** wrote of **A TIME WHEN** the nation of Israel would respond to Jesus.

(**Zec 12:10**), "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

(**Rom 11:26**), "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"

#### #7—THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

- C It is suggested the fulfillment of the *Feast of Tabernacles* will take place when Jesus returns to earth to **tabernacle** among humanity on earth. That period of time is known as **THE MILLENNIUM** (Rev 20).

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**THIS MESSAGE FOCUSES ON THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES** because that is the feast Jesus celebrated in John 7. We will consider **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES FROM TWO DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**.

- I. **A LOOK BACK AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY**
- II. **A LOOK FORWARD AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROPHECY**

# I. A LOOK BACK AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCRIPTURE and HISTORY

## S FIVE FACTS FROM THE SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVE:

### #1. IT BEGAN THE 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MONTH

(Lev 23:34, 39, 41; Deu 16:13, 15)

S **TABERNACLES WAS A FALL FESTIVAL.** The *Feast of Tabernacles* always falls somewhere in our months of **September or October**. Because **the Jews** used the **lunar calendar**, the **exact date varied** from year to year.

S **EASTER is an example of how the dates vary** because of the lunar calendar. Easter is sometimes observed in April, while at other times it is observed in March. This variation of time is due to the lunar calendar.

### #2. IT WAS A PILGRIMAGE FEAST

S **(Deu 16:16)**, “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:”

S EVERY ABLE-BODIED MALE of eligible age was **required** to travel to the location of the tabernacle/temple for the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

S That requirement meant **A HOST OF PEOPLE** would have been present in Jerusalem to observe the *Feast of Tabernacles* during the events described in John 7.

### #3. IT LASTED SEVEN DAYS, PLUS ONE

**(Lev 23:36)**, “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.”

S THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES* WAS **ALWAYS** followed by a day called **A SABBATH**, or a **HOLY CONVOCATION**, or a **HIGH SABBATH** (Lev 23:39). The result was the *Feast of Tabernacles* was sometimes thought of as lasting eight days.

C **(Lev 23:39)**, “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.**” (Lev 23:35)

C **(Num 29:35)**, “On the eighth day ye shall have **A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY**: ye shall do no servile work therein:” (Num 29:12)

C A search of the Scripture reveals that God instituted **seven additional Sabbaths** each year above the normal fifty-two weekly Sabbaths. The special Sabbaths were to be observed in a manner equivalent to a regular Sabbath. No work was to be carried out on those special days. Those seven special Sabbaths were:

1. The **first day** of **UNLEAVENED BREAD** (Lev 23:7)
2. The **last day** of **UNLEAVENED BREAD** (Lev 23:8)
3. **The day** of the **FEAST OF PENTECOST** (Lev 23:21)
4. **The day** of the **FEAST OF TRUMPETS** (Lev 23:24)
5. **The day** of **ATONEMENT** (Lev 23:28)
6. The **first day** of **TABERNACLES** (Lev 23:35, 39)
7. The **day after** the **FEAST OF TABERNACLES** (23:36, 39)

The knowledge of **HIGH SABBATHS IS HELPFUL** in determining the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. John 19 is an example.

**(John 19:31)**, “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for **that sabbath day was an HIGH DAY,**) . . . ”

### #4. THE WORSHIPERS WERE TO DWELL IN TENTS (TABERNACLES-BOOTHS)

**(Lev 23:42)**, “Ye shall dwell **IN BOOTHS** seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in **BOOTHS**:”

S The Hebrew word for “BOOTHS” IS **“SUKKOT”** and is translated into English in a variety of ways: **“tabernacle,” “booth,” “pavilion,” “cottage”** and **“tent.”** It is suggested the name “sukkot” (tent) was

adopted because of the first place Israel camped after leaving Egypt. That place was called "Succoth," meaning "tabernacles" (Ex12:37). (The word "**sukkot**" is different from the Hebrew word used to describe the Old Testament tabernacle ("**mish-kawn**").

**S JONAH BUILT A "SUKKOT" OUTSIDE OF NINEVEH**

(**Jonah 4:5**), "So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a **BOOTH (sukkot)** and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city."

**S SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS WERE GIVEN** regarding the construction of these tents for the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

- 1) They were to be built of **OLIVE, PALM, AND MYRTLE BRANCHES** (Neh 8:15-16; Lev 23:40).
- 2) The branches on the roof were to have **SPACE ENOUGH** between them so as to allow the worshiper to see the sky by day, and the stars by night, from inside the booth.
- 3) The people were to **LIVE** in their booths **for the SEVEN DAYS of Tabernacles** (Lev 23:42). If it rained during the feast, the participants were excused to find protection from the elements. As soon as the rain ceased, it was required that each person return again to their tent.

**THE PURPOSE FOR LIVING IN TENTS WAS KNOWN:**

(**Lev 23:43**), "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."

LIVING IN TENTS WAS DESIGNED TO **REMINDE THE JEWS** of the forty years their forefathers lived in tents while in the wilderness. It was during that time that Israel was able to look up in the sky and see the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. That cloud was God's presence among the Israelites. God clearly dwelt among His people.

**S BECAUSE the Feast of Tabernacles WAS A PILGRIMAGE FEAST, THOUSANDS OF TENTS** would have covered the hills around Jerusalem during Jesus' day.

**#5. IT WAS TO BE CELEBRATED WITH GREAT JOY**

**S** Taking all the details into account, the *Feast of Tabernacles* **WAS LIKE A WEEK-LONG GOD-ORDAINED CAMPING TRIP**. The feast was a time of joy and celebration. The **CHILDREN LOVED** the *Feast of Tabernacles* so much because it involved so much celebration.

**S** The *Feast of Tabernacles* is sometimes called **THE FEAST OF REJOICING**. In fact, *Tabernacles* is **the only feast** where God commanded His people to "rejoice before him."

**C** (**Lev 23:40**), "... **YE SHALL REJOICE BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD SEVEN DAYS.**"

**C** (**Deu 16:14-15**), "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.**"

**S** **IN CONTRAST** to the *Feast of Tabernacles*, the *Feast of Atonement* mandated that worshipers afflict themselves with fasting.

**S** Rejoicing during the *Feast of Tabernacles* was **IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CONSUMMATION OF THE FALL HARVEST**. Their celebration marked the completion of the harvest season.

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WITH PAST BIBLICAL HISTORY IN MIND, IT IS WORTH CALLING ATTENTION TO **THREE SIGNIFICANT BIBLICAL EVENTS THAT OCCURRED** during the *FEAST OF TABERNACLES*.

#1. THE DEDICATION OF **THE SOLOMON'S TEMPLE** OCCURRED DURING THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES* (2 Chron 5-7; 1 Kings 8). God marked that dedication by filling the temple with His glory to the degree that the priests could not enter (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

#2. THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES* was celebrated in conjunction with **THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE** in the days of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8:13-18).

#3. **A THIRD SIGNIFICANT EVENT OCCURRED IN JOHN 7, OUR TEXT.**

**S** BASED ON THE SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CELEBRATING THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES*, **WE CAN DRAW SEVERAL FIRM CONCLUSIONS** regarding Jesus' presence at the *Feast of Tabernacles* in John 7.

- 1) Jesus entered Jerusalem to celebrate the *Feast of Tabernacles* sometime during the months of **SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER**. The **winter months** would have been rapidly approaching.
- 2) **THE HARVESTS** for the year would have almost been completed. Some of the olives would have remained in the trees. The figs, dates, pomegranates and grapes would have already been cleared from their fields.
- 3) JERUSALEM WOULD HAVE BEEN **PACKED FULL OF WORSHIPERS** because *Tabernacles* was a **pilgrimage feast**.
- 4) **THE HILLS** surrounding Jerusalem would have been COVERED WITH **TENTS**. The worshipers would have lived in their tents for **SEVEN DAYS**.
- 5) THE WORSHIPERS WOULD HAVE BEEN **COMMEMORATING** Israel's **forty-year journey** through the wilderness. They would have recalled **God's presence** in their midst during those difficult years. They would have also been reminded of **God's supernatural provision** during those years of wilderness wanderings.

**(Lev 23:43)**, "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."
- 6) THE CELEBRATIONS during Jesus' stay at Jerusalem would have been MARKED WITH **JOY and HAPPINESS**. The **MISHNA** spoke of one celebration in the *Feast of Tabernacles* as,  
"He that never has seen the joy of the Beth ha-She'ubah has never in his life seen joy" (Sukkah 5:1).
- 7) The entire celebration would have lasted for **EIGHT DAYS**.

**S** WE HAVE LOOKED BACK FROM A **SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

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NOW, WE LOOK BACK FROM A **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

SEVERAL INTERESTING **CUSTOMS** became a fixed part of the *Feast of Tabernacles*. Many of these traditions have been passed down through the **MISHNA** in a treatise called "**Succa**" (or the "**tabernacle**"). Consider **THREE CUSTOMS** that shed light on New Testament Scriptures.

**[#1]. THEY WAVED PALM BRANCHES BY THE THOUSANDS**

**S** Waving the branches was **AN EXPRESSION OF JOY AND OBEDIENCE**.

**(Lev 23:40)**, "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."

**S** "**THAT LAST DAY** was called . . . **THE DAY OF WILLOWS**, and **THE DAY OF BEATING THE BRANCHES**, because all the leaves were shaken off the willow-boughs, and the palm branches beaten in pieces by the side of the altar. (**W. E. VINES**)

**S** ACCORDING TO **RAY VANDER LAAN**, "**THE PHARISEES** took the branches and tied them together. Holding this cluster of **BRANCHES** (called **LULAV**, pi. **lulavim**) in one hand and **A CITRON** (the fruit they decided was mentioned in Leviticus 23:40) in the other, they **carried them to the Temple for each of the seven days** of the festival (as religious Jews still do today). Here the people, and even the youngest **children**, would **wave** their lulavim joyously, as they **danced, sang, and chanted** the **HALLEL** (Psalms 113-118)." (From the video series *That the World May Know*)

[#1]. **THEY WAVED PALM BRANCHES BY THE THOUSANDS**

**[#2]. THEY DREW WATER FROM THE POOL OF SILOAM**

**JESUS MADE REFERENCE TO WATER AT THE FEAST:**

**(John 7:37-38)**, “In **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. {38} He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow **RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.**”

- S** There is debate as to whether the “**THE LAST DAY**” was reference to **THE SEVENTH or THE EIGHT DAY**. Some believe Jesus spoke these words on the seventh day, while others believe He spoke them on the special Sabbath that followed the *Feast of Tabernacles*. (On the seventh day, the procession would circle the altar seven times before the water was poured out on the altar. That was reminiscent of Israel’s conquering Jericho in Joshua 6.)
- S** Jesus’ reference to “**RIVERS OF WATER**” had particular significance in the context of John 7 because of **THE CUSTOM** of pouring water on the altar during the *Feast of Tabernacles*. The priests would lead a procession of worshipers down to the **POOL OF SILOAM**. After dipping the golden pitcher into the water, the procession would proceed to the temple. At the temple the procession would circle the altar of burnt sacrifice while chanting **THE HALLEL (Psalms 113-118)**. The climatic event took place when the priest ascended the ramp to the altar and poured the pitcher of water out upon the altar while the people shouted,
- “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”** (Isa 12:3).
- S** IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY, OR HOW, THIS CUSTOM DEVELOPED.
- C** SOME PEOPLE believe the custom of pouring water developed in relation to **THE PRAYERS FOR RAIN** that took place at the conclusion of the dry season. The *Feast of Tabernacles* preceded the **RAINY SEASON**.
- C** OTHER PEOPLE believe the custom was born in conjunction with **SOLOMON'S PRAYER** at the **TEMPLE DEDICATION** in **2 Chronicles 6**. In the context of that temple dedication is found an often quoted verse.
- (2 Chr 7:14)**, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

THAT OFTEN QUOTED VERSE IS PRECEDED WITH A WORD FROM GOD REGARDING RAIN:

**(2 Chr 7:13)**, “If I shut up heaven that there be **NO RAIN**, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;”

- C** STILL OTHER PEOPLE believe the custom of pouring water served as a reminder of **God’s supernatural provision** of water in the wilderness. When Moses hit the rock in the wilderness with his staff, water came gushing out of the rock (Exodus 17:6).
- S** **W. E. VINES** EXPLAINS HOW **THE CUSTOM** WAS CARRIED OUT:
- C** “EVERY MORNING, AFTER THE SACRIFICE, **THE PEOPLE, LED BY A PRIEST, WENT TO THE POOL OF SILOAM**, where the priest filled a golden pitcher, and brought it back to the temple amid music and joyful shouts. Advancing to **the altar of burnt-offering**, at the cry of the people, **“Lift up thy hand!”** he emptied the pitcher toward the west, and toward the east a cup of wine, while the people chanted, **“With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”** (Isa 12:3).
- S** ACCORDING TO **RAY VANDER LAAN**,
- C** “. . . **A PROCESSION OF PRIESTS**, accompanied by **flutes**, marching from the Temple **TO THE POOL OF SILOAM**, which was fed by the Spring of Gihon. One of the priests filled a **golden pitcher** (more than a quart) with water, and the procession returned to the Temple. They arrived just **after the sacrifices** were laid on the altar. The priest carrying the pitcher entered the priests’ court through **the Water Gate** and, to the **blast of the SHOFAR**, approached the altar. He made **one circle around the altar** as the crowd sang **THE HALLEL** (Psalms 113-118). Then the priest climbed the ramp and stood near the top of the altar. Here there were **two silver funnels** leading into the stone altar for the daily drink offerings. As the crowd grew silent, the priest solemnly **poured the water** into one of the funnels.”

[#1]. THEY **WAVED PALM BRANCHES** BY THE THOUSANDS

[#2]. THEY **DREW WATER FROM THE POOL OF SILOAM**

## [#3]. THEY SANG HOSANNAS

**S** As previously stated, the procession of worshipers would chant the **HALLEL** (Psalms 113-118). When they came to **Psalm 118:25**, they sang some words that are very familiar to us in New Testament times.

**(Psa 118:25)**, "SAVE NOW, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity."

THE WORDS, "SAVE NOW" are taken from two Hebrew words: "YASHA`" (yaw-shah') and "NA'" (naw). From those two Hebrew words come the very familiar word used by the crowd during Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem the week of His crucifixion (Matt 21:9). They shouted "HOSANNA", which meant, "SAVE NOW."

According to **W. E. VINES**, "THAT LAST DAY" was also called **THE DAY OF THE GREAT HOSANNA** because **the procession was made seven times round the altar** while saying, 'Hosanna'.

**RAY VANDER LAAN** records that the worshipers would wave their **lulavim** (branches) toward the altar as they sang, "**O LORD, SAVE US! O LORD, GRANT US SUCCESS!**"

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**FAST FORWARD NOW TO THE TIME OF JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY** into Jerusalem. When Jesus entered Jerusalem during the week of His crucifixion, it was in observance of the *Feast of PASSOVER*. The *Feast of Tabernacles* had passed six months earlier. The interesting thing is the Jews did perform acts associated with the *Feast of Tabernacles*, rather than the *Feast of Passover*. They **waved palm branches** and shouted *Hosanna*.

**(Mat 21:8-9)**, "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strowed them in the way. {9} And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

IT APPEARS AS IF THE PEOPLE **WANTED JESUS TO FULFILL** the *Feast of Tabernacles*. **THE PROBLEM WAS** it was not the right time for the fulfillment of the *Feast of Tabernacles*. Jesus had entered Jerusalem on a

donkey the last week of His earthly life in order to fulfill the *Feast of Passover*. Jesus had come to be offered as the *Passover* lamb to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). **Jesus had come TO DIE** on a cross to offer deliverance from sin. HIS FULFILLMENT OF THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES* WAS **reserved for a time later in history**.

I. **A LOOK BACK AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY**

## II. A LOOK FORWARD AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROPHECY

**S** THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES* was designed for the specific purpose of **WORSHIPFUL CELEBRATION**. Part of that celebration was directly related to **THE COMPLETION OF THE HARVEST**. The **grapes, dates, figs** and **pomegranates** would have been gathered. The **olives** would have been hanging heavy in the trees. That is why it was also called **THE FEAST OF INGATHERING**.  
**(Exo 23:16)**, "... The **FEAST OF INGATHERING**, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field."

(Having grown up on a farm, I can tell you that great joy is associated with the completion of harvest.)

**S** IT IS **REASONABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT** for the *Feast of Tabernacles* relates to the joy associated with the consummation of **GOD'S SPIRITUAL HARVEST**. As this feast is celebrated in relationship to the conclusion of the harvest season, so it also pictures the joyful completion of God's spiritual harvest. Someday, at the **SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, GOD WILL SAFELY GATHER HIS PEOPLE TOGETHER FOR CELEBRATION FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD**.

**S** Once the spiritual harvest is complete, **GOD WILL AGAIN TABERNACLE AMONG HIS PEOPLE**. As God once **tabernacled** among His people in the wilderness, so God **WILL ONCE AGAIN TABERNACLE AMONG HIS PEOPLE**. THAT GRAND TIME WHICH IS DEPICTED BY THE *FEAST OF TABERNACLES* IS CALLED **THE MILLENNIUM**.

- S The views regarding the *Millennium* are **SO DIVERSE** that they have been divided into three primary categories. Those three views are called:
- 1) THE **POST-MILLENNIAL VIEW**. That view suggests that when Jesus returns, He will return to a world that has been reformed.
  - 2) THE **A-MILLENNIAL VIEW**. That view suggests that the *Millennium* is to be taken figuratively. Adherents to that view do not believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth.
  - 3) THE **PRE-MILLENNIAL VIEW**. Adherents to this view believe that after Jesus' returns, He will reign a thousand years on earth. The word used to describe that thousand years is "**MILLENNIUM.**" The word *Millennium* literally means **ONE THOUSAND**. The words "a thousand" are used several times in Revelation 20.

S **A FRIEND IN SEMINARY** was debating with another friend who did not believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth. He gave the reason for his position by stating "There in only one chapter in the Bible that mentions a thousand-year reign of Christ." My friend asked him, "How many times does God have to say something before it is true? Does God have to say something twice in order to make it true? If He only says something once, does that make it untrue?" His point is well taken. The truth is, whatever God says is true whether He says it once or fifty times.

- S THERE ARE **MANY REASONS** to believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth. **WARREN WIERSBE** offers **SIX GOOD REASONS** to believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth.
- (1) To fulfill **O.T. PROPHECIES**.
  - (2) To fulfill the promises that the **SAINTS WILL REIGN** with Christ.
  - (3) To give a public display of **CHRIST'S GLORY** to the nations of earth.
  - (4) To answer the **PRAYER** of "**THY KINGDOM COME.**"
  - (5) To bring about the complete redemption of **NATURE** as promised in Rom 8.
  - (6) To give mankind **ONE FINAL TRIAL** under the sovereign rule of Christ.

I WOULD ADD A SEVENTH REASON:

(7) The *Millennium* **FULFILLS BIBLICAL PROMISES** regarding **THE MEEK**:

C (**Psa 37:11**), "But the meek **SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH**; . . ."

C (**Mat 5:5**), "Blessed are the meek: for they **SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.**"

- S If there is going to be a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth, what does the Bible have to say about that period of time? **CONSIDER NINE SCRIPTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM:**

### #1. IT WILL LAST ONE THOUSAND YEARS

S The word *Millennium* means *one thousand*.

S **Revelation 20** mentions *a thousand years* **six times**.

S ONE EXAMPLE:

(**Rev 20:6**), "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him **A THOUSAND YEARS.**"

### #2. SATAN WILL BE BOUND DURING THOSE THOUSAND YEARS

S (**Rev 20:1-2**), "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. {2} And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,"

S **AT THE END** of the thousand years, **SATAN WILL BE RELEASED** and will again wreck havoc and deceit on earth for a limited period of time

(**Rev 20:7-8**), "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, {8} And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

### #3. JESUS WILL REIGN ON EARTH THOSE THOUSAND YEARS FROM JERUSALEM

S (**Jer 3:17**), "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

S (**Rev 20:4**), "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his

mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and REIGNED **WITH CHRIST** A THOUSAND YEARS."

S **(Micah 4:1-2)**, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. {2} And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

S **Isa 2:2-3**

#### **#4. THE SAINTS WILL REIGN WITH JESUS**

S **(Rev 20:4)**, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and REIGNED **WITH CHRIST** A THOUSAND YEARS."

**(Rev 20:6)**, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

S **THE MANY FAITHFUL MARTYRS** who died because of their faithful obedience to Christ during the Great Tribulation, will be resurrected at the beginning of the *Millennium*. They will rule with Christ and will be priests of God and Christ (Rev. 5:10; 20:4).

S **THE UNBELIEVING DEAD** will remain in their graves until the second resurrection after the *Millennium* (Rev. 20:5).

#### **#5. RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL BE ENFORCED**

S **(Psa 2:9)**, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

S **(Rev 12:5)**, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

S **(Rev 19:15)**, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

S **THE LOGICAL QUESTION** is why would Jesus need to rule with a rod of iron if the *Millennium* represents a time of peace? **THE ANSWER** is the *Millennium* isn't heaven. People with sinful natures will still be an issue during the *Millennium*.

#### **#6. NATURE WILL EXPERIENCE A NEW FREEDOM**

S **(Isa 11:7-8)**, "And **THE COW** and **THE BEAR** shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and **THE LION** shall eat straw like the ox. {8} And the sucking child shall play on the hole of **THE ASP** . . ."

S **(Isa 65:25)**, "The **WOLF** and the **LAMB** shall feed together. . ."

#### **#7. HUMANS WILL LIVE LONG LIVES ONCE AGAIN**

S Death will still occur for those who are born on earth, but they will live long lives again LIKE **METHUSELAH** who lived 969 years (Gen 5:27).

S **(Isa 65:20)**, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."

**(NIV)**, ". . . He who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed."

#### **#8. WAR WILL BE NO MORE**

S **(Isa 2:4)**, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

S **(Isa 54:13-14)**, "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. {14} In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee."

S **(Isa 65:25)**, “. . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD."

## **#9. RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL BE THE DOMINANT THEME**

S **(Isa 11:9)**, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

S Sin will be present, but will not be tolerated.

## **#10. PROSPERITY WILL ABOUND**

S During the *Millennium* the ground will produce abundantly.

S **(Isa 65:21)**, “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them."

S **(Joel 3:18)**, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim."

S **(Amos 9:13)**, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt."

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MANY BIBLE STUDENTS BELIEVE **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES** POINTS TO THE PERIOD OF TIME KNOWN AS THE **MILLENNIUM**. THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST will have been completed at that time. At that time God will **tabernacle among** humanity again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It will be a time of great joy on earth. It seems appropriate that this feast should be called **THE FEAST OF ALL FEASTS**.

C **(Isa 11:4)**, “But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

C **(Zec 14:9)**, “And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day

shall there be one LORD, and his name one."

C **(Zec 14:16-21)**, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. {17} 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. {18} 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 keep the feast of tabernacles. {19} This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. {20} In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. {21} Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts."

C **(Rev 7:9)**, “After this I beheld, and, lo, A GREAT MULTITUDE, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and **PALMS** IN THEIR HANDS;"

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**ONE DAY, PERHAPS SOONER THAN ANY OF US THINK, THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES** WILL BE FULFILLED.