

OT Feasts: Part 8 of 8; Leviticus 23:33-43 ESV

## How Did the Old Testament Feast of Tabernacles Point Ahead to Jesus' *Second Coming*?

17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2014

Sunday, Oct. 5 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, Oct. 6 at 7 PM

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Our focus today is on the **third** of the fall feasts which is **Tabernacles** (the Hebrew name is **Sukkot**, which mean **Booths**). It was a joy-filled eight-day feast (from Tishri 15-22), which celebrated the fall harvest and still points ahead to the final harvest – *when all believers will share in the joy of God's kingdom forevermore!* The feasts fit into their agricultural year: Passover—*planting*, Pentecost—*wheat harvest*, and Tabernacles—*fruit harvest*. We now focus on Leviticus 23:33-43:

1. **A Summary of Tabernacles:** <sup>33</sup> **And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,** <sup>34</sup> **“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. // A tabernacle or booth is like a tent – a *temporary* dwelling place.**
  - a. **Day 1:** <sup>35</sup> **On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. //** The first day was like the weekly Sabbath – do no ordinary work, but *gather in God's presence!*
  - b. **Days 1-7:** <sup>36</sup> **For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. // “The pleasing aroma to God (the aroma of grilling meat) assured people that the Lord took pleasure in them and would deal favorably with them.” (TLSB, 145)**
  - c. **Day 8:** **On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.” //** So the eight-day feast began and

ended with a special gathering in God's presence. Even now God wants us to faithfully gather and receive His blessings! Let us **not** allow our *busy* and *sin-filled* world to pull us away from Jesus!

2. **A Summary of All Seven Feasts:** <sup>37</sup> **“These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the LORD food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day, <sup>38</sup> besides the LORD’s Sabbaths and besides your gifts and besides all your vow offerings and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.”** // Wow! Did you catch all of that? A faithful OT Christian ♦gathered on the appointed days for the seven appointed feasts and ♦offered all of the various offerings, *each on its proper day*. But that was not all; they also *gathered each Sabbath* and gave ♦gifts, ♦vow offerings, and ♦freewill offerings! The faithful ones were people who trusted in God as the *Source* and the *Sustainer* of their lives, *now and forever!* If our lives are similar, *good!* If not, *let us repent!*
3. **Details About Tabernacles:** <sup>39</sup> **“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days.** // This year, *on the Hebrew Calendar*, the fifteenth day of the seventh month is our October 10.
  - a. **On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest.** // So the days of rest pointed ahead to Jesus—*our ultimate rest!* He said: **“Come to me all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden and I will give you rest.”** (Mt. 11:28 NET)
  - b. <sup>40</sup> **And you shall take on the first day <sup>1</sup>the fruit of splendid trees, <sup>2</sup>branches of palm trees and <sup>3</sup>boughs [limbs] of leafy trees and <sup>4</sup>willows of the brook**

*["Known as the 'four species'" (TLSB, 202)], and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. // A prayer for Tabernacles: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, for keeping us alive, taking care of us, and bringing us to this time." (Norten, 85) Let us also faithfully acknowledge †who God is and †His countless blessings to us!*

- c. <sup>41</sup> **You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.** <sup>42</sup> **You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths,** <sup>43</sup> **that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."** // **As** the people of Israel, *who came out of Egypt*, lived in tents for 40 years – *before entering into the Promised Land*, **so**, *during the feast of tabernacles*, the people lived in temporary structures made from tree branches to remember God's ♦rescue from slavery, ♦provision in the wilderness, and ♦gift of the Promised Land; also, they anticipated their entrance into *the Ultimate Promised Land* through *the coming Messiah!*

4. **Interesting Connections to Tabernacles:** (Norten, 90-91)

- a. Jesus may have been born during this feast: (1) lambs and shepherds were in the fields, *which fits this time of year*; (2) the inns in Bethlehem – *6 miles from Jerusalem* – were full, *which fits a time when Jewish men were required to gather*; (3) the Roman census probably took place in connection with one of the three required gatherings; and (4) John the Baptist, *who was six months older than Jesus*, was most likely born six months prior to Tabernacles –

*based on the time when John's father, Zacharias, did his scheduled service at the temple.*

- b. Jesus may have been conceived on Hanukkah: So  
 ♦ Hanukkah is *the festival of lights*, ♦ 40 weeks from Hanukkah is Tabernacles, ♦ on Tabernacles there was a great *show of lights*, and, ♦ Jesus said of Himself: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me...will have the light of life." (John 8:12 NIV)

**Conclusion**: So, after laying out the seven feasts in Leviticus 23, the chapter concludes with these words: **"Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD."** (44)

- So, in the OT era – prior to Jesus ♦ fulfilling the God's Law, ♦ receiving all sins and all punishment, and ♦ laying down His life to make atonement for all sins – the seven feasts were to be celebrated each year.
- Now, in this NT era, the Bible calls us to "...not [forsake] our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day [of Jesus' second coming] drawing near." (Heb. 10:24 NAS)
- In the OT the people gathered on Saturdays, the day of rest, *looking ahead to the Messiah and His saving work!* Now, in the NT, we gather on Sundays, *the day Jesus rose from the dead; His resurrection points to our resurrection!*

**Now** we are thankful for God's abundant provision and His eternal promises through Jesus. **When He returns, we who know Him as Savior will experience the fullness of those eternal promises forevermore!** Therefore, let us → continue in God's Word, → tell the good news of our Savior, and → look forward to the day when Jesus will take us home to His Father's house! And all God's people said: **Amen!**

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