

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

BIBLE TEXT : Leviticus 23:33-44; Deuteronomy 16:13-17

LESSON 88 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Leviticus 23:33-44 (KJV)

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Last Feast

The third and last feast that God required the Children of Israel to keep was called the feast of tabernacles, or ingathering. During the seventh Jewish month, starting the fifteenth day, all the men presented themselves before the Lord once more. We have studied the feast of weeks which came at the time of the harvest of grain. Then after all the harvest was over and all the fruit of the land was gathered in, they met again for the feast of the ingathering. This was a memorial of Israel's living in tents *during* their wanderings in the wilderness, and of the ingathering (or gathering in) of the products of the year.

The feast of the ingathering was one of the three feasts that God had commanded the Children of Israel to remember always. At this time they gathered with offerings and praise to God, not only for what He had done for them in the past but also for the blessings that they received at each harvest when their crops were stored away for the season. We must not fail to thank and praise God for what He has done for us. For past and present blessings, we consecrate our lives daily to the Lord.

The gathering for this feast was somewhat like the people's going to the church today for a meeting. Only this meeting lasted a whole week' it was something like a camp meeting. The law was given very clearly just how they were to worship God at the feast. The first and the eighth days were holy days; no work was to be done, and they were to be kept as Sabbaths. Each day they were to make a special offering to the Lord. In the 29th chapter of Numbers we read what animals — lambs, kids, rams, and bullocks — and how many they were to offer each day for the week. When we go to church, and whenever we present ourselves to God, we are not required to bring an offering of an animal. The Lord wants us to give Him offerings of praise. *God's* children praise Him in song, in prayer, in testimony, even in the way they listen to the sermon and the way they act in church.

Thanksgiving

Our nation, too, has set aside one certain day of the year in which to give thanks. We call it Thanksgiving, which was started many years ago for the purpose of thanking God for the food that the people had gathered in. It has often been said that every day is a day of thanksgiving to a Christian. We do not want to be guilty of thanking God just one day a year, or even just one day a week.

In the third chapter of Ecclesiastes we read that there is a time for everything — a time to plant, a time to pluck up that which is planted, a time to weep, and a time to laugh. The feast of tabernacles was a time of praising God and making offerings. When we come to God's house, or wherever we come before God, we must remember that it is a solemn time, a holy time, a time of praising God. We want to conduct ourselves and our worship in an orderly manner. We want to go to God prepared

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.

Deuteronomy 16:13-17 (KJV)

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

to make offerings of praise and consecrations.

The offerings at the feasts were to be given besides the gifts, besides all their vows, besides all the freewill offerings (**Leviticus 23:37-38 (KJV)** 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). "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee" (Deuteronomy 16:17). Some people think that they do so much when they do what is required of them. But God wants us to do more than that. The Children of Israel were required to offer certain sacrifices, but God expected them to give gifts and freewill offerings. Jesus told the disciples in Luke 17:10, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."

Rejoicing

The people rejoiced and were happy for the temporal blessings that God had given them in the form of their crops. They also trusted in God for their next crop. No doubt they looked back to the time when they had no fields to till and no crops to gather. We, too, feel like praising God when we count our blessings — both spiritual and temporal. We can look back to the time when God's smile of approval did not rest upon our lives, because of sin.

The Children of Israel were to "rejoice before the LORD," and we read the same thing in many places in the New Testament. We read, "Rejoice in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:3); "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (Philippians 4:4); "Rejoice evermore" (I Thessalonians 5:16); "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). It was never intended for a Christian to be sad. A Christian rejoices even during sickness and hard places. The disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' name. We rejoice also in the hope that we have of being in the last ingathering — when the saints are gathered Home.

Some people praise God but they are not very joyful nor do they look joyful. "Make a joyful noise unto God" (Psalm 66:1). We want to do more than just make a noise unto God; we want to make it joyful and happy.

To Dwell in Booths

During the feast of tabernacles the Children of Israel were to live in booths, or tents, made of boughs. They took the limbs of trees — branches of palm and willow are mentioned.

They left their homes and lived for seven days in these booths made of branches of trees. That was to remind them of the tents in which they lived during their wanderings in the wilderness. There they had no real home, but God Himself hung a cloud to cover as well as to guide them (**Psalms 105:39 (KJV)** ³⁹ He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night). After living in these booths for a week, they were thankful for the comforts of their homes. Sometimes it is good for us to recall how we dwelt in tents of wickedness; then we are aware of the blessings we have by dwelling in the Lord. We appreciate the shelter, comforts, and conveniences of the Gospel.

Some people think so much of their dwellings or homes on earth that they cannot leave them to worship the Lord. We want to feel like Paul when he wrote to the Hebrews, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." He meant Heaven, that City whose Ruler and Builder is God. We want to think about the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for us.

given thee.

We want to get ready: to be saved and prepared for the great ingathering of God's people that is coming soon.

Declared by Moses

Moses was faithful to teach the Children of Israel concerning these feasts, for it was the Law that they should keep. Not all their leaders were faithful to the Children of Israel, and for many years this feast of tabernacles was not kept. We read in Nehemiah, the eighth chapter, of a time when this Law was brought to their minds. In the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, they read the Law to the people and learned about this feast beginning the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the feast of tabernacles,

The Children of Israel made booths of the branches of trees and dwelt in them, just as they were told to do. "And there was very great gladness" (Nehemiah 8:17). There is always great happiness when one is obedient and does what God wants him to do.

How thankful we are today for leaders who teach us the whole Bible. They are faithful to tell us not only what God demands of us and the offerings (consecrations of our lives, our time, our talents) He wants, but they also tell us of the privileges we have and the promises we may claim. Let us be one of those who have God's blessing upon their lives because of obedience. Jesus told the disciples, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Which feast came at the harvest of wheat?
- 2 Which feast came after the end of all the harvest?
- 3 Give another name for the feast of tabernacles.
- 4 Why was this a time of rejoicing?
- 5 At what other time were palm trees used as the people praised the Lord?
- 6 Why did they live in tents, or booths?
- 7 What great ingathering is yet to take place?