

LEVITICUS 23:33-44 (THE FEASTS OF THE LORD: TABERNACLES)

The most common thing for me on Sunday night, and then again as I rise on Monday morning, is to wonder if I will be able to complete a sermon that is worthy of the day I must put into it, of the ears that must eventually hear it, and of the God whose word I am trying to explain to others. I am always unsure if what I hope for will come about, and it is almost scary to open up the Bible, the 10 or so references I start with, and then put my hands on the keyboard to start typing.

I so desperately want there to be something interesting, edifying, and yes, new, to present. It is no joy at all to repeat something that someone else may have presented. And it is always a delight, when I type, to come across something, or some things, that I am pretty sure have never been presented the same way before – at least not that I know of.

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the fall feasts. As I've said before, lots of people want to claim that there is a future fulfillment in these fall feasts for the nation of Israel. This is incorrect in as far as the feasts are fulfilled – completely and in their entirety – in Christ Jesus. The only future fulfillment is anytime someone realizes that He is who the Bible proclaims, and they receive Him for who He is. There are things that lie ahead for us that also may be a part of these feasts, but they are only so much so as they are guaranteed because of what has been done by Him already.

We are waiting to be glorified, but according to Paul, in God's mind that is already done because of Jesus' work. We will just catch up to what is already accomplished. Such is the case with these fall feasts. Understanding this already, I came at today's verses expecting one thing, and yet I realized they mean something entirely different than what I had expected. That is why we are to always put our presuppositions aside when looking at Scripture. Otherwise, everything presented here would have been a repeat of what has already been said. Thank goodness the sheet is blank in my head when I get going.

Text Verse: “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” Colossians 2:16, 17

What a surprising word we have. While going through these verses, and studying them word by word, marvelous patterns of what is said here kept coming up from Paul’s hand in the New Testament. I doubt if it was intentional, but his training as a Pharisee meant that he was fully versed in the Old Testament. As he wrote, he probably just put down in ink what was already stored up in his mind.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit was influencing him to draw out those wonderful things, and to bring them out into an epistle to this group of people, and another to that group of people. Eventually, everything that needed to be said in order to reveal Christ Jesus had come out. And there it sits, waiting for people to sit down and study and make the necessary connections.

What a marvel! What a gift we have in the pages of the Bible. It is the mind of God, revealed in letters and words through the hand of chosen men. It’s a hard thing to grasp, but things that pop up from the most obscure of words suddenly form patterns and pictures which simply cannot be random. We’ll see some of those today. Great stuff lies ahead, and it is all to be found in His superior word. And so let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Tabernacles (verses 33-44)

³³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

The words initiate a new sequence of thought, and thus what lies ahead is separate from what has thus far been presented. In other words, as a feast will be next named, we know that it is one which is separate from the others. It is not conjoined to another such as was the case with the Firstfruits and Weeks.

³⁴ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

The words are to be conveyed to all of the people. This final Feast of the Lord is to be observed by all to the Lord, and so Moses is directed to speak to the people concerning it. The Lord, as their Sovereign, is now mandating this final annual feast be on...

³⁴ (con’t) ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month

This is the third designated feast in the seventh month of the year. Again, this is based on the redemption calendar. Thus, this is the same as the first month of the year in the creation calendar. But because the feasts signify the redemptive acts of the Lord, the calendar used is that which begins in the springtime, not the fall. The commencement date is set at the fifteenth of the month of Ethanim, later known as Tishri. This, like Unleavened Bread, commences at the time of the full moon and lasts a week.

³⁴ (con’t) *shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord.*

Here the word *khag*, or “Feast” is used for only the second time in the chapter. The first was in verse 6 when naming the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now this particular word is used again for the second, seven day feast, Tabernacles. The word *khag* comes from *khagag*, which in turn, indicates “to move in a circle” or specifically “to march in a sacred procession.” From there you have the implication of being giddy; to celebrate, dance, and feast. It is to be a time of worship, celebration, and sacrifice. It is a pilgrim feast. Later in Scripture, the Feast of Weeks will also be noted as a part of a *khag*, or pilgrim feast, as well.

The term here is *khag ha’sukkoth*, or “Feast, the tabernacles.” The word *sukkah*, or tabernacle, signifies a shelter. It is variously translated as tent, tabernacle, cottage, lair, booth +etc. It comes from *sok*, which carries much the same meaning. Twice in the psalms, the word is used to speak of the tabernacle of the Lord. And finally, *sok* comes from *sakak* which signifies “to weave together.” That word hints to us what this feast is pointing to. It is used in Psalm 139 when speaking of the weaving together of the human form –

“For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother’s womb.
¹⁴ I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.” Psalm 139:13, 14 (NASB)

As a point of reference for understanding the fulfillment of this feast, the Greek Old Testament uses the word *skenon* for “tabernacles.” It means “tent” or “tabernacle” as well. This feast is also detailed and reviewed in Numbers 29 and Deuteronomy 16. Deuteronomy 31 adds in a specific requirement to this feast which is well worth citing –

And Moses commanded them, saying: “At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ¹³ and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.” Deuteronomy 31:10-13

It is hard to imagine that the people were read the law only once every seven years. If one were to ever consider a famine in the land, that would be it to me. Nehemiah 8:18 notes that this requirement was accomplished by the people after their return from exile to Babylon –

“Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *there was* a sacred assembly, according to the *prescribed* manner.”

Not having read the law during this feast, if the feast was held at all, was certainly the standard. And it is for a lack of knowledge of the law that the people suffered the shame of punishment and exile. This is certain to be true, because In 2 Kings 22, the Book of the Law was “found” in the house

of the Lord by the high priest Hilkiah. It had been completely forgotten, and thus its precepts were wholly unknown to king, priest, and commoner alike.

³⁵ On the first day *there shall* be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*.

miqra qodesh – “convocation holy.” Like the other holy convocations, it signifies a day on which no regular, servile work was to be done. Meals could be prepared, and so it is not a Sabbath.

³⁶ For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

The required offerings are listed in Numbers 29:13-39.

^{36 (con't)} On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

In the feast of Unleavened Bread, there were seven days, the first and the seventh were holy convocations. In this feast, there are seven days, the first being a holy convocation, and then an added eighth day is also a *miqra qodesh*, or holy convocation. However, because the Passover is tied to Unleavened Bread, they are both actually eight days in duration.

^{36 (con't)} It *is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.

Here, a new word is brought into Scripture, *atsereth*, or sacred assembly. The word comes from *atsar* which signifies to shut, restrain, etc. Some scholars say that this eighth day doesn't specifically belong to the feast, but it is rather the solemn close of the whole circle of yearly feasts, and so it is appended to the feast. This isn't wholly correct. It is recorded as an ending portion of the feast in Nehemiah 8:18, 2 Chronicles 7:9, and John says the following about this eighth day of the feast –

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:37, 38

It both belongs as an addendum to the feast, and it also closes out the festal year of Israel. From there, the people would have to wait for the Passover until this set cycle would begin again. Later however, the Feast of Purim would be added at the time of the exile recorded in Esther. This would occur in the twelfth month. And then after that the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah, was instituted for the ninth month of the year. That occurred during the intertestamental period, but it is recorded in John 10.

³⁷ ‘These *are* the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations,

This is a summary of the entire chapter. The feasts are all considered *miqrae qodesh*, or “convocations holy,” as was first stated in verses 2-4. These feasts then include the Sabbath, the Passover and Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Acclamation, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

³⁷ (con’t) to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—

Exodus 29 details the daily offerings to be made, every day of the year. Along with those, the feasts had their own offerings added onto the daily offerings. These are recorded in Numbers 28 & 29. The “sacrifice” mentioned along with the burnt and grain offerings would be the sin-offerings noted there, but which are simply called here “a sacrifice.” The sin-offering being the principle sacrifice necessary to atone for the sins of the people.

³⁸ besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord.

The term “besides the Sabbaths of the Lord” is a metonym which speaks of the sacrifices of the Sabbaths. In other words, the required offerings of the feasts did not set aside those required sacrifices. They were to be made in addition to them. The same is true with the people’s gifts, and vow and

freewill offerings. Anything which is prescribed or promised for the Lord was to not be set aside just because the feasts had their own offerings.

³⁹ **'Also**

Like verse 27, the verse begins with the Hebrew word *akh*, translated here as, "also." It is often used as a restrictive, or limiting word, translated as "only." Only Yom Kippur and Tabernacles contain *akh*. Thus, like it, this is a peculiar feast. As it is a limiting word, one must contemplate what is being set apart.

As this is an addendum to the feast which has already been described, it will be that which sets it apart as unique. It would be that which is then recorded in verse 40. A particular rite is directed for the people which is being given for them to remember the past, but it is also for them to look ahead to the future.

³⁹ (con't) **on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land,**

The words here look to the other name of this particular pilgrim feast, *ha'asiph*, or "The Ingathering." That name was designated in Exodus 23:16, and it is repeated in Exodus 34:22. It is obvious that the feast is intended to be celebrated in the land of Israel, not during the time of the wilderness wanderings. The people were supposed to go straight into Canaan and take possession. However, their disobedience kept them out of that inheritance for 40 years. During this time, the feast could not be kept as intended.

³⁹ (con't) **you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days;**

takhogu eth khag Yehovah shivat yamim – "feasting a feast (of) Yehovah seven days." The idea here is one of great celebration.

³⁹ (con't) **on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.**

Both the first and eighth day were previously called "holy convocations," and it was said of them that no *regular work* could be done on them. But

the preparation of food is not forbidden. Thus, these are not Sabbaths. The word translated here is *shabathon*. It is used only 11 times in the Bible, all in Exodus and Leviticus, and all but three are conjoined to the word *shabath*, or “Sabbath.” That then indicates a sabbath of complete rest. Because this is not conjoined with the word Sabbath, it is not a Sabbath per se, but rather simply a rest. Make a note in your Bible.

The reason for using this word *shabathon* here is because the seventh month of the year, like the seventh day of the week, and the seventh year of the Sabbatical year cycle, is considered a month of resting. In other words the entire month is consecrated as a special month to the people. Everything about the seventh month has an elevated sense to it. However, unless this day fell on an actual Sabbath day, it was simply a day of rest, and not a Sabbath.

40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees,

The word *akh*, or only, of verse 39 is now defined with the instructions of these words. At the feast’s commencement, the people were to take, as it says, “the fruit of beautiful trees.” The word *peri*, or fruit, is used, but it seems that the term is defined next, and in Nehemiah 8. Rather than speaking of fruit specifically, the idea is the product of the beautiful trees, and thus its branches, and even branches which may still have fruit on them. The word used to describe the trees is *hadar*. It is introduced here, and it gives the idea of beauty, majesty, glory, splendor, and so on. Thus, these would be ornamental.

40 (con’t) branches of palm trees,

The word “branches” is literally *kaph*, or “hands.” It is what the appearance of *temarim*, or palms, looks like. The palm is a symbol of righteousness. Because it stands upright.

40 (con’t) the boughs of leafy trees,

The word *anaph*, or branch, is introduced here. It will be seen just seven times. It comes from a root meaning “to cover,” just as a branch would cover the limbs beneath them. The word, *aboth*, or leafy, is also new, and it will be seen just four times. It comes from a root meaning to weave or wrap up, and so you get the idea of a branch filled with intertwining leaves.

40 (con't) and willows of the brook;

The *arav*, or willow is also new. It comes from the word *arav*, which means “pledge” or “surety.” That is connected to the word *aravon*, or pledge which is found 3 times in Genesis 38, and three times in the New Testament. Though Hebrew, it is transliterated directly into the Greek there in the NT. The word brook is *nakhal*. That comes from the verb *nakhal* which indicates to take possession, or inherit. And that in turn comes from *nakhalah*, or inheritance. These particular branches are specified here and not others. In Nehemiah 8:15, others are mentioned by name, but for now, the Lord is having us focus on these.

40 (con't) and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.

The feast is a seven-day feast of rejoicing, as it says, *liphne Yehovah elohekem*, or “in the face of Yehovah your God.”

41 You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year.

v'khagotem otow khag l'Yehovah shivat yamim ba'shanah – “and feasting it a feast to Yehovah seven days in *the* year.” The year is that which contains the cycle of redemption. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection.

41 (con't) It shall be a statute forever in your generations.

The words *khuqat olam l'dorotekem*, or “statute forever in your generations,” indicate to the vanishing point. Israel was to observe this feast forever, until it reached its fulfillment in Christ. What was mere shadow, is now substance in Him.

41 (con't) You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

The fifteenth of the seventh month is exactly six months after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened bread. Thus, there is this marvelous pattern of the two feasts beginning on the day of the full moon, and lasting seven days – exactly one half a year apart from one another.

⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days.

The dwelling in booths was for only seven days. The eighth day was the conclusion of the feast, and the booths were no longer used. In other words, the rejoicing in the temporary booths was in anticipation of the day when they would be removed from them into their permanent dwellings. The number eight in the Bible always signifies “new beginnings.” It is this day which was anticipated by the people; awaiting their “new beginning.”

⁴² (con’t) All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths,

The term *ezrakh*, or native, comes from the word *zarakh*, or rise, as in when the sun rises. The meaning is that of one who rises out of Israel. All who rose up from Israel were to dwell in booths. The term, however, is used in Exodus 12:48 when speaking of a stranger dwelling among Israel who participated in circumcision, and then kept the Passover – both of which point Christ’s work.

⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt:

Every translation says basically the same thing here, and they are all certainly incorrect. It never says *anywhere* that they dwelt in *sukkoth* or “tabernacles” when they were brought out of the land of Egypt. Instead, it says in Exodus 12:37 that the Israelite’s were brought out of Egypt and, “Then the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth...” This is what they were remembering.

It wasn’t because they dwelt in temporary booths after leaving Egypt. It was because they *had left Egypt!* Their first stop was Succoth. They were to make booths because they had left Egypt to stay in a place called “Booths,” The verse should read, “... that your generations may know that I made the

children of Israel dwelt in Sukkoth when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Sukkoth, the name of the location means “Tabernacles.” That day corresponded to the first day of Unleavened Bread, and they passed through the Red Sea on the seventh day of Unleavened Bread. Corresponding to that, is this feast, looking back on that great redemption and deliverance.

⁴³ (con’t) **I am the Lord your God.”**

ani Yehovah elohekem – “I am Yehovah your God.” The Lord proclaims His name and position. In essence, what we are being told with these words is, “I am the self-existent Creator. When you see these things fulfilled by Someone in the future, you will know that it is Me. I am Yehovah your God, come to dwell among you.”

***⁴⁴ So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.**

The word here is *moed*, and it should be translated as “appointed times” rather than “feasts.” These are the appointed times of the Lord Jesus. Certain things were to occur at appointed times, because they would occur at set times each year, and they would again occur at set times in the future, when He came.

*We are here in Your presence, dwelling in temporary tabernacles
And we are rejoicing in all that You have done for us
A fire is inside to warm us as each ember burns and crackles
We are safely secure as we await the Lord Jesus
Oh to dwell in our eternal home; for this we long
May that day be soon, but we will rejoice until then
Hear our praises; hear our joyous song
Coming forth from the lips of Your redeemed among men
Thank You for our great hope, and the peace it does provide
Thank You for the surety we have in Christ Jesus
In His hope we now patiently abide
Anticipating all that He has prepared for each of us*

II. Fulfilled in Christ

This feast, like that of Unleavened Bread, points to Christ's work as it is displayed in us. Unleavened Bread followed the Passover, and it signified our life in Christ; the process of sanctification. That went from the day after the Passover, and it lasted seven days until the passing through of the Red Sea. It pictured our redemption in Christ (Passover – His sacrificial death), and then our life of sanctification until we pass through death, and the rapture (Unleavened Bread), and are then brought into the Lord's presence.

This feast is a parallel to that. It follows two other feasts in the seventh month. The first was the Day of Acclamation, picturing Christ's birth where He came to dwell among us. Then came the Day of Atonement where He died among us, becoming our Sacrifice for sin. With our atonement behind us, we have a new life to live, pictured by Sukkoth, or Tabernacles.

The first thing to understand is that this feast is fulfilled for us in the work of Christ. This is made explicit in John 1:14 (YLT) –

“And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth.”

There John uses the word *skénoó*, or dwelling in a tent. It is from the same word as that of the Greek translation of the Old Testament for “booths,” or “tabernacles” here in Leviticus 23. In other words, Christ came, put on a tent of flesh, and became a Man. What allows us to participate in this Feast of Tabernacles is that Christ first did so.

The seven days of Unleavened Bread pictured us as unleavened before the Father, living out lives purged of sin. The seven days of Tabernacles pictures us, living in temporary booths, or tabernacles before the Father, awaiting our permanent dwelling. It is the same time frame in both feasts – our life after receiving Christ Jesus. The two feasts simply portray two different aspects of this.

Both occur on the fifteenth day of the month, the time of the full moon. Our true life begins as the brightest moment in our life, represented by the

brightly lit night which starts the new day. As the moon begins to wane, so our lives in Christ as mortals do as well, but we are not to despair as we approach the darkness.

The first day is a holy convocation, as is the eighth day. The two holy convocations bracket the feast. They stand as representative of the entire period of the feast. Like Unleavened Bread which is tied to the Passover, the feasts both last seven days. But with an additional day added, thus making eight. The last day for both are a new beginning.

The significance of the *sukkah*, or tabernacle, is tied into our position in Christ. He came and tabernacled among us. Now for those who are in Him, we are positionally new beings in Christ. Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians 5 –

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Paul uses this same terminology 4 more times to show us that if we are in Christ, we will be like Christ, and we are thus to live as Christ lived. This is our time of dwelling in Sukkoth – redeemed from spiritual Egypt (Passover), sins atoned for (Day of Atonement), and awaiting our new beginning. The mentioning of the required offerings and sacrifices for each day of the feasts, along with the other sacrifices, offerings, and so on, is to show us that the work of Christ was accomplished for us, but it continues to be effectual for us throughout our life in Christ. There is no lack in our spiritual needs, and our salvation is on-going and eternal.

After that, it again returned to the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Ingathering. As it says, “when you have gathered in the fruit of your land.” This doesn’t necessarily mean that all of the harvest is gathered in, and such was not the case in Israel at this time of year, but is reflective of the gathering in of the harvest of the church from beginning to end. Keep thinking of the church age leading to the rapture.

In Deuteronomy 16:15, it specifically says that they were to observe this feast, “...because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in

all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.” It was a time of rejoicing because of the blessing of an abundant harvest.” Again, keep thinking of the church age.

The Jews use the term, “Ingathering,” to say that it is representative of the regathering of Israel to the land today. This is wholly incorrect, and it has nothing, zero, zip, nada to do with that. This is a Feast of the Lord, looking to His redemptive work in the church, be it for Jew or Gentile. It is a spiritual harvest, not a physical regathering of Israel. It is the abundance of life in Christ, terminating in our glorification, that is being anticipated here.

Next in verse 39, it said, “on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.” As the first and final days stand as representative of the entire feast, this then teaches us that our rest is in Christ and His work. The entire time of our life in Christ, we are free from working *for* salvation, because we have been saved.

After noting that, came the directive, that on the first day the people were to take “the fruit of beautiful trees.” They were to select specific named trees which would reflect the *hadar*, or majesty, of what the Lord would do in, and for, us. The word *peri*, or fruit, is used to signify the product of these beautiful trees in our lives. Paul explains this several times, but Philippians 1 gives a beautiful example of it –

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11

Next were named the *kapot temarim*, or hands of palm trees. This reflects a state granted to us by the hand of God, Christ’s righteousness, all because of our faith in Christ. That is seen many times in the New Testament, but Romans 4 speaks of it in exacting detail. We are granted in Christ’s righteousness; it was imputed to us.

After this were *anaph ets aboth*, or boughs of trees leafy. The leaves being so abundant, they form a cover. The New Testament parallel is obvious. Paul explains it in Romans 4 –

“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶ just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed *are those* whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;

⁸ Blessed *is the* man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.” Romans 4:6-8

And then next were noted *arve nakhal*, or willows of the brook. As I said, the *arav*, or willow, comes from the word *arav*, which means “pledge” or “surety.” That is connected to the word *aravon*, or pledge which is found transliterated three times in the New Testament. It means a pledge or guarantee. All three times in the New Testament, it speaks of the pledge of the Holy Spirit, given to believers who put their faith in Christ. In one of the three times, Paul directly ties our being in a tent with the *aravon*, or guarantee. In fact, the words of Paul here show us the complete fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles... all because of the work of Christ –

“For we know that if our earthly house, *this tent*, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in *this tent* groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 5:4, 5

You talk about eternal salvation! Here it is in these Old Testament pictures! The second word used, *nakhal*, signifies an inheritance. That is used, in conjunction with *aravon*, in Ephesians 1:13, 14 –

“In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

It is more than amazing, but rather it is of divine perfection that the same Old Testament words that are joined together here in Leviticus are joined with their New Testament counterparts in 2 Corinthians and Ephesians. The trees specifically named here were chosen because of what the root words they come from signify. In turn, what they signify is then used in the New Testament to then point us specifically to the work of Christ. This is all the more evident, because other trees could be used, but they go unnamed here. In Nehemiah, we read this –

And they found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, ¹⁵ and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, “Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as *it is* written.” Nehemiah 8:14,15

In the law, explaining the feasts, the trees are named for a reason, unlocking the reason leads us directly to the fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Next in verse 40, the people are directed to rejoice. They are not asked to do so; it is an imperative – “you shall rejoice before the Lord your God,” and they are to do it for seven days, signifying the entire time of their dwelling in their temporary tent. That is literally fulfilled in the words of Paul in Philippians 4:4 –

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”

There, the words are present, imperative, active. You shall rejoice, you shall do it now, and you shall continue to rejoice. We are to rejoice in the Lord, meaning Jesus – the Fulfiller of the Feast. Paul repeats the sentiment in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, the shortest verse in the Bible – *pantote chairete*, “Rejoice always!” Let us ever do so!

The word then tells us that we are to be feasting a feast to Yehovah for seven days in the year. In other words, in the prophetic plan of redemption, there is a moment in time when we exist. When we come to Christ, we are to feast our feast to Jesus during that moment in time. Again, let us ever do so!

The Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled by Christ for us, just as the Feast of Unleavened Bread is. Even though we have not seen the consummation of it yet, it is His completed work which allows it for us. Israel of old was told to observe the feast as a statute forever throughout their generations. In Christ is the fulfillment of the shadow. Now we have the substance to keep for all our lives.

Verse 42 again said that they were to dwell in booths for seven days. We are to dwell in these temporary, and yet beautiful bodies in Christ, throughout our earthly lives. We are to live in anticipation of that great eighth day when we receive our “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” This is speaking of our permanent, glorified bodies. It will be on the eighth day, the day of new beginnings.

Verse 43 then ended with the thought that “All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths.” I explained then that the term *ezrakh*, or native, comes from *zarakh*, or rise. The meaning is that it is one who rises out of Israel. For those who are grafted into Israel, as Paul explains in Romans 11, we are included in this admonition. We have been circumcised not of the flesh, but of the heart, because Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.

The last verse of the feast instructions, verse 43 was given as a reminder that we are to dwell in booths because when the Lord brought us out of Egypt, meaning spiritual bondage, He first delivered us to Sukkoth. We were made new creatures in Christ at that moment, and so we are to live as new creatures in Christ until we are brought to our final state of glorification.

The verse ended with the words, “I *am* the Lord your God.” In proclaiming His name and position in conjunction with these feasts, we are to know that Christ Jesus, who fulfilled these feasts, is the Lord our God. So ends the Feast of Tabernacles, and indeed all of the feasts of the Lord.

In the waving of the palm branches, and in the cries of “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,” Israel was proclaiming what this feast anticipates. But so few of them followed through with it. And so God turned His eyes to the Gentiles until the time when Israel would again be grafted into the olive tree. And in the millennial reign of Christ, the one feast which will be mandatory to be observed by all nations is this Feast of Tabernacles. That is recorded in Zechariah –

“And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall 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* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have no rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:16-19

It will be a thousand year long reminder that the Lord who came to tabernacle among us, is there with them, dwelling in their midst. But that is not the end of the story. In the book of Revelation, the final chapter of this marvelous story is written. Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible takes us to the glory which lies ahead for the redeemed of the Lord –

“...and I heard a great voice out of the heaven, saying, 'Lo, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them -- their God.’” Revelation 21:3

Concerning the Feast of *Sukkoth*, or Tabernacles, in Christ we proclaim, “Feast fulfilled.” Concerning all of the Feasts of the Lord named in Leviticus 23, in Christ we proclaim, “Feasts fulfilled.” As I have said repeatedly through these Feast of the Lord sermons, they are fulfilled. They are done, and we are exhorted by Paul to not worry about observing them in a physical manner. In doing so, all that can do is put up a wall between us and our Creator.

Instead, we are to trust in Christ, rest in Christ, and be thankful to God for the finished work of Christ. And in fact, we are, if living properly as Christians, living out these feasts as they were fully intended to be by observing them in our spiritual walk. We are in a temporary booth, covered with the glory of Christ, and awaiting our final, eternal tabernacle.

If you have never taken the step of faith and received Jesus as Savior, you are not a part of what God is doing in this world, nor will you share in heaven's riches when Christ comes for His people. I would ask you today to consider what you have heard and to do the wise thing by being reconciled to God through the work of Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts;
Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home,
A tabernacle *that* will not be taken down;
Not one of its stakes will ever be removed,
Nor will any of its cords be broken.

²¹ But there the majestic Lord *will be* for us

A place of broad rivers *and* streams,
In which no galley with oars will sail,
Nor majestic ships pass by

²² (For the Lord *is* our Judge,

The Lord *is* our Lawgiver,

The Lord *is* our King;

He will save us); Isaiah 33:20-22

Next Week: Leviticus 24:1-9 *Beautiful verses to fill your head...*(The Holy Oil and the Holy Bread) (43rd Leviticus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if you have a lifetime of sin heaped up behind you, He can wash it away and purify you completely and wholly. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Tabernacles

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying
These are the words He was then relaying

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying:
‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month, hear now this word
Shall be the Feast of Tabernacles
For seven days to the Lord

On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, so I submit
You shall do no customary work on it

For seven days you shall offer an offering
Made by fire to the Lord, according to this word
On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation
And you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord

It is a sacred assembly, according to the sacred writ
And you shall do no customary work on it

‘These are the feasts of the Lord
To be holy convocations which you shall proclaim
To offer an offering made by fire to the Lord
A burnt offering and a grain offering, each by its name

A sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—
Besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, so hear the word
Besides your gifts, besides all your vows
And besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord

‘Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month
When you have gathered in the fruit of the land
You shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days
On the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, please understand
And on the eighth day a sabbath-rest
As to you I now attest

And you shall take for yourselves
On the first day the fruit of beautiful trees
Branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees
And willows of the brook; choose as many as you please
And you shall before the Lord your God rejoice
For seven days you shall raise a festive voice

You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord
For seven days in the year
It shall be a statute forever in your generations
You shall celebrate it in the seventh month
----- when the seventh month does appear

You shall dwell in booths for seven days as to you I tell
All who are native Israelites shall in booths dwell
That your generations may know
That I made to dwell in booths the children of Israel
When I brought them out of the land of Egypt:
I am the Lord your God, and so to you these things I tell
So Moses declared to the children of Israel
The feasts of the Lord; so to them these things he did tell

Lord God, you came and did tabernacle among us
You put on garments of flesh, and with us You did dwell
Praises to You for our Lord, the Lord Jesus
What an incredible story the Bible does tell
Now we too dwell in a temporary tent
Living out our lives with an eternal guarantee
And when our lives are over; our last breath is spent
We shall be glorified forever; throughout eternity

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God
Hallelujah to our atonement covering
Hallelujah, to Christ our King we applaud
And to His majesty we shall forever sing

Hallelujah and Amen...