

The Feasts of Jehovah

Part 5

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[00:00:01] Good evening and welcome to our last session of this series. Our opening hymn is number 375.

Lord, we do not ask the question, where abidest thou? Well, we know where thou art dwelling. Well, we know it now. Thou abidest in the bosom of the Father's love, in that love forever living, love all thought above. Hold our hearts, O Lord, we pray thee by and in thy love, till we dwell with thee in glory evermore above. 375. Would you turn, please, to the book of Exodus, chapter 23. Exodus 23, verse 14. Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou [00:01:23] shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread. Thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days as I commanded thee in the time appointed of the month Abib. For in it thou camest out from Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty. And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field, and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God. Leviticus 23. And verse 33. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto [00:02:20] the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein. 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. These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by [00:03:08] fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything upon his day, 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. 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. 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, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a [00:04:07] statute forever in your generations. Ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days. All that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, 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. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord. Deuteronomy chapter 16. Verse 13. Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days. After that, thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy [00:05:09] 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. 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. There are many other relevant scriptures we should read, but let us lastly for the moment look at Peter's second epistle. Chapter 1, verse 16. We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto [00:06:12] you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. Chapter 3, verse 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall [00:07:02] be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In looking at the feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23, we have noticed that the first four could be [00:08:07] grouped together. They were prophetic at the time that they were uttered, but they are historical to us. The Lord was giving Moses directions as to future events, which would be anticipated by the typical element in the feasts. And in the order in which they come, we have been able to see from Scripture that the first one, the Passover, is intended by God to remind us that Christ, our Passover, died for us. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is intended by God to teach us that we who [00:09:07] believe that Jesus died and rose again should be happy and find it imperative to separate ourselves from all evil and live to God in the good of all that there is in Christ as food to the soul.

In the third, we looked at the Feast of Firstfruits, Christ risen from among the dead. We were able to see, and this is why modern theologians attack the personal resurrection of Christ so much. All that we have finds its origin and basis and riches in the personal resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. [00:10:07] And in the fourth feast, again prophetic at the time it was uttered, historical fact now, on the day of Pentecost, the church was brought into being. And since then, those who have been saved have been built into that wonderful divine spiritual structure, the church, the assembly of the living God. Now, having looked at those four, and these things have all happened now, we then looked last night at a second group of three, which were prophetic in the future at the time they were written and are still future. They have not yet happened. And we looked at some of [00:11:08] the scriptures that tell us that after the church has gone, after we've been translated, ruptured into the presence of the Lord, dead believers raised, living believers changed, that there will be before very long those raised up of God in witnessing to him, that there will be a movement by of the Holy Spirit resulting in the ingathering and the drawing towards Palestine and Jerusalem, of all the tribes of Israel, indicated in the Feast of Trumpets, that at a time when Jews, [00:12:01] particularly being withdrawn into Jerusalem as a citadel, when they are surrounded by their enemies and on the point of being annihilated, God intervenes in the person of his beloved Son. And the Lord Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, makes a mighty deliverance. And then, when that deliverance is in course, and when those who are being delivered of the house of Israel realize who it is that is delivering them, they are stricken with mourning for sin, mourning for themselves, stricken in repentance, and they are aghast that their mighty deliverer is none other than the despised Nazarene, Jesus of Nazareth. Now, that's where we got to last night, and we turn tonight [00:13:08] to the last one, the Feast of Tabernacles. Now, the Feast of Tabernacles can be readily appreciated, provided you are conversant, as we've read, with the substance of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ezra, Zechariah, the four Gospels,

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, 2 Peter, and the book of Revelation, to name a few. So, as you'll see, the task is an easy one. Familiar verses from familiar books. Now, again, we shan't have time tonight to read all the Scriptures, but some have [00:14:06] requested, and it's a good idea. I will list and send back to you lists of relevant Scriptures, and there's no better way of seeing what God teaches in the Scriptures relative to certain important epochs than to see, to read through and study the Scriptures that refer to them, and that's why we read from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Now, we looked, by way of introduction, at the first few verses of the chapter on Tuesday, was it, to see that God has had, from the outset, in mind to dwell amongst his people, that they should respond to him, that they should offer due praise and worship on the basis of the knowledge of himself that [00:15:09] they receive by way of revelation. And when we come to the seventh feast, we are coming to the culmination of the effect of the first six feasts being developed progressively, building brick upon brick, and by the time we get to the seventh feast, it is assumed that we are in the good and have some understanding of the other six. And in the seventh, we see that God indeed will arrive at the end that he has in view, that he shall dwell among his people. You will remember that when we looked last Saturday at Psalm 22, we found that God revealed himself even there as the one [00:16:02] who is holy and the one who had the desire to dwell amongst the praises of his people. The thought of dwelling, contentment, abiding, came through even in those early stages. When we come to the fullest revelation of God in John's Gospel, and this is why we read that opening hymn, you'll remember that in chapter one, we find that the word became flesh and dwelt among us, literally tabernacled among us. And those who were privileged to be there on the spot could say, and we beheld his glory. Now, it's not very far after that that we find in verse 29 that the Lord Jesus is introduced as the Lamb of God, the bearer away of the sin of the world. As in Psalm 22, it was [00:17:08] necessary that the one who was taking the place of the sin offering should be forsaken of God and answer to God as to sin if God was going to be able to dwell among the praises of his people. It is significant, and the hymn writer I'm sure had it in mind, that his disciples came to him and they took up this matter of dwelling, abiding. Where abidest thou? And, of course, he said, come and see. And the Gospel by John develops this matter of dwelling. As you know, the words which are used characteristically in the Gospel by John, abide, remain, continue, dwell, all with the same [00:18:02] force, that because of the incoming into the world of God the Son, the word become flesh. It was going to be possible for God to dwell amongst his people. Now, in each of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the synoptic Gospels, we get a reference to the Transfiguration, the Mount of Transfiguration, where the Lord Jesus was transfigured before them. And there we have, and we read the words from Peter that confirm it, the Mount of Transfiguration was a preview of circumstances and conditions which will apply in the kingdom, the world to come, the thousand years reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequent upon and subsequent to his appearing in power and great [00:19:05] glory, the Lord Jesus will be in sole command, as we have considered from time to time, Acts 17, verse 31, God has appointed a day in which he will judge or rule the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead. Again, depending upon the personal resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the Transfiguration scene is a picture, the kingdom in embryo, a very small miniature representation that there is going to come a time on earth when Christ will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords, when there will be a heavenly company in association with himself, perhaps that's why, [00:20:14] in the Transfiguration scene, the disciples with their feet upon earth could look up towards heaven and see Moses, who died and was buried, and Elijah, who was translated without dying and being buried. So we have perhaps a picture even there, that the heavenly company will include those who have died in Christ and been raised, and those who are living in Christ have been translated, the heavenly side of the kingdom. Peter, James, and John representing the remnant in Israel, those who are true to God, taking their place eventually as the earthly part of the [00:21:07]

kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, here we have then, in the Gospels, a picture of how things will be in the kingdom. Confirmed there, in Peter, as he says, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty when we saw him on the holy mount. Now, that having been said, we must go back now to Leviticus 23 and see some of the early indications that the things that the Gospels and the epistles teach us clearly in words were suggested typically even in these feasts. Now, if we look up the text of Leviticus 23, verses 33 to 44, we'll see that in verse 34, the feast of tabernacles covered a full [00:22:09] cycle of time, a seven days period. Or, as Luke suggests in the account of the transfiguration in Luke 9, an eight days period. Very often, these periods in the Old Testament began and finished on the same day of the week, and that's why they cover eight days in total. But, put here, verse 34, seven days, verse 36, seven days, and six or so times in the course of the text, we get the reference to seven days. Here is a full cycle of time sufficient in itself to be a fair declaration of the ways of God [00:23:05] in demonstrating certain features. And the features in particular that we get in the text, and we can look for them in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, they came through very clearly. First, the feature of dwelling, where we got that in verses 42 and 43, three references to dwelling, and the other references to joy and rejoicing. Now, here is a cycle of time, a full period indicated by the seven or eight day period, which is characterized by dwelling, resting, and by joy. Now, when we turn to the myriad of prophetic scriptures, take, for [00:24:03] instance, large chapters, large slices of the book of the prophet Isaiah, and we read of the joy, the celebration, the rejoicing, which will come in, because God says so, for a whole period, in prophetic terms, of a thousand years. If you wonder where that term comes from, when the time is defined as to duration six times over in Revelation 20 and thereabouts, we get a reference to the thousand years. The thousand years. The period of a thousand years when peace, plenty, prosperity, joy is there and enjoyed because God is dwelling amongst his people. Now, we get this full cycle of time. Now, when will this occur? And if you're looking for the joy, you can see it in verse 40, ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven [00:25:09] days. Now, if you look at verse 39, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, now that's expanded in Deuteronomy, as we read, when ye have gathered in the corn and the wine. Now, there are two phrases in the study of prophecy which are keys to much that we need to learn. One is the term harvest, the other is the term vintage. Look for them when you read expository writings, listen for the terms when you hear expositors outlining these things. The harvest tells us that God is going to gather in to himself that which is [00:26:04] acceptable to him and accepted by him on the basis of the work of Christ, introduced into the blessing because of the resurrection of Christ.

After the good have been gathered in, these are the words of the parables as well as the prophecies, there will be necessary judgment executed upon earth. This is in advance even of the great white throne, the final judgment of all. We have said in reference to the feast of trumpets and the day of atonement, that the godly in Israel will be penned in, they will be besieged in the nation, in the city of Jerusalem. Their enemies coming against them [00:27:09] will be destroyed. The term vintage includes the judgment meted out against those who come against God's earthly people at the city of Jerusalem. Revelation 14 gives us some of the details. And the scripture says that the feast of tabernacles will come in after the corn has been gathered in, after the vintage, in other words, after the church has been gathered home to Christ at the rapture. After a succession of judgments listed in the book of Revelation, and only after that, will the feast of tabernacles be ushered in. A feature, a major feature of the time upon earth, a thousand years, where there will be joy celebrated universally because the right man is in control, [00:28:16] the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this is more than a catalogue of events. This is the fulfillment of the ways of God on earth. God has ever had in mind that his purpose for the earth will be worked out for a full cycle of time. Within the period of the annual calendar of ecclesiastical activities in the nation of Israel, seven days was a full cycle of time. In God's prophetic calendar, a thousand years is a full cycle of time. And we read here, putting one with

the other, that this full cycle of blessing enjoyed upon earth under the administration of the Son of Man, this will last, and the joy will last, and the blessing will last. [00:29:21] There will be balance between supply and demand in every aspect of need being met that will go on for a full cycle of time, a thousand years. Now this feast of tabernacles, in the first place, looks on to that. And, as we saw last night, these last three feasts are grouped together after a long gap between the first four and the last three. And so, as the prophetic scriptures tell us, the answer to the feast of trumpets, the ingathering of the nation of Israel, God's summary judgment upon those who gather themselves against God, his Christ, and his earthly people, [00:30:18] and the personal intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ will usher in that which is depicted by the feast of tabernacles here. Again, there is the reference, verse 36, he shall do no servile work therein. All of grace. Israel will say, in substance, in the millennium, as we can say now, all to grace, how great a debtor daily we are constrained to be. It will be the language of the nation of Israel, it will be the language of those saved amongst the nations, [00:31:03] who, in subordination to the nations of Israel, will also enjoy the celebration of the feast of tabernacles. Now, verse 39, on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath, beginning and ending with God at rest amongst his people, the great end to which God is moving.

Suggested in the opening verses. Call to mind here that this vast period marked by rejoicing and the blessing of God dwelling amongst his people begins and ends taking account of the Sabbath of rest that God has ever had in mind.

[00:32:15] He says, if the first day shall be a Sabbath, so shall be the eighth. Now, even if you are not a convicted numerologist, you will have noticed that very often in scripture, the number eight is introduced. Of course, since God so arranged creation that a whole week is a period of seven days, and each day having its cycle, when you come to an eighth day, you are beginning another cycle of time.

[00:33:04] Now, that's fairly plain. But wherever, certainly usually, whenever the number eight comes in, something new is being introduced which hadn't been brought in before. If we are thinking of the breaking of bread, scripture is very clear that it has to be celebrated on the first day of the week. It doesn't say of next week, every week, each week. The first day of the week. God only encourages us to look at the week on which we are embarking on the first day of the week. Not a question of expecting to do it for the next fifty years. The first day of the week. Something which is new. New from the hand of God brought in for our blessing. Now, it's not without significance that because resurrection is bringing someone or something into new life, that very often the number eight is included. [00:34:21] As you are aware, apart from the personal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and apart from that very strange occurrence recorded in Matthew 27, where we read that the body of the saints, of many of the saints, were raised to confirm and support the personal resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, apart from the Lord personally and those special ones in Matthew 27, there were eight persons in the scriptures that are recorded as being raised from among the dead. Happy confirmation in the text of scripture that when God has something new to bring in, he puts the stamp of his approval upon it by somewhere in the background including a reference to the numeral eight. [00:35:16] Now, that being so, and it can be confirmed from many other scriptures, why is it that in verse 36, on the eighth day, shall be, and holy consecration, verse 39, on the eighth day, shall be a Sabbath? When we looked at the Passover, we found that the Passover, a one-day feast, merged into and blended with a seven-day feast, the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[00:36:03] When we come to the end, we find a seven-day feast, the Feast of Tabernacles merges with

and blends into something which has a declared beginning, which has no declared end.

In other words, the suggestion is that something eternal has been brought in to which there shall never be an end. Now, we shouldn't be surprised that that is so, because we find that a major characteristic of eternity, when time has ceased to be, will be that God is pleased to dwell eternally with his people. The dwelling of God is an eternal characteristic. [00:37:02] If you want to compare in your minds the tabernacle and the temple, it's a bit of a paradox. In human terms, the temple, a temple, and the materials from which it is used, a temple appears to the human mind to be a permanent structure. And yet, it depicts the display of the glory of God, particularly in a precise, defined period of a thousand years. Yes, the glory of God will be displayed throughout that thousand-year term, which is also covered by the Feast of Tabernacles. When we come to the tabernacle, the tabernacle in the wilderness, and when we examine the significance of that, we find that God is teaching us that he will not only be displaying his glory in the thousand-year period of the millennium, the world to come, [00:38:16] but that he has in mind that he should be known, his presence should be enjoyed, his worship shall be an exercise not only for a thousand years, but for eternity. And the paradox is this. To human eyes or minds, a permanent structure, the temple, signifies conditions for a thousand years. But the tabernacle, to our minds, a temporary structure, depicts the conditions in eternity. Now, what confirmation have we of that? Well, John 1, 14, the word became flesh, and tabernacled dwelt among us.

[00:39:07] Now, that's one certain scripture. And we read from 2 Peter, chapter 3, of one of the few scriptures which tell us eternity.

If you want to read detail about eternity, when time has ceased to be, after the world to come, after the world to come, where Satan is released and the human heart is seen to be no better than it ever was, after the summary judgment upon Satan and all his hosts, after the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all, and eternity resumes, if that's the term, we have only four scriptures which tell us anything about conditions in eternity proper. [00:40:14] 1 Corinthians 15, verses 24 to 28.

Ephesians 3, verse 21, the last verse in the chapter. 2 Peter 3, about verses 10 to 13 or 14, and then the opening seven or eight verses in Revelation 21. God is sparing about what he says about eternity.

But what comes through consistently in those scriptures is that that towards which God has ever been working will then be current, it will be extant, it will happen, it will be in being. [00:41:02] And that is God dwelling among his people. Remember, 2 Peter 3, we read the word, the day of God wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Righteousness will dwell because God will be dwelling among his people. Ephesians 3 tells us that there will only be one distinct company in eternity.

God, personally, yes.

The one distinct company will be the Church, that Church which was ushered in on the day of Pentecost, of which the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Pentecost, tells us. Now let us read in confirmation of God's end to this wonderful feature in Revelation 21. [00:42:08] Revelation 21 and verse 1.

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth and the first heaven were passed away and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Well, that agrees with Ephesians 3. New Jerusalem, a picture of the heavenly city, the Church translated to be with Christ, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [00:43:01] Eternal affection in mind in the bride. In the bride. Verse 3.

I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. Well, there we have it. Distinctions among the nations gone forever. No Israel now, no Gentiles. There is the Church of God in heaven. There is the God dwelling amongst men on the new earth, and it is spoken of as the tabernacle of God with men. God himself shall be with them and be their God. Many other features that we might like to look at in other scriptures that might be brought forward. I am assured that when we consider the whole of Leviticus 23, [00:44:07] considering that the Feast of Tabernacles, the last one, says now this has to be done in the remembrance that it was the God who brought you out of Egypt, delivered you with a mighty hand, that is dwelling amongst you, and who is zealous for your praise and your worship. The details of the sacrifices given in the text. And when that worship is celebrated, when the praise and thanksgiving are offered, it is in the light of what we've learned in the earlier feasts, that if we were to be included and involved in this wonderful scheme, it could only be if our sins have been dealt with, [00:45:03] the blood of Christ cleansing from all sin, associated with him, linked with him in virtue of his glorious personal resurrection, built into the church, to be translated to be with him, to be in the heavenly component, the heavenly part, in that wonderful period of a thousand years, when God shall be pleased to dwell amongst his people, because Christ, the Messiah, who is personally God, will be directing things amongst the nation of Israel and the nations of the world. Further details of conditions then, we'll have to look at the last few chapters of the book of Zechariah, and I trust we'll all feel free to do that. [00:46:05] But when time has ceased to be, when time has run its course, when every enemy has been put down for the last time, there shall be. Our words are so feeble, we are inclined to say time, but there's no time scale. We're inclined to say period, but there is no cessation, there is no limit to the period. But in eternity, God shall receive a full, unlimited, unrestricted answer to that which has ever been in his heart and his mind, that dwelling amongst his people, there shall be that return, that response to him which is ever due. Perhaps we can remind ourselves of this as we sing our last hymn, number 48. Necessarily, in this book of Christian praise, it concentrates on the Christian element. [00:47:07] High in the Father's house, above, our mansion is prepared, there is the home, the rest we love, and there our bright reward. With him we love in spotless white, in glory we shall shine, his blissful presence our delight, in love and joy divine. All taint of sin shall be removed, all evil done away, and we shall dwell with God's beloved through God's eternal day. Number 48. High in the Father's house, above, our mansion is prepared, there is the home, the rest we love.

[00:48:11] And there our bright reward.

With him we love in spotless white, in glory we shall shine, his blissful presence our delight, in love and joy divine.

[00:49:04] All taint of sin shall be removed, all evil done away, and we shall dwell with God's beloved through God's eternal day.

O God, our Father, how easy it is to take such sublime words upon our lips. [00:50:07] We feel humbled by the realization that they are blessedly true. But we thank thee that we can owe and own it

all to the fact that thou hast wrought from thyself and for thyself.

That in the person of thy beloved Son thou hast been pleased to work a work which shall be the righteous basis for all these wonderful things.

We remember when we first trusted him as saviour how wonderful everything was, how little we knew, how little we imagined. [00:51:02] And yet we loved him because he has died to save us. And if it is pleased thee to show us from thy word some of the tremendous ramifications, some of the wide issues involved, some view of the vast panorama of blessing, we must cry with one of old what has God wrought. We thank thee for revealing these things to us by the Spirit. We know now that our present enjoyment, our present knowledge, power in the kingdom, joy in the kingdom, can only be known and appreciated in the power of that selfsame Spirit. We thank thee for implanting him within us to dwell on us now, to give the pledge and the guarantee of that onto which we are going, [00:52:12] and giving us now some of the present joy in anticipation of that wonderful day. We commit ourselves to thee as we separate, and if it please thee to bring us together on the morrow the first day of the week, we pray that there might be that due return in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ and through him to thee that shall be for the satisfaction of thy loving heart. We give thee thanks. We seek thy blessing. In his most precious name. Amen.