

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## **GIG271 – The Feast of Tabernacles**

In this podcast we are talking about the Feast of Tabernacles. We are right into the Feast, and I do not want this to be just an introduction to the Feast of Tabernacles; I want to talk about some of the feelings and the faith that I have for this feast and for the year that it introduces us into. First of all, let me give you Scriptures that instruct Israel in the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles. You can read over those on your own in order to bring yourself to remembrance of what was to go on and how it was to be celebrated.

First is Leviticus the twenty-third chapter, starting at verse 33 and going through verse 44. Next, I would look at Deuteronomy the sixteenth chapter, verses 13 through 15. You can also look at Zechariah the fourteenth chapter; verses 16 through 21 talk about the prophetic view of what will happen through history with the Feast of Tabernacles. Also, in the New Testament you could look at John the seventh chapter, starting at verse 1 and going through verse 16; this will give the story of Yeshua, Jesus, keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. These passages will give you some elements to look at and to prepare yourself for as you think about the Feast of Tabernacles and what we are expecting God to do for us during this time.

Tabernacles was held following the harvest, and it triggered the rains for the next season to come. As we celebrate Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles, we worship in thankfulness for all that God has done for us in the season we have just completed; and we are coming out of a season. Also, we begin to prepare our hearts during this time of the Feast for the season that we are now coming into. This is the marking of a new season, and I find personally, spiritually, that God is always ending the old at the Feast of Tabernacles and beginning the new. So I believe this next year that we will experience is launched at this Feast of Tabernacles.

I personally am reaching in to the Lord about what He is saying for this upcoming year. As I have been doing that, I have found that there are several things flooding my own heart personally. First is a burden and a cry of intercession before the Lord that the Word of the Lord open up to God's people; that It break our hearts, that it cause us to repent, and that in it we find the instructions and the directions for our lives in this coming year. It reminds me of the book of Nehemiah and the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. They had found the Word of God, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and they began to read out of the Law. In the process of that, God began to really break their hearts and bring them into something.

I want to read Nehemiah the eighth chapter, starting at verse 13. It says, "Then on the second day the heads of the fathers' households of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law." That is part of this prayer. I am looking to see God in this year give us real insight into His Word, that His Word begin to lead us and guide us and direct us individually and corporately as the body of Christ into the things that we are to experience in these days just before us.

Verses 14-17,

They found written in the law how the Lord had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month. So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. The entire assembly of those who had returned from captivity made booths and lived in them.

I love the feeling of this. These are the people coming out of the captivity of Babylon, and they find this deep thing. Their hearts are being stirred by the Word of God in the instructions that the Word is giving them. The Feast had not been held for many, many years, and now they are restoring it. This was a time of restoration, and I believe there is something of the Word of God being restored to our lives. I think we are coming out of a season where people have not really given themselves to the Scriptures, to a life in the Word, or a life led by the Word; and now God is bringing us back into a time when the Word is going to lead us, it is going to direct us.

These people came and built their booths, and they began to celebrate the great Feast of Tabernacles. It goes on to say in verses 17-18, "The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing. He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day." Every day during the Feast they read from the Word of God, looking for the insights into the things that God was saying to them through His Word. God, loose this spirit upon us again in this day. This is the sense of intercession and drive that I find in my heart, that we pray, that we prophesy to the body of Christ that we find again a new relationship with the Word of God as we go through these days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Nehemiah 8:18 – 9:2,

They celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance. Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth with dirt upon them. The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Celebrating this feast threw them into something of really seeking the Lord, and I want it to do that for us. I want this to really put us in a place of seeking God. This was following the Feast; they went into a time of fasting, putting on sackcloth, seeking the Lord with all of their hearts. Born out of that, if you go on and read through these next verses and into the next chapter, we find that they were not just confessing and worshiping and reading the Word, but they go on to make a new covenant with God of a way to live with Him and how they are going to walk with Him, how they are going to find the instruction for their lives born out of the Word of God. I pray for this year that this same experience be ours, that it be Israel's experience, that it be the body of Christ's experience as we go forward.

Next, I find in my heart this deep cry that the Lordship of Christ invade the earth. This should be part of our intercession. Yeshua, Jesus, taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Let Your Kingdom come. Christ said, "My Kingdom is not of this world," but we also know that His Kingdom is coming into this world. At some point it invades this world, and we find that the

days of Messiah are brought upon the earth. I feel a burden that we pray and that we intercede to begin to see this manifestation.

In Revelation 11:17 it talks about how God has taken up His power and He begins to reign. We see that the Kingdom comes in this sense of waves of a beginning. God begins to manifest His Kingdom, and I want to see the beginning of the manifestations of the Kingdom of God in the earth. We know that His Kingdom is established in heaven, but there comes this time when the age of Messiah begins to reign in the earth and the Lordship of Christ begins to reign in our own hearts. And so we pray, "Bring Your Lordship over my life, Lord, over my family, over my community, over the earth itself." Let it be in this hour, in this time, and let it begin as something that is a result of our celebration of this Feast of Tabernacles.

So these are two burdens of prayer and intercession that I feel like the Holy Spirit is laying on my heart for this coming year, and I believe to see the fulfillment. I hope that many will also feel the same burden by the Holy Spirit, so that we find ourselves contending together in the Spirit in our prayer before the Lord to see the manifestation of the Word of God coming alive to the body of Christ, coming alive to Israel in a new way, in a greater way. We give ourselves to it. It begins to break our hearts to lead us into repentance and seeking Him that He lead us in all that we do, and that we also find this great feeling of His Presence and Lordship, that He leads our lives.

This is the way it was when we look at this picture of the days of Tabernacles, Sukkot, in the wilderness. It really appeared, when you look at the picture of it, as the divine order of God's Kingdom ruling and reigning; so we want to see that happen. We know that in Revelation, we see Him taking His power and beginning to reign. But in Numbers the ninth chapter, verses 15 to 23, we see that from the time that the tabernacle was built and finished being erected, "the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night." Verses 15-16. Whenever the cloud was lifted from over them and from over the tent, they followed it. The sons of Israel would pack up, they would set out of camp, and they would be led by this pillar. And whether it was the cloud that was by day or the fire that was by night, this led them; so that according to the command of the Lord, it says, they set out from camp, and according to the command of the Lord, they made camp. This is how they lived in those days. In verse 23 it says, "At the command of the Lord they camped, and at the command of the Lord they set out; they kept the Lord's charge, according to the command of the Lord through Moses." So we find this leading of the Lord that was taking place for them during these days.

This is part of the picture that we see in celebrating Tabernacles. And this is part of this burden that not only do we find the Word of God coming alive to us, but we find the Lordship of Christ coming alive. We find the command of the Lord once again in charge: Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on this earth as it is in heaven.

When we look at the picture in Numbers the first chapter, starting at verse 52 and on into chapter 2, it gives us another impression or another picture of how this actually functioned for them. All of the tribes camped under the banners of their fathers, and they camped in order around the Tabernacle, each as the Lord had depicted, one in front, one to the sides; all of them were camping according to the word that Moses gave of where they were to set up camp, how they were to set up camp. So we see again that this time was a time of God's order, God's leadership, God's being in charge – His government coming into the earth. And so, when we pray that great prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,"

we realize this is what we are talking about. I believe, and I want you to believe with me, that these two burdens of prayer and intercession are something that you will focus on with me, that God open up His Word to us in a way that we have not seen in these past seasons; that there will be a new season where the Word of God is alive, where the Word of God speaks to our hearts, where the Word of God leads us. But also, that we find the command of the Lord, the Presence of the Lord in His government, that His Kingdom comes, that His will be done. We begin to see the days of the Messianic Kingdom come to this earth. We believe for those things to come about.

The other thing that has been real to me is not so much a prayer burden, but it is a burden of what I believe we are going to experience in this year. Each year the Lord brings something through this time of the Feast of Tabernacles that we are called to, or that we are going to walk in, and I believe this is what we are going to experience as we go through this time. This is going to be a time of our focus; that, to me, is what this year is about. We construct our lives, and how we live our lives, with a focus on God, with a focus on His provision, not on the desolate wilderness. When we get to the Feast, you see that they were commanded to go build these booths. Now the booths were open in the front so that they were all facing toward and looking toward the tent of meeting, or the tabernacle in the wilderness, that was set up in their midst. Also, because the roof was made out of just branches, they could see up and out of this booth. They could see out the front door of the booth. So it was very open, and it gave you a perception. What is it that they were to be looking at? What was this picture that they saw? It was this pillar of fire by night. It was the cloud by day. This is what they lived in.

These booths that they made focused upon the Presence of God that was with them, the Presence of God that was in their midst. And I believe in this year it is about our focus. You are to build your own booth. We construct our lives, we construct how we live. The Lord tells us where to live, but how we live is something that we build and we construct as part of this Tabernacles experience. So we build a booth that focuses us upon the Presence of God, and therefore what we are constantly looking at is this picture. I mean, you could look up through your ceiling and you could see His Presence over the tabernacle. You could look out the front door and see His Presence over the tabernacle. This is what Israel saw. And I just thought about the story that God is telling us – what is He trying to get us to inculcate into our lives out of this great Feast of Tabernacles as we go into this coming year? Well, first of all, we see the cloud that covered by day, and we see the experience that the wilderness was very hot. It was not a wonderful environment. If you focused on the wilderness, it could be a negative picture. But even in the daytime and the heat that you experienced, if you were focused on this great cloud, if that is what you saw, you realized the Lord was covering you; and I think that there is a focus that we have to have. We are going to be living in maybe some very dark days during this coming year, but what we focus on is what God is doing for us.

In Psalm 91, verses 1-12, it says,

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!" For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. For He

will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.

We see that there is a focus that we can have, that during the blazing heat, during the intensity of the warfare that may come against us, we can choose with our focus to trust in the Lord, to make Him our shelter, to abide in the shadow of the Almighty; and that is what they were to do during this time of Tabernacles. They were to go out and remember the fact that Israel had lived in the shadow of the Almighty and they were not smitten by the heat of the desert, the wilderness, and all that was there that seemed so imposing upon their lives and so threatening to their lives. That was not their focus; their focus was the Almighty. Their focus was to live in Him, to shelter in Him, to trust in Him. And I believe that there is a focus we can have in God that will bring to us a trust and a deliverance from everything that would come against us during these days. I bless us to experience that. That was one of the aspects that was so real about this time that Israel lived through and what they were to remember again in these days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Another Scripture that came to me is about the other aspect of His Presence that was with them. It was not just a cloud that came by day to shelter, but it was also a pillar of fire by night that warmed them, and it also brought a great light into the camp of Israel. I thought about the Scripture in Isaiah 60:1-3,

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

We may experience deep darkness during this coming year. It may be times of real darkness. We do not know what we will face, or what we are going to go through, just as they did not know exactly what they would face day to day in the wilderness. But they knew one thing: the glory and the Presence and the light of God was with them. The light of the Lord had risen upon them. The glory of the Lord had risen upon them, even though there was darkness in the earth. Remember, the cloud appeared during the nighttime, so you could wander away from the Presence of that pillar of light and you were in deep darkness, and darkness covered all the earth. If you walked away out of the camp, if you walked away from that tremendous glory of God that was radiating light in the midst of His people, you found yourself in darkness. And many will find themselves in darkness during this time. "Darkness covers the earth and deep darkness the people." We are seeing it more and more as the days go by, the things that are coming upon the earth. But I encourage us, let's not focus on that. Let's not wander away from the Presence of God, from the light, from the glory that He is bringing. Let's keep our focus. As we build those sukkahs, the booths around ourselves, build them in such a way that they house us into His Presence, that they keep us focused upon His glory and we stay positioned in that place.

The other Scripture that came with this was 2 Corinthians 3:16-18. It says,

But whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

This idea of Tabernacles is training us to focus upon His glory, to focus upon His Presence, to focus upon His appearances with us. And what happens when we do that is that we are changed, we are transformed into that same light and that same glory. It happened in those days with Moses on Mount Sinai – as he

beheld the Lord, he was changed. When he came down the mountain, his face shone and the people were stumbled by what they saw. They asked him to cover his face up so that they could stand his appearance. But then when the glory of the Lord came upon the Tabernacle, they all had the same experience – they were looking up at the light of the glory of God that dwelt in their midst. Think about it. If you stared at them, what did you see? You saw the glory of the Lord radiating back off of their faces also. So as long as they stayed focused upon the Lord, not only did the glory of the Lord fill them and bring warmth and bring protection for them, but it also radiated out from them. It shone from their faces. And I believe this is something that we can see in this year, having experienced a tabernacling with the Lord, staring into His face, staring into the light of His Presence, the glory of His Presence that manifests for us as it manifested for them in the wilderness.

Don't focus on the wilderness. Don't focus on the problems. Don't get caught up in the darkness that covers the earth, and the gross darkness that is enveloping the peoples in this generation. But instead, absorb the light. Focus on the glory of God, and let that same glory radiate from your face into this world as we face it going forth in this time. I believe this can be a transitional time for Israel and for the body of Christ both, as we experience something tremendous in these days of Tabernacles. I encourage you, build your booth in a way that creates a constant focus on the Lord. Build your life, build your family, build your community in a way that you are constantly set in your focus upon the Lord, drawing the shadow of the Almighty. That was such an important aspect of it, and I want you to have that in your thoughts also as you listen to these words. Abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Let Him become your dwelling place. Live in Him. Live under His protection. Go back over these Scriptures, and review Psalm 91. Read it thoroughly all the way through, and make the Lord your dwelling place. Make the shadow of the Almighty your dwelling place.

Also, even though we are facing deep darkness, at night the pillar of fire would manifest itself. In the darkness of your night or whatever you are facing in your life, let the glory of His Presence begin to manifest around you and begin to consume you. Have your focus be upon Him. Have your focus on His glory, on His Presence, both that you might be changed within, as it says in Corinthians, that we are transformed from glory to glory into that same Presence; but also that we might reflect back that glory to others as it radiates from us.

The days of Tabernacles are times of transition. They are wonderful times of His glory. Let's celebrate the Feast with faith and enter into this new season that God has for us, in the name of the Lord.

Amen.