

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG320 – The Feast Of Tabernacles – An Introduction

In this podcast, I want to bring an introduction to the Feast of Tabernacles. This is such an important feast. I really do want to bring a more detailed podcast in which I talk about the things that I would like to see the Lord do for us during this upcoming Feast of Tabernacles; but in this podcast, I want to just give us a broad overview and an introduction to the Feast of Tabernacles. I am going to begin by giving Scriptures that you can take time yourself to go back into, to read, to study. I encourage you to do a lot of study about this Feast, because there is so much to it. It is very, very detailed, and it has many facets to it. So please take these Scripture references; maybe do Bible searches yourself and see what you can find by searching on “Feast of Booths,” or “Feast of Tabernacles,” and some of the different key words that you can think of related to this feast.

First of all, we have Leviticus 23. Starting at verse 34 and going through verse 44, we find the Lord commanding this Feast to be celebrated, and the details surrounding that. In Deuteronomy 16:13-17, we find the same thing, the direction for celebrating this Feast. In Deuteronomy 31:10-13, we find, again, instructions for the celebration of the Feast of Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles. In First Kings 8:2-6, we find a very significant celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Scriptures, where Solomon's Temple is dedicated. In Second Chronicles 5:1-7, we again find the Feast being celebrated surrounding Solomon's Temple. In Ezra 3, we also find the Feast of Tabernacles being celebrated, this being significant because of the restoration of the Temple. In Nehemiah 8:13 through 9:3, we find Tabernacles being restored after they returned from captivity in Babylon – those are wonderful, wonderful verses to study and see how their hearts were open to the Word of God, and the amazement they had in finding the Word and going back into the celebration. In John chapter 7, starting at verse 2 through verse 14, we find that Yeshua, that Jesus, goes up to the Feast and celebrates the Feast in Jerusalem; also in John 7:37-39, we find Yeshua in the synagogue, celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles on the last day, the great day of the Feast. This is significant for you to get in and look at. So I encourage you to read all of these Scriptures. Go through them yourself and study them.

So, here we are – the Feast of Booths; Sukkot; the Feast of Tabernacles; and to me, one of the great titles for this Feast – it is called “the Feast of the Lord.” (Leviticus 23:39) That kind of shows you how important this time is, that this is referred to as The Feast of the Lord. So, what is it all about? Well, when we get into it, we find that we are to be altogether joyful in our celebration of this Feast of Tabernacles. It is a Sabbath; both the first day and the last day are a Sabbath, and they are celebrated with a Sabbath rest. It is to be celebrated by all – this is really a unique aspect of this Feast of Tabernacles. We know that, for instance, on the Feast of Passover there were restrictions as to who could celebrate it and who could not celebrate it. But with this Feast, it says that “you and your sons and your daughters, your male and your female servants, the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow that are in your town” can celebrate this Feast. All of these people. The alien, in another place, was said to be welcome to celebrate this time of the Feast. This is very unique, in that it is all-inclusive of everyone coming and feeling free to celebrate this time of the Feast of Booths. Whoever was in the town could come and be part of the celebration of this time. And I think that points to what Tabernacles

is all about: it really is talking about the Lord's Presence and His Kingdom coming on the earth. So we have this very welcoming celebration. All of Israel was to celebrate it: All the sons, all the daughters, all the servants, all the Levites, the priest, the stranger, the widow, the orphan, the alien, everyone was to come and celebrate this great Feast of Tabernacles with all of Israel – a time of great joy, of great rejoicing, a time of Sabbath rest.

It was a time of a feast of harvest. It was to be celebrated, it says, “when you have gathered in the crops of your land.” Once they came into possession of the land of Israel, they were to celebrate this Feast; the timing of it was such that they would gather in all of the crops of the land, they would bring them into the barns, and then this great Feast would start. And part of what they did, since they had just brought in the harvest, was that they brought their offerings. They would bring the offerings of the fruit of the land to the Temple and give to the Lord. So it is a time of bringing our offerings to the Lord.

They were to live in booths. Now, to explain what that was, they were to go out and cut down limbs from the trees and they were to build these little shacks, these little booths that they were to live in for the whole time of the Feast of Tabernacles. This was to remind them that during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, they lived in tents, they lived in very simple shelters for that whole time. It says that they were to build these booths and they were to live in these booths for seven days, remembering the time that they spent in the wilderness after coming out of Egypt. So this was the whole point, to recall this time in the wilderness.

Now, many times when we study the Scriptures, we think about the wilderness in the sense that it was a difficult time, a negative thing, that they were “wandering in the wilderness.” I think that in a Christian mindset, we always think of the wilderness as a time when God is dealing with us, or when negative things are taking place surrounding us. But the truth is that the wilderness actually had quite a few advantages to it, and many wonderful things really transpired during this time in the wilderness. For instance, the Presence of God dwelt with them day and night; they literally saw His Presence with them. This is one of the reasons why, in building the booth that you are going to live in, you have an opening in the ceiling and you are able to see out through the ceiling. This is because the Presence of God was always above them in the center of the camp, and they wanted an awareness of that. Part of this celebration was God reminding them, “When you were in the wilderness, I was with you. I was with you day and night.” That was significant in the wilderness, because, as we know, it is very hot; the sun is devastating in the wilderness. Also, at night it turns very cold. This is why the Presence of God with them was a fire by night and it was a cloud by day – this was so that it literally shaded them from the sun during the day, and it warmed them during the cold at night. So we see that many aspects of this wilderness wandering were really tremendous. In fact, it is representative of the Kingdom of God coming to earth; and as we get into these details, we see why it represents that. It is to remind us that God dwelt with Israel on the earth. His physical Presence was there with them, and He provided for them.

The wilderness was a time when questions were answered for them – directions were given, judgments were made – by God Himself. If ever Moses had a question, he simply went into the Tent of Meetings; the Presence of God would fill the Tent of Meetings, Moses would speak to God face to face, and God would answer him. They were never without answers of what to do. If they had questions about the Torah – how to observe it, how to follow it – God gave those answers to Moses in the Tent of Meetings. What a tremendous thing, when you think about it! They had daily direction, daily leading and judgment; daily answering of questions was available to them. If they wondered what the Word really

meant – “What does the Torah mean when it says this or that?” – they were able to get those answers directly from God. That, to me, is pointing to the Kingdom of God, that we will be able to have all of the answers we need, all of the direction we need. God will be the Judge on the earth, and He judges rightly. So, again, we see some of these tremendous advantages of this time in the wilderness that only existed for Israel, or on the earth, during this time.

We do not want to think of the wilderness negatively. We want to think about all the positive blessings that existed. We want to think about how much this does represent to us the Kingdom of God coming to earth. We are looking forward to the Kingdom of God coming to earth. We know that Yeshua, Christ, taught us to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” And Christ is in heaven, establishing His Kingdom. He said, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” But we also know that He brings His Kingdom to this earth and onto this world, once that Kingdom is fully established. And so, we look for that; and our great example and illustration of what that will be like is really found during this time of the Feast of Tabernacles. What a blessed remembrance this is for Israel. What a blessed remembrance it is for us, as we remember how it was in the Scriptures. And I encourage you to use your imagination of what those days must have been like.

Another thing we see is that there were none of the diseases that the surrounding nations had. Therefore, the people did not get sick during this time; there was no disease. Their clothes did not wear out, their shoes did not wear out during this time. They were fed daily the manna from heaven that God provided for them. He gave them their daily bread, and there was the rock that provided water for them. So even though they were in this wilderness, they had all the food they needed. They had all the water they needed. They had the perfect leading of God – think about that – God led them. They stayed at camp until the Presence of the Lord picked up and started moving. When it did, they packed up camp and they followed Him. We have no greater illustration of the leading of God than we find at this time of Tabernacles. We know that they who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14) And so this idea of having a perfect leading of the Spirit of God is a tremendous idea that we look forward to and we believe for.

The other thing they had was perfect order. God established the order of how they functioned. When you look at a picture of the camp in the wilderness, each tribe was camped around the Tabernacle under the banner of their father. Each tribe was living together in a specific area around the Tabernacle, as God had directed them to live. And so they had this perfect order of the community that was established by God. And we look forward to that, don't we? We look forward to that in the Kingdom, that the Kingdom will be the community of God, the family of God, in perfect order, as He has established for us to live and relate and work together.

The other thing that was happening, which may not have been such a wonderful idea to some, but during this time in the wilderness all of those who were rebellious and disobedient were being purged from the midst of the community. As a result, when they were ready to go in and take the land, the body of Israel, the family of Israel, had been cleansed of those who were rebellious and disobedient, so that it was a community of those who were seeking God, driven to follow His instructions, ready to go in and take and possess the land.

All of these factors were the main focus of the Feast of Tabernacles. They were to build these booths, live in these booths for seven days, and remember this time of the wilderness. And I encourage you to do it. Sit and wait upon the Lord. Close your eyes, use your imagination. Think about what it must have been like to be in that place where God was providing, and providing, and providing all of these things

for them in their lifestyle, leading them, training them, guiding them. What a wonderful time this was! And God is saying, "I want you to remember this time, because I am going to bring My Kingdom to this earth." Yeshua taught us, Christ taught us to pray for that very event. And we do pray. But this Feast helps us to pray that prayer with understanding: what is it that we are believing for when we talk about the Kingdom of God on this earth as it is in heaven? These things make up some of our experience that we will have for this life in God's Kingdom on this earth.

There are other events that transpire during Tabernacles and surround this idea of what Tabernacles was all about. One of the things that we see is that the Torah, the Law, was read. Every seventh year, during Tabernacles, the Word would be read to the people. Everybody would come and listen to all of the Torah being read to them; and they had it, and they understood it. Think about what a great understanding that was. We have the Bible, some of us read it daily; they only had it every seventh year. And yet, the understanding that they had carried them through those years. Part of what was imparted to them during the reading of this was the fear of God, because they read not only the good things and the blessings, but they read about the disturbing things that had taken place in Israel for those who did not follow and give an obedience to this Word that the Lord had spoken. So, every seventh year on Tabernacles, the Word of God was read to them.

Another great event that happened during Tabernacles was that the Ark of the Covenant was moved from the City of David into Solomon's Temple, and it was put into the Holy of Holies during the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast was celebrated as the event surrounding the dedication of Solomon's Temple. And we see the similar manifestation here like it was in the wilderness, because this is when the Presence of God appeared in Solomon's Temple to such a degree that the priests were unable to stand and minister any longer; such a great Presence, we call it the Shekinah glory, that came to them during that time. But what was it representing? It was representing that Presence of God that they had during the wilderness – all day and all night, twenty-four seven, the Presence of God was with them. So we see the Ark of the Covenant being moved into Solomon's Temple, being placed in the Holy of Holies, and His Presence, once again, coming and manifesting over that Ark – just as it had done during all of those wilderness wandering days, not just during the Feast of Tabernacles. But the Feast of Tabernacles brings the remembrance of it, and gives us the cry for those days to return. We also see that it was during the Feast of Tabernacles that Ezra saw the restoration of the Temple. They also restored the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

One of the things that happened every seventh year was all the debt was forgiven; that should be something that gets our attention. Imagine your debt being forgiven during the Feast of Tabernacles. That is something we can believe the Lord to restore during our time, don't you think? Also, we see that during this great Feast, Yeshua, Jesus, stood up in the synagogue and He read out of the Scriptures. He said, "All of those who are thirsty, come to Me and drink, and out of your bellies will come forth rivers of living water." (John 7:37-39) This was such a prophetic voice of the Savior coming and telling what was to be expected during these days of Tabernacles.

I want to give us some last thoughts that we can carry into these days of preparation before the Feast of Tabernacles begins for us, and that we also contend for during these days of celebrating the great Feast of Tabernacles. One thing I would encourage you to do, study the Scriptures. Go in and do your own Bible study surrounding the Feast of Tabernacles – how it has been celebrated through the Scriptures, the things that have happened and transpired during those days of Tabernacles – because it gives us something to not just remember, but to look forward to. I encourage you to use your imagery, use

pictures in your mind of what those days in the wilderness would have been like. Get rid of the thinking that this was just a negative experience that the children of Israel went through. It was not just a negative experience – it was some of the most glorious days that they as a people ever celebrated and lived under, with the Lord's Presence with them. They were fantastic days of their clothes not wearing out, of being provided for in ways that we believe we will see once again in the Kingdom. Use your imagination, wait upon the Lord, and say, “Show me, Lord, what are these days of Tabernacles, and what do they hold in store for us as believers today?”

I also encourage you to pray and believe that as Yeshua prophesied, the Holy Spirit will flow to the world through the body of Christ. The Scripture says in Isaiah 11:9, “For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” I believe that is what the Lord was pointing to when He said, “Out of your bellies will flow rivers of living water.” It was during Tabernacles that He made this prophecy, so it is talking about this great Presence of God, the knowledge of God, the understanding of God that will flow into the earth during this time. But it will be through the believers in Christ that these things will happen. So we believe, and we pray for it.

This Feast of Tabernacles is the Feast of His Presence on the earth. Let us believe to see the glory of the Lord fill all of the earth at this wonderful time of Tabernacles. We call upon your Presence, Lord. We remember Your Presence being with them then, and we cry out in our own hearts for You to fulfill this Tabernacles and live with us now in this earth. Amen.