

The Tabernacle

Feast of Tabernacles

Lesson Overview

- References – Leviticus 23:33-44, Numbers 29:12-40, Deuteronomy 16:13-17
- Also called “feast of ingathering” (Exodus 23:16), and by some “feast of booths”.
- Jews today call this feast *Sukkot*, the Hebrew word (Strong’s H5521) meaning generally a temporary tent or shelter.
- Was celebrated for seven days beginning on the 15th of Tishri
 - In 2022 this will be September 9-16 and in 2023 September 29-October 6.
 - There is also a sabbath on the eighth day (today called *Shemini Atzeret*) that is connected to this feast but not truly a part of it – Exodus 23:36,39
- The last of the three Pilgrimage feasts – Exodus 23:16-17, Deuteronomy 16:16
- It in part celebrated the end of the annual harvest season and remembered God’s provision for Israel during the 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

Edersheim’s Three Chief Characteristics of the Feast

- The Joyous Festivities
 - The celebration for all – Deuteronomy 16:14-15
 - The giving of freewill and peace offerings – Deuteronomy 16:17
- Dwelling in Booths
 - “Thus it must be a real booth, and constructed of boughs of living trees, and solely for the purposes of this festival. Hence it must be high enough, yet not too high – at least ten handbreadths, but not more than thirty feet; three of its walls must be of boughs; it must be fairly covered with boughs, yet not so shaded as not to admit sunshine, nor yet so open as to have not sufficient shade, the object in each case being neither sunshine nor shade, but that it should be a real booth of boughs of trees. It is needless to enter into further details, except to say that these booths, and not their houses, were to be the regular dwelling of all in Israel during the week, and that, except in very heavy rain, they were to eat, sleep, pray, study – in short, entirely to live in them. The only exceptions were in favour of those absent on some pious duty, the sick, and their attendants, women, slaves, and infants who were still depending on their mothers.”
- Offerings – Numbers 29:12-40
 - Thirteen bulls were offered as burnt offerings on the first day, and one less each day until seven were offered on the seventh day for seventy total.
 - Each of the seven days also had burnt offerings of two rams and fourteen lambs, a sin offering of one goat.
 - The eighth day had burnt offerings of one bull, one ram, and seven lambs, and a sin offering of one ram.
 - Note – all the above offered with the prescribed drink and meal offerings.

Later Developments (Time of Christ)

- The use of the *Four Species*, based on Leviticus 23:40. These are an *etrog* (citron fruit) and a bundled *lulav* (date palm frond), *hadass* (myrtle tree branch with leaves), and *aravah* (willow tree branch with leaves). These were “shaken” in celebration in the Temple.
- Before the morning sacrifice each day, the priests would pour the drink offerings and water from the Pool of Siloam into special silver basins beside the Brazen Altar. These basins had holes in them that spilt the water onto the Altar. As it poured, the people sang the *Hallel* (Psalms 113-118).
- After the first day, large “candelabras” were placed in the Court of Women. Under the light of these was much celebration and singing of psalms and hymns.

Appearances in Scripture

- Solomon dedicated the Temple this feast – I Kings 8:2
- It was kept when the sacrifices resumed and work on the Second Temple began – Ezra 3:4
- It was kept by the people after Nehemiah’s revival – Nehemiah 8:13-17
- Its observance in the Millennial Kingdom is seen in Zechariah 14:16-19
- Christ attends this feast in Jerusalem in John 7. He cries out “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink”, likely in conjunction with the aforementioned water ceremony. Where Christ in John 8:12 says, “I am the light of the world”, it may reference the light ceremony.

Truths from the Tabernacle

- We could all more thankful for God’s provision in our lives and praise Him as we look back and see what He has brought us through.
- Some (including myself) believe that Christ was born during this feast. It would make a wonderful picture for Christ to come dwell (John 1:14) with us during the Feast of tabernacles.
- From a prophetic standpoint, this feast points to situation of the Jews in the Millennial Kingdom.