

SPIRITUAL FEAST OF TABERNACLES

By
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The very first instruction from Jesus after He was cleansed and purified for 40 days of fasting in prayer in the desert was: "***Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.***" [Matthew 4:4 and He was actually quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.] These words set forth the scenario for the very plan of God with humans.

God inspired Paul to write in 2 Timothy 3:16 "***All Scripture is God breathed and is useful in teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, SO THAT THE MAN OF GOD (true Christians - - sons of God) MAY BE THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK!***" Romans 8:13-17)

Those scriptures set the stage for a correct understanding the plan of God and for understanding the Feast of Tabernacles and HOW IT SHOULD BE KEPT. How then should the Feast of Tabernacles be kept? Are there specifics set forth in the Bible that we perhaps have overlooked? What are the blessings God promised that we are not now receiving? Let us use the observance of the Passover - - and the incorrect behavior of some - - to properly understand how all the festivals should be kept and that they can be kept incorrectly with dire circumstances and deprive us of our sonship in the family of God.

INCORRECT PASSOVER OBSERVANCE

Many place great importance in observing the Passover - - which is certainly the right thing to do! But, did you know that one can ***keep*** the Passover on ***the right date, at the right time***, using the ***right symbols*** and STILL KEEP IT IN A WRONG MANNER? Let us carefully study 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. Here we find that Paul

received clear instructions from Jesus Christ Himself (vs. 23). Now pay careful attention to verse 27 which states “***Therefore, whoever eats the BREAD and drinks the CUP of the Lord IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER will be GUILTY of SINNING AGAINST THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD.***” Do you grasp what this is saying? Paul was inspired to say that there are some who keep the Passover at the right time, on the right date and with the correct symbols BUT ARE ACTUALLY SINNING AGAINST THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS! You cannot get more serious than that - - to actually SIN AGAINST THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS!

THE CONSEQUENCES

What does God’s word say are the consequences of *sinning against the body and the blood of Jesus*? Verse 30 gives the specific answer: “***That is why MANY among you are WEAK, and SICK, and A NUMBER HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP (died).***” These are words directly from the Word of God which have been given to teach us the will of God and to correct us where we are wrong and in training us in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

But what if we do not heed the instructions God gives in His word? Are there consequences and what are those consequences? 1 Corinthians 11:30 shows that the consequences can be quite horrific. Becoming weak and sickly and dying are rather severe consequences. God even gives the specific reason for these dire consequences in verse 29 which reads “***For anyone who eats and drinks (the Passover symbols) without RECOGNIZING the body of the Lord eats and drinks JUDGMENT on himself!***” Do you grasp what that is saying? Clearly it is saying we will be eating and drinking **JUDGMENT** on ourselves IF WE HAVE NOT FULLY RECOGNIZED AND FULLY ACCEPTED THE BODY OF THE LORD and how that sacrifice applies to us. What exactly does that mean? And how does that apply to observing all of God’s holy days?

Let us first take the Scriptural example we just studied. Psalm 103 sets the stage for us to fully understand what God inspired Paul to expound to us. Psalm 103:2 says “***Praise the Lord, O my soul, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS!***” What are “all His benefits?” Verse 3 sets forth THE TWO FOREMOST BENEFITS that He offers to us which are: 1). “***Who forgives all your sins and 2). Heals all your diseases!***” These are the two fundamental features of what Jesus did for mankind (us personally and individually) - - spilling His blood and sacrificing His body so that we can be reconciled to God and be healed of our sicknesses.

Since God specifically said that some are weak and sickly and others have died because they have *not* discerned the body of the Lord, then should we not determine why or where we have failed in discerning the Lord's body which was beaten for our healing (1 Peter 2:24)? Over the years I have encountered many who request an anointing for their healing but if God delays the answer they run to the doctors to seek what God has not done for us and to see if a human doctor can somehow preserve the human life since they cannot bring themselves to truly trust God to preserve or to heal. I have heard people say "Well, I went to a minister and got anointed but God did not answer so I am *forced* to go to the doctor!" Think about that comment or thought for a moment. Who forces us to turn from our God healer? Where is there any real and *tangible faith* in such an attitude or approach (see James 1:6-8)? How many of us find ourselves at least thinking such? If we feel our lives are at stake or if the doctor assures us our lives are at stake, do we then look for humans to preserve our human lives? Is this not what God was inspiring Paul to explain in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30? We claim we believe God forgives all our sins but can and will we actually believe that He heals all our diseases? It appears that God is saying that many are sick and weak and even dying because they have not PROPERLY DISCERNED THE LORD'S BODY and the purpose for His being beaten so badly (see 1 Peter 2:24 again)! But note that they were keeping the Passover at the right time and date and with the right symbols and yet they were getting weak and sickly and dying. *What a paradox?* Thus, it seems evident we can keep God's festivals at the right time, with the right symbolism but still NOT be pleasing to Him and actually bringing judgment such as weakness, sickness and even death on ourselves because of this lack of faith (see James 1:6-8 again and Exodus 20:5-6).

APPROACHING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Let us now go to the Feast of Tabernacles and see what God would actually want us to do to properly prepare for and keep this most important festival and realize just how important this festival is to God and should be to us. This is important since it seems that many today keep the Feast of Tabernacles as a *vacation* when they can spend money to enjoy the flesh (carnal pursuits). You regularly see advertisements by different groups touting all the physical thrills available at *THEIR* specific site. But how many Feast advertisements do you see advising people about how difficult it is to be accounted worthy to be present when that festival is actually fulfilled on earth once Jesus returns? I attended a feast site with another group a few years back and the first time the purpose and meaning of the Feast was even mentioned was not UNTIL THE THIRD DAY. I was a guest speaker on that third day and I felt compelled to explain the meaning of WHY WE WERE THERE observing that specific festival.

What should be our attitude as we approach and actually enter the festival site - - the site where God is supposed to be? Do we really comprehend that we are **SUPPOSED TO BE COMING DIRECTLY BEFORE THE ALMIGHTY GOD?** Are we not supposed to be **INVOKING HIS VERY PRESENCE** at that festival? Why are we actually there - - merely to spend money on ourselves and have a great time as is customary today? We claim that this is the place **WHERE GOD HAS PLACED HIS NAME!** But what exactly does that mean? Does this mean that God has mysteriously “placed His name there” but that He is off somewhere else and not really that interested in what we are actually doing during the festival? How can we be assured that God would even want to be in our presence? How do we go about getting Him to actually **ENTER THE SANCTUARY** (The “Holy of Holies” or “the Most Holy Place”) during our observance of **HIS FESTIVAL?** It seems that too many merely **ASSUME THAT** God will automatically be present at any or all feast sites merely because a group is having a service and calling it a feast of tabernacles. Is that scenario scriptural? How many grasp that they are supposed to be coming directly before the very throne of God? Have any of you reading this ever heard the speaker at the feast clearly and dynamically point out what it is to come directly before ***The Throne of God?*** **IF NOT - - WHY NOT?**

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The first thing that needs to be determined is **WHETHER OR NOT GOD IS *WILLING* TO BE PRESENT IN THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES WE ARE CONDUCTING AND OR ATTENDING.** We claim that we are *invoking* His presence but **WHY** would He even consider showing up? Is it merely enough to pray asking for His presence? The true follower of Jesus Christ (the true disciple) is supposed to have ***Christ dwelling in us.*** We then are to go to the festivals **WITH CHRIST DWELLING IN US.** But then what? What about **THE FATHER?** Where does He fit into this scenario? It is His festivals that we are observing. Christ is the one who is leading us to the Father. Is not the Father supposed to be present in His own festivals? Can any of us truly observe the festivals correctly **WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE FATHER?** **THEN HOW DO WE PURSUADE THE FATHER TO SHOW UP AT THE FESTIVAL?**

What will it take for the Father to come into our festival? Remember that it is the Father that calls each of us (John 6:44) and turns us over to Christ for safe keeping until He can bring us into the presence of the Father. The Father is sitting on His throne at a location called the “Holy of Holies.” The Father must **PLACE HIS NAME** at the festival. How does He “place His name” there? Can just anyone set a “fest

site” based on which site offers the greatest opportunities for placating the human flesh and its desires and then *expect* God to honor such a placement and make His presence? Can just “anyone” establish a feast site and God the Father will automatically appear there in person simply because it is “called” a feast site? Think about that question for a moment and drink in of its meaning and importance. Since the festivals are supposed to be honoring GOD then are we not supposed to determine HOW GOD WANTS HIS FESTIVALS OBSERVED? Is it not time we consider this?

We have already seen that the Passover can be observed at the right time and place with the right symbols and still be observed wrong! Could this also occur with the Feast of Tabernacles as well as the other festivals and even the weekly Sabbath? Are these to merely be “token” observances where we pause for a brief moment at the beginning of services and ask God to be present and He is then **OBLIGATED** to show up? Don’t you think it is time we stopped and evaluated this point until we KNOW we are **REACHING THE FATHER AND INSPIRING HIM TO WANT TO HONOR THE FESTIVAL WITH HIS PRESENCE?** Is the Father going to jump and present himself before humans merely because they utter a token prayer? Are there specific instructions in the Bible in **APPROACHING THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD?** Do we just walk into the meeting hall and expect God to be there? Let us examine these questions and see if we have been falling short all these years!

DOES GOD EMPLOY SYMBOLISM?

We need to evaluate whether God employs symbolism and, if so, how does this symbolism work and why did God ordain symbolism? Actually, God employs symbolism all through the Bible. The weekly cycle is *symbolic* of the seven thousand year period He has set to bring humans to salvation. The weekly Sabbath itself is *symbolic* of the one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. The Passover is *symbolic* of the sacrifice Jesus made so humans could be salvaged, redeemed and also healed. The wine at the Passover is *symbolic* of the blood of Jesus shed for mankind. The unleavened bread is *symbolic* of the broken body of Jesus. The wave sheaf offering *symbolizes* Jesus being offered up to the Father as that supreme sacrifice and His being accepted by the Father.

The fasting on the Day of Atonement is to *symbolize* a truly humble and contrite heart and attitude. The trumpet blown on the Feast of Trumpets is *symbolic* of the actual return of Jesus to this earth. The “booths” of the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) is *symbolic* of our TEMPORARY dwelling in this flesh. The Last Great Day is *symbolic* of the LAST CHANCE for humans to enter the very family of God.

The foot washing during the Passover service *symbolizes* humility plus it *symbolizes* the humility of Jesus AS HE OFFERED HIS LIFE BLOOD AND HIS BODY FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

Our being baptized by IMMERSION is *symbolic* of our acceptance of the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus and our baptism also *symbolizes* our death, burial and resurrection to Christ our Redeemer.

God also used circumcision as *symbolic* of the true repentance and conversion of the true Christian - - a “circumcision of the heart and soul” (Isaiah 66:2 and Romans 2:28-29)).

Oil is used for anointing purposes. Oil *symbolizes* the Holy Spirit. God shows that oil (pure olive oil) is used for anointing kings, for anointing the sick, for anointing even physical places, etc. We could go through the entire Bible and see literally hundreds of ways God uses symbolism to illustrate a *bigger* and *greater* point or event. God uses all these physical symbols so as to enable humans to grasp His overall plan in a more realistic manner. We should be able to see that God uses symbolism greatly in teaching humans His ways since we are physical and can understand something when physical symbolism is used.

HOW TO APPROACH THE FATHER

Have we even taken the time and made the effort to see how GOD REQUIRED HUMANS TO APPROACH HIM? First we must realize that God is HOLY and He will NOT dwell where there is UNHOLYNESS! The next question we must ask is WHETHER JUST ANY ASSEMBLY HALL OR MEETING PLACE IS AUTOMATICALLY *HOLY* JUST BECAUSE THE FEAST OR SABBATH SERVICES ARE HELD THERE? What would make such a meeting hall HOLY? There is only one thing that can make such a meeting hall HOLY and that is THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD THE FATHER. What does it take to persuade the Father to make His abode with us during the feasts, Sabbaths or in our daily lives?

The symbolism GOD HIMSELF SET FORTH when He established formal worship services give us great insight into what God would recognize today. God did set certain places during Old Testament times where He was to be worshipped. But Jesus explained that the time has come when we humans can worship THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH (see John 4:23-24). But we cannot worship God FROM AFAR - - we must be IN HIS PRESENCE - - UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

OTHERWISE, WE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED (see Matthew 5:23-24 and 6:14-15). But how is this accomplished? The scriptures we just referred to plus Isaiah 66:2 show is clearly what God requires. Does God Himself make certain requirements? Let us see what He says in His word - - the Holy Bible.

Keeping in mind the fact that God constantly uses symbolism, let us review some of the requirements that God Himself laid down BEFORE humans could come into His presence. One of the first scriptures that come to my mind, with reference to approaching the Most Holy Place where God is seated, is Exodus 40:9. Here we find that God required that the tabernacle or tent of meeting and all its furnishings were to be anointed (an anointing sets something or someone apart for holy use!). After studying that scripture we should go to Exodus 30:26-29 and Leviticus 8:10-12 for specific COMMANDS FROM God regarding coming into the PRESENCE OF GOD THE FATHER. In simple terms, everything and everyone must be *set apart for holy use* so God would be willing to make His personal appearance. These are requirements that God has not and never will change!

My sincere question involved whether or not God NO LONGER CARES ABOUT THE WAY, MANNER AND ATTITUDE WE BRING WITH US WHEN WE COME INTO HIS PRESENCE for any kind of service? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

4). The scripture speaks of the priests (ministers) washing their feet and hands before entering the Most Holy Place. {Remember that Jesus instituted the foot washing ceremony BEFORE He set forth the new symbols of His death (the blood and the bread as the new *symbols* of the New Testament Passover.) Washing the hands is symbolic that our activities are CLEAN AND PURE BEFORE GOD BECAUSE WE HAVE REPENTED OF OUR SINS AND ASKED HIM TO CLEAN US UP. The washing is merely symbolic of the condition of our hearts and souls. And the washing of the feet symbolizes that our activities in serving God are clean, pure, humble and pure of heart. This is clearly New Testament doctrine and instruction!

5). Whether we should offer up a prayer like Solomon did as recorded in 1 Kings 8. And, as this text shows in verses 46-53, confess our sins before God asking His forgiveness.

6). Then, should we not do as Solomon did and BLESS THE PEOPLE knowing that God has heard and has come into our presence and is pleased with us and our sincere effort to serve Him in the ways He has set?

7). There are other examples of God's servants recognizing that the people had gone astray and they took the matter before the Holy Place SINCE GOD PLEDGED THAT IF HIS PEOPLE WOULD DO THIS HE WOULD HEAR AND ANSWER AND DELIVER THEM.

Romans 12:1 tells us that PRESENTING OUR BODIES BEFORE HIM AS A LIVING SACRIFICE IS OUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE to God - - a *symbolic* "sacrifice of ourselves - - (see Micah 6:8).

Can any of you show me that we should NOT put these instructions into practice? Certainly we are NOT offering animal sacrifices and sprinkling animal blood over the altar but rather are we not to literally practice Romans 12:1 as our SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE TO GOD

Can anyone show me that we should not humbly prostrate ourselves before God as we begin the first meeting AND CHALLENGE HIM TO FULFILL THE PROMISES HE HAS MADE FOR THOSE WHO DO THIS? If we truly do our part in contrite humility, then we can and should *expect* God to fulfill His promise and dwell in us and pour out the blessings He has promised! We can then *expect* the promises made in John 14:12-14. God is willing - - are we?

Can anyone show me that the New Covenant would forbid our doing this and expecting Him to hear and answer us?

If you have allowed yourself to read to this point you now realize there is something drastically wrong with how God's festivals are being observed.

One man told me that he "thinks" God is NOT going to hold us to the strict instructions found in the Bible. All we need do is read Matthew 7:20-23 to answer this question. Jesus gives the answer very clearly and I will let Jesus answer this man's question in the judgment. Note that Jesus said to those "claiming" to have done many wonderful works in His name. He states clearly that He will proclaim to them "I NEVER KNEW YOU!"

You may be among the many who try to reason around and justify NOT doing what the Bible says. But is the Jesus Christ of the Bible going to accept your excuses and reasoning?

It is strongly suggested that everyone carefully study Ezekiel 33:7-9 .

The buck really does stop with you personally and individually as these (and many other) verses clearly show.

When you attend a holy day or Sabbath, ask yourself whether God is actually there AS HE HAS PROMISED TO BE and if there is no clear tangible evidence of His presence then ask WHY! Why have a religious service if there is no evidence of God's approval by His presence.

Jesus said: "Where two or three are gathered together *in my name*, THERE I AM WITH YOU! (Matthew 18:20). But, as we have seen, He will come to ONLY those who have been sanctified and remain under the sanctifying blood of the Lamb demonstrated by their true humility and surrender to God (Isaiah 66:2 again).

Is there then clear evidence of God's presence where you attend services? What is that evidence? Should you be asking yourself these questions so as to determine if you are in the presence of God (Christ in you) or are you merely attending a "religious service?" Your salvation is literally dependant on the correct answer to this question! And ONLY YOU can answer that question!

Thanks for any input you choose to offer.

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