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THE BIBLICAL FALL FEASTS PART 17

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES – SUKKOT (part 3)

Tonight, at sundown (or 6 p.m.) is Tishri 15 on the Hebrew calendar. This begins the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also called Sukkot, or Feast of Booths, or Feast of Rejoicing. Whereas the first ten days of Tishri is a time of self-examination, repentance, restitution, and alms giving, Tabernacles is a time of happiness and rejoicing. They rejoice because the tabernacle, and later the Temple of Solomon, represented God's presence among them. God "tabernacled" with them, meaning He dwelled among them with His Holy presence in the Temple or Tabernacle.

It is also the last of three feast days (or holy convocations) when all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord God." (Deuteronomy 16:16.) The other two were the Feast of Unleavened Bread (immediately after Passover) and the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).

The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) is an eight-day event. The first day (Tishri 15) is a holy convocation (gathering called by a shofar). It is a high sabbath. No work is allowed. The next seven days they will dwell in booths constructed with limbs of trees as a reminder of their forty wilderness years after they were delivered from 400 years of Egyptian slavery. Burnt offerings, meat offerings (meal, bread) and drink offerings are made. They are to literally feast, eating heartily, these seven days. The last day of that seven-day period is to also be a sabbath. So, for the eight total days of Sukkot, the first and eighth days are sabbaths.

When the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., the Temple sacrifices ended. No animal sacrifices have been made since then. It changed many observances that were given in scripture. With Jerusalem being plundered, the Jews fled to many other countries. The Rabbis and Jewish leaders devised various religious customs and practices over a period of time to cover for the loss of the Temple. Practices of our modern times vary significantly from the Temple (or Tabernacle) days. Codification of the altered customs have helped to maintain the integrity of the Jewish people in the 1,950 years since the destruction of the temple. Today, they are the oldest, longest standing, ethnic/religious group in the world, spanning 4,000 years from Abraham to these days.

The scattering of the Jews after 70 A.D. is commonly called "the diaspora," which simply means "the scattering." The seven biblical feasts (God's feasts) plus the two historical feasts (Hanukkah and Purim) have held them together as they all share that in common.

We shall speak more about "tabernacling" later and its importance to us as Christians.