

The Feast of Tabernacles & God's Plan of Salvation

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields

Abstract:

Learn how the large fall harvest pictures the time God sets His hand to bring all who will listen, to salvation. Why no booths on the 8th day. The biggest factor for a great feast – and an awesome Millennium. Why temporary dwellings (booths)? The most important factor to be restored. Why man was given 6,000 years. Will animals' natures be changed? And more. To be continued.

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Greetings, Bride of Christ, you chosen generation, holy nation of kings and priests of our God (**1 Pet. 2:9**). This is Philip Shields, your brother and servant, with another message showing how God's feasts explain His plan of salvation. Today we'll specifically look at the spiritual meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Fall – **because understanding the holydays of God gives us our sense of purpose, a vision of what lies ahead for us**. Purpose and vision in turn give *meaning* to our lives and make our struggles as Christians all worth it. If we don't understand why we keep God's feasts, we will be missing out on some nuances of understanding God's plan of salvation.

I hope we all understand the Feast of Tabernacles for us today should have a strong spiritual focus. We go to the Feast to worship God, and to celebrate the Millennial reign of King Jesus. Scripture also teaches us that the Feast is a time for rejoicing, family time together, and learning to fear God as we worship Him. Some make the Feast a vacation, a holiday – and that clearly is not its purpose. Having said that, neither is it a time for just spiritual pursuits. As you see and do interesting things around your feast site, be sure to visit what should be **the #1 Feast attraction: Heavenly Mt. Zion**. We visit there on our knees and in daily prayer and meditation.

Up until now we have seen how there were feasts in the spring and early summer – Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, the Wavesheaf, and the Feast of Pentecost. These holydays pictured those being called first, to be part of the first resurrection, called "the better resurrection". *Then several months go by before we have another feast. There seems to be a lull.*

Then we come to the Autumn – and bam, bam, bam – we have the last 4 holydays, and 4 feasts – in close order, in rapid succession: the Feast of Trumpets, The Feast/Fast of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and then what the Bible simply calls "the 8th day", the holyday after the Feast of Tabernacles, which many call "The Last Great Day. All of these 4 holydays fall within one month, the 7th month, of God's calendar, which usually falls in our late September and first half of October.

On my website www.lightontherock.com are full explanations and sermons about the feasts of Trumpets and Atonement. I cover material in those that often are left out, as well as new angles, so you may wish to hear those as well, if you haven't already. Today, be turning to Leviticus 23.

Today, let's continue the thread of how the holydays of God explain the sequence of spiritual harvests in God's plan of salvation, until *all of mankind* who have ever lived, and who are willing to repent and accept Jesus as king and Savior in their first and one good opportunity to do so, *will* be converted and their names entered into the book of Life. If they refuse, they will die for all eternity.

I hope this sermon will be in the category Jesus says a “good scribe” would present: “out of his treasure, both new and old” (**Matthew 13:52**). We'll retrace some well worn paths as well as look at some newer, less mentioned, concepts.

Are God's Feasts to be Observed by Christians today?

Remember that Lev 23 lists all the feasts, including the weekly 7th day sabbath – and **in verse 2, the Almighty calls these feasts HIS feasts**, not the feasts of Israel, and in fact God says “these are MY feasts”. So even the weekly 7th day sabbath is a feast of God.

There is the common understanding by most professing Christians that these feasts were only for Israel and were done away with by the Cross for us New Covenant Christians. That's not correct.

Was it just for Israel? In the Old Testament you find that **even the strangers and aliens living among Israel were commanded to keep the laws** of Israel – for example all through Lev. 17; Lev. 18:28; as well as the sabbath itself – **Ex. 20:10**. Even visitors and aliens were commanded to fast on Atonement, for example – **Lev. 16:29**. *Even strangers, aliens, were to keep the feast (Deut 16:14)*. However, with the feast of Tabernacles, however, only the native Israelites had to dwell in booths (**Lev. 23:42**). Otherwise, aliens and strangers living in Israel were commanded in **Num. 15:29-30** to keep all the laws the Israelites had to keep, with very few exceptions. Also **Ex. 12:49** – one law for Israelites and foreigners. Yes, there were a few exceptions, but not the holydays.

In the New Testament, we find Jesus keeping the feasts. He obviously kept the Passover and He is described keeping the Feast of Tabernacles (e.g. **John 7:2,10**); **The apostles kept the feasts after Jesus' resurrection. They surely would not have, if they believed they were done away.** They were gathered together and received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (**Acts 2**) as a result. The Corinthians obviously were *keeping* the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread (**1 Cor. 5 and 11**), and there are references to Atonement (“the fast” – **Acts 27:9**) and other holydays. This would not be the case if the holydays were all done away with. Besides, as we're seeing as we keep the holydays, they explain God's sequence of events in His plan of salvation. Without the holydays, we would soon lose correct understanding of what God's plan of salvation is.

So whatever some verses seem to say that some misunderstand to mean we don't have to keep the feasts, we have to remember the very clear verses that teach us the early disciples and apostles even *after* Christ's death on the cross *did* keep the holydays. Someday I'll go into much more depth into why we keep the 7th day as sabbath, and why we keep the holydays, even in the New Covenant. Turn to **Leviticus 23:33**, as we continue.

We also know that the feasts will be kept in the millennium (**Zechariah 14:16-19**). Why, if they were done away with? In fact, if they don't keep the feast of Tabernacles after Christ returns and is reigning on the earth, it says in Zech 14 that they won't receive any rain until they do.

Updating the Sequence of Events up to the beginning of the Millennium on earth

In the last couple sermons, on Trumpets and Atonement, we saw how prior to the return of Jesus Christ, this world will be going through the time of trouble worse than anything it has ever seen.

Christ returns just in time to keep man from annihilating all human and physical life off the planet. God has to let us get to that point, so there's no question, that after trying every possible form of government, man just about annihilates himself. Unless He returns, no flesh will be saved alive (**Matt. 24:22**). The book of Revelation and many of the old Testament scriptures depict very clearly a world that has been absolutely ruined, both by acts of war and by man's violence – as well as punishing acts of God: pestilence, massive earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, intense solar flares, meteorite hits, perhaps near misses from asteroids, plagues of all sorts – all designed to bring mankind to his knees in repentance.

I believe all this is also designed to completely reshape the face of the earth – and at first it will result in towering tsunamis, islands disappearing and appearing, mountains collapsing and deep valleys being raised. I'll explain in the next sermon *why* this will be necessary. Even the earth's axis or orbit may change slightly—with dramatic effects. You can read **“the earth shall move out of her place”** in **Isaiah 13:13**. That will have *awful* effects in the short run, but with our merciful God, I believe He's setting things back to eventually even out weather and climate on the planet.

Parts of the earth could be in a nuclear winter. The sun and moon will seem very dark, due to all the pollutants in the air from war and natural catastrophes (**Matt. 24:29; Rev. 8:12**).

We reviewed last time how a **massive army of 200 million** will *fight* King Jesus and they will have to be killed, before peace can be restored (**Rev. 9:13-19; 18:12-14; Rev. 19:17-21; Zech 14:12-15**)

The world and “cities” we inherit will be a world that has to be rebuilt, healed and repaired. I think it will take a long time. I also think God will have to do some emergency miracles to restore the planet to at least safe, livable conditions, even if He is thinking about letting people rebuild over time.

When we land on the Mt. of Olives, one of our **first order of business will be to free the captive Israelites, including Americans, Britons, Australians and Canadians**. I covered this in detail in the sermon titled “The Coming Exodus”. ***The Millennium is about the surviving people of the world – not primarily about us.***

So there will be a lot of work – but over time, this earth will be healed, and will eventually be turned into a planet-wide Garden of Eden of peace and harmony and beauty. God's spirit will be poured out and the world will become a true UTOPIA *because* of everyone eventually being converted. I do not feel the world will be “fixed” and restored in a short time. There is a reason for having 1,000 years in this time.

So what does this have to do with the Feast of Tabernacles? Everything! Let's look at it.

Review of the harvest – physical and spiritual—revealing God's Plan

The Holydays and feasts depict God's plan of salvation – centered around the harvests of Israel. If my brief review baffles some of you, go back and hear the full explanations given, available on the website, for each actual holyday.

The harvests in Israel pictured the sequence of God's spiritual harvest: the sequence of how and when He will save everyone who is willing. The harvests are like a secret code that is plain to see when we have it decoded, which is what God does for His people. God has to first call us, then

open our eyes to see spiritual things or else we just won't see them (**1 Cor. 2:9-12**). I've explained before that **God is not losing a war of souls against Satan**. It's just that God is not *yet* trying to save every single human being in this life. And for that matter, *most* humans who ever lived never have even heard the name "Jesus", the only name by which they can be saved. That simply would not be fair to judge someone who never even had *one fair* chance to be called, converted and come to know Jesus.

God's plan of salvation starts with the slain Lamb at **Passover** – and the chance to be forgiven and have a new start. That was planned, we're told, from before the foundation of the world. The Passover could not be held unless there was firstfruit barley to be offered a few days later on wavesheaf Sunday. In the same way, the actual Passover of Christ could not happen until Christ was fully ready and mature to be "harvested" and presented both as the Lamb, and then a few days later, as the firstfruit wavesheaf.

The 7 Days of Unleavened Bread illustrate that once we accept Jesus, our lives must change and we live a new way of life now. Eating manna pictures the fact Jesus has now come into our lives, since HE is the Manna from heaven, the unleavened, sinless life. Jesus sees us as forgiven, even unleavened, as – once we're under His grace – He imputes His righteousness to us and we are "a new lump" (See **1 Cor. 5:7**).

Next: **Wavesheaf Sunday, during the days of Unleavened Bread**, when the firstfruit of the barley is offered to God to consecrate the rest of the harvest. That is the resurrected Jesus rising to heaven on Sunday to be presented and accepted by our Almighty Holy Father, who is also Jesus' God and Father (**2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:17**). This feast was called the feast of firstfruits (**Lev. 23:10-11**).

That's followed by the **firstfruits of the wheat harvest**, which starts right at the tail end of the barley harvest. This is **PENTECOST**, also called ***the Feast of Weeks***. It is also a feast of firstfruits, but of the wheat, which follows the barley. The barley = Christ, and the firstfruits of wheat = the church, those select FEW being chosen at this time. The firstfruits of the wheat harvest pictures the church, the Bride of Christ. (**James 1:18**). The firstfruits include also the 144,000 apparently (**Rev. 14:4**). **Ex. 34:22**. God ***gave His law and His Holy Spirit on Pentecost***. This was also **when He married Israel and in my view, very likely to marry the Church** prior to coming finally as the ruling King later. My prior sermons on Pentecost and Trumpets explain that.

Ex 34:22 "And you shall observe the ***Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest***, [Pentecost] and the Feast of Ingathering [Feast of Tabernacles] at the year's end

After Pentecost, we have a break of holydays for several months, finally followed by the Feast of Trumpets in the Fall, heralding the return of Jesus Christ on the Mt. of Olives with his angelic hosts and His Bride, the church, whom He has just married in heaven. But before Jesus returns, there is a time of worse trouble than the world has *ever* seen. Everyone is forced to worship the Beast power and its image and its number 666. Those who don't – the saints - are persecuted, tortured and beheaded. Great wars, plagues and God-sent catastrophes also sweep the earth, killing most of humanity. It is in this setting, that Father in heaven sends King Jesus to put a stop to this madness and to set up a new world, ruled by kingdom of God. The world will lie in mostly a pile of ruined rubble when the King returns.

Nine days after Trumpets, on the 10th of Tishri, we have the Day of Atonement, when the sins of the world are piled on Satan's head and he is cast out, pictured by Michael casting him bound into

the bottomless pit (**Rev. 20:1-3**). Because of that, I believe Atonement in the year Jesus returns will likely be a *Jubilee* year, proclaiming liberty in the land. Meanwhile, Jesus, pictured by the goat of atonement whose innocent blood is spilled for the nation, offers atonement for all sins ever committed, for those who repent and accept Him as Savior and Lord. Satan gets the blame, Jesus does the atoning. Satan is taken away, to have no influence in the earth, for 1,000 years. Satan has touched, defiled and ruined everything he has touched. He has deceived the whole world, and he will be bound "so that he should deceive the nations no more, for 1000 years" (**Rev. 20:1-3**). Even among us elect, I doubt we ever even come *close* to knowing how completely Satan has polluted, ruined and confused every single facet of this world's ways. God will have to put him away and start over – until all things are restored.

Now the celebrations can begin. That Old Serpent, the Devil, that tyrant and personification of evil, has been cast out, and the world can be harvested now for conversion! Now we're ready for the **exciting Feast of Tabernacles**.

In this 7th month of God's calendar – our Autumn -- during the Feast of Tabernacles, came the huge harvest of fruits, vegetables, grapes, the wine and any other crops – and it was called also the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 34:22). A feast when the bounty of the land was gathered in and there were great celebrations.

In the same way, this is the time of the big spiritual harvest of souls – when God sets His hand to convert the whole world, after Satan has been removed. ***The Millennium, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles, is when the whole world receives God's calling to come to Jesus and repent, to walk in righteousness, to receive the grace of God is now offered to all who remain alive on the earth – and for 1,000 years.***

So scripture is clear that there is a sequence to when and how God works converts people. Let me say it again: He is not losing a battle to Satan, to save mankind. God has never lost and is not losing now. When God decides to call and work with people, the vast majority will end up in salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:21-27

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 **But each one in his own order**: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

So let's read it again: Lev. 23:39 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, **when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days**; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest". We also read earlier in **Exodus 34:22** how this feast is called "**the feast of Ingathering**". It's the massive fall harvest.

Overview of the Feast of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:33-44

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: '***The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the***

LORD. 35 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it.

v.36 – discusses offerings and the holyday on the 8th day.

v.37 –calls these the feasts of the Lord and holy convocations... let's pick up in verse 39

39'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, **when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.** 40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 **You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations.** You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 **You shall dwell in booths for seven days.** All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."
44 So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD".

I want to focus on several things: **It starts on the 15th day**, a full moon in the 7th month, as the 15th day would have a full moon in the sky, since the months started with a new moon or no moon on the 1st day. **On the fifteenth is a holy convocation.** And note this is **a feast and a holy convocation "to the Lord"** – in verses 34 and 37.

In verse 39 we read this Feast is to be kept **"when you have gathered in the fruit of the land"** in the Autumn. This represents the BIG harvest of the land, of course, but the symbolism points to the great harvests of PEOPLE who will be called and saved at that time.

Another thing noteworthy is they were to **dwell in booths for seven days, it plainly says.**

- **"Booths" or sukkah:** God's people usually gather together at larger group sites around the world, meeting in temporary dwellings, or "booths". A booth in Hebrew is *Sukkoth*. Most of us rent a motel room or a temporary home or condo during this Feast. Scripture says we should do *that*, for 7 days, **not 8 days (Lev. 23:42)**, and then come together again for a holy convocation on the 8th day, which is a separate holyday. **We dwell in booths or temporary abodes to remember when God brought Israel out of Egypt . We too, are being called out of spiritual Egypt and sin and we too are in a temporary spiritual wilderness** prior to receiving our real, spiritual promised land. We also dwell to booths to remember **our bodies are only temporary** "tents" tents if you will, prior to receiving a permanent, immortal body made in the heavens. The booths – or motels – picture that this life, **every aspect of it**, is temporary.

2 Corinthians 5:1-5

"For we know that if **our earthly house, this tent** [NOT a huge permanent building], is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, **earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,** 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 **For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.** 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee."

2 Peter 1:12-14 “Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent [i.e., body], to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly **I must put off my tent** [i.e., die], just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.”

So we dwell in temporary abodes to remember them coming out of Egypt but to also remember this life we now live is not “where it’s at”. This life is not the big deal, though we all seem to forget that. I do too, from time to time; I admit that and repent of that. The big deal is the life to come, as spirit immortal beings, when all corruption puts on incorruption. **There’s a saying: “you only live once” – but that’s a lie.** We shall all have a 2nd life – either to praise or condemnation. Those who refuse God’s way, will suffer a 2nd death, which I will cover in a future sermon soon.

The temporary abodes, or booths, also picture that the Millennium is only a temporary condition. Just for 1,000 years. After the Millennium comes the new heavens and new earth and it’s after the Millennium that God the Father returns with heavenly Jerusalem. At that time, everything is indestructible and permanent. Hence God’s word says – and this part is *not* observed by most – we are to dwell in booths for *seven* days, not eight.

By the 8th day, which symbolically pictures the time after the Millennium, and after the Feast of Tabernacles therefore, there’s nothing temporary. Hence no booths or temporary abodes on the 8th day. Read it for yourself. The Feast of Tabernacles is for 7 days. Dwelling in *booths* was to be for 7 days only, not 8, as practiced by just about everyone today.

Now do you know why we are not to dwell in booths on the 8th day? Because if we do, we miss the MEANING: that by the 8th day, which many call the “last great day”, there is nothing temporary anymore. We should be preaching this truth. By the end of a certain period of time after the millennium, we are all either immortal spirit beings – or dead, burned by the Lake of Fire, if we *don’t* accept Jesus Christ and instead, choose to continue a life of sin. Even the heavens and earth will be brand new – and every trace of the past temporary ones will be dissolved. I’ll talk more about this in the sermon I give for the 8th day. Be sure to hear it. It’s an exciting topic.

Deuteronomy 16:13-15 everyone – even kids, servants and strangers were to be there “You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, **when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress.** [note the tie-in to harvests] 14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, ***you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant*** and the Levite, ***the stranger*** and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. 15 **Seven** days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your ***God in the place which the LORD chooses***, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.”

Again note that in verse 13, it is when you have taken in the huge harvest in the fall.

v. 14 – **everyone** should be there, not just the males, though the males *absolutely* had to be there.

v. 15 – we meet in **pre-designated areas** today; though in Bible days it was in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 31:10-13 The 7 year rehearsal of the law

“And Moses commanded them, saying: “**At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before**

all Israel in their hearing. 12 Gather the people together, **men and women and little ones, and the stranger** who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, 13 and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

So here we read that God's entire *Torah* was to be read every 7 years. In **Nehemiah 8:16-18**, after the returning captives from Babylon got re-established in Jerusalem, that's exactly what they did. They made booths and for 7 days read from the law. So they apparently met on each day in that example. However, the Bible requires a holy convocation only on the 1st day and the 8th day, which is a separate feast. I see no problem with having one or two completely "free" days during the Feast for people to truly celebrate, fellowship and be with family. Most groups today meet daily in the mornings or may have 1 free day during the feast.

Nehemiah 8:16-18 church services

"Then the people went out and brought them and **made themselves booths**, *each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God*, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. 17 So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. 18 Also **day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days;** and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner."

Zechariah 14:16-19 The feast will be kept also during the Millennium

We read the first 13 verses in the sermons on the Feast of Trumpets, so start in verse 14:

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 **And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.** 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."

So we can see the verses in the Bible which refer to the Feast of Tabernacles clearly being kept, both in the old dispensation and in the new world, after King Jesus returns.

But what kind of planet earth will King Jesus inherit? * This world will be in complete chaos. The earth will need to be rebuilt by King Jesus, but He's seen this before. He's the SAME One who BUILT, CREATED AND ESTABLISHED this planet in the first place in Genesis 1 and 2. He is returning to a planet that once again will be *tohuw waabohu*, without form and void (Jer. 4:19-31, see v.23) just like Gen. 1:1-2. And once again He will restore this planet to what it should be.**

John 1:1-3 makes it clear that the Word, Jesus Christ, is God, was God, and always will be God *with* God His Father, and Jesus the Word was the one who created all things and said, "Let there be Light". Jesus is uncreated God who has always co-existed with His God, the One we know as God

the Father. Don't let yourself be susceptible to any variation of that. More and more want to downgrade the honor due King Jesus, by somehow making Him either an exalted arch-angel, or somehow less of a Being than being GOD Himself, in His own right. What a sin that is! Wake up to see it happening! Neither is it right to refer to Jesus as "a god". There is ONE God, and both God the Father and Jesus are fully part of that One God. So Jesus is "Immanuel" – "GOD with us". Jesus is God, not just "a" god.

But when Jesus first returns, this planet will be a *mess*! Remember that **Matthew 24, Rev. 5-6**, and so many other verses talk about a time of Great Tribulation, when our nations will be destroyed by the coming Beast power and our peoples taken captive. Many of the saints will also be persecuted, tortured and martyred by this 666 Beast power and the False Prophet in the last days. Then when we add to that, the Day of the Lord, when the day of God's wrath begins....when God begins to spank everyone on this earth for their evils, there won't be much left of this planet. Of course we have *already* wrecked much of this planet, long before God sends His earthquakes, 100 lb hailstones and meteorite hits on the earth and more.

Isaiah 13:8-13

8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.

9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

11 **"I will punish the world for its evil,** And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 **I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold,** A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13 **Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place,** In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger."

A Time of Restoration of all Things; What is MOST important to be Restored?

By the time we hand the world back to Him, humanity will have totally wrecked it. Add to that the destruction from God's attack on the wicked, and we see we must have a time of restoration and even re-creation.

Acts 3:17-22

"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 **Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,** 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

So remember that God wants an advance group, the elect, to be prepared and ready to be the Bride, to help Jesus restore all things. ***That process begins with our repentance*** and acceptance of the blood of the Lamb in our stead. God's elect have to have repented first – representing Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, and grown by God's spirit – Pentecost - ***and the selection of the***

firstfruits must be completed first before God will send back King Jesus to reconstruct this planet, restore it over time to the condition it was after Genesis 1. By the time King Jesus is done, once again He will be able to say that He looked over all He had made, and “behold it was VERY good”.

So a *massive rebuilding* project will have to be taking place during the Millennium.

Let's read a little bit about it, but I need to make a very important point: Yes, the earth will have to be restored, yes, the cities rebuilt. But the most important of all that will have to be restored is the correct worship of the one true God– and with that, the conversion eventually of every single living human being. Conversion and worship of the true God is what will make the Millennium a UTOPIA, a dream come true. And without this being restored first, all the rebuilding will end up in chaos anyway.

We've rebuilt destroyed cities in the past, just to have another wave of invaders destroy it. We even see people who live in cities not appreciate what they have and so they pollute, destroy, deface their cities. So this is very important: the reason that this rebuilding project “sticks”, and just gets better and better, is that people themselves will change. All around the world, people will – over time – come to submit to Jesus, worship Him, and be converted. Once we have everyone converted, we will treat this planet with respect, as we submit to the standards King Jesus will lay down.

WHY 6,000 YEARS FOR MAN?

Remember God created a beautiful garden in Eden, and then He made man and placed man (Adam) in the garden to maintain it, to keep it. God gave Adam a job before He gave him a wife. God intends us to have respect for the land, for nature, for our skies and waters. As we learn to submit to Him, the earth can take shape and over time the whole earth will resemble the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were in God's presence, acceptable to God. Once they rejected God's way, mankind – since we're all descendants of Adam and Eve – are ‘*outside* the garden’. That relationship has to be restored! God has to, in effect, bring man back into the garden.

God gave man – and man's number is 6 – 6,000 years (a day is as a thousand years with God) to try every means of living apart from God, to show that no matter what WE do, if it is without God's anointing and if it's outside of God's way – it's bound to fail. After 6,000 years, man can't say to God, “but if you'd only given us a little more time, we would have figured it out”. No, God will be able to say, I gave you all the time you needed and in fact, if I hadn't sent King Jesus back, you would have annihilated all life from this planet!”. So mankind will have to acknowledge that we blew it and need God. If God had given man just 500 years, or 2,000 years, the end result would not have yet happened: i.e., an end result where no life would be saved alive unless Christ intervened.

Mankind coming back into the Garden, I speak in symbolism here, can happen only after the returning captives and the remaining humans repent deeply of their sins, loathe themselves, and come to worship the king. God even is the one who leads all of us to repentance.

Ezekiel 36:22-36

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, **O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.** 23 ***And I will sanctify My great name,*** which has been profaned

among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. **29** I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. **30** And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. **31 *Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.*** **32** Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"

33 Thus says the Lord GOD: "**On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.** **34** The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. **35 So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'** **36 *Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it.***"

Because of a planet full of repentant people, converted people, we will be able to have a planet of peace, of prosperity. This should be the focus we place on our thinking about the 1,000 year reign. It is a time when the whole world is harvested to God and His righteousness. The knowledge of the LORD will cover the whole earth as the waters cover the seas (Isaiah 11:9).

It is the time when God not only saves and works with Israel, but with the whole world. It's the time for the Gentiles too. Yes, they also will be called, and will worship the one true God.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, a total of 70 bulls were sacrificed. Fourteen on the first day, then 13, then 12, and so on. Add them up and you have 70 total. **Seventy was understood to be the number of Gentile families or nations** and it was understood to stand for the time when *they* are given the light of God's truth.

ANIMAL NATURES CHANGED TOO

Even the nature of animals will change. I believe it is very possible that after the sin in the original garden, that animal natures also changed. That doesn't have to be doctrine, but it is just an opinion. In Isaiah 11:

Isaiah 11:6-9

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,

The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

All this is possible only in a world where *people* are converted and even animals have their natures changed. Right now, I don't care how much people change, if a little child tried to lead a lion and a bear around, he or she would be killed and eaten. So apparently even animals' natures will be changed. If you want more scriptures that indicate that: **Hos. 2:18 where God makes a new agreement, a new covenant (not a spiritual one, of course) even with the animals; Ezek. 34:25.**

One more possible insight I'd like to share: *the change of animal natures could also be an allegory and symbolism of when the whole world will be converted and have access to God's Holy Spirit.* The Jews referred to Gentiles sometimes as beasts, even dogs (**Phil. 3:2**). Even Jesus Himself once said "it is not fit to give the children's food to dogs" (**Matt. 15:26**). So when it speaks of animals' natures being changed, it could also be a symbol of when even *Gentiles* will be called by God's name and be converted (**Acts 15:17**). The whole world will eventually become ONE with Christ and the Bride. That will be fully possible once Satan is removed from the scene.

I need to also say again though: that PHYSICAL world we just read about, is a world ruled by God's kingdom, but is not "the kingdom of God". When we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we must remember we are seeking a *spiritual nation*, a spirit kingdom, where flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (**1 Cor. 15:50-52**).

WHAT WILL MAKE THE MILLENNIUM SUCH A GREAT TIME; WHAT MAKES FOR A GREAT FEAST OF TABERNACLES

What I learned in Guyana in 1984

In 1984 my wife and I had a very unique and special feast of Tabernacles – and I'm telling this story because it bears powerfully on the Millennium.

We had been asked to go to Guyana, in South America, to speak to the brethren there. It was so poor, that the brethren usually had no food or money for food, during the "lunch" hour between morning and afternoon services. The church outing was on an overcrowded barge chugging down a brown river. This was a poor group. There were no big tourist sites to see while you were "in the area". There were no destination restaurants, pubs, or even fast food places you could hang out at. There were no great shopping districts, no malls, no arcades, no seaside walks or Jacuzzis in your room. The water out of the tap was brown. You couldn't safely drink the local water, or use local ice cubes. There were warnings about malaria. There were cockroaches – the huge palmetto kind – here and there on the walls from time to time.

And yet – are you ready for this – **Guyana 1984** ranks as one of my best feasts ever. You know why?

It was because of the deep spiritual mindset of the PEOPLE of God we met there. They spoke non-stop of the things which filled their heart: the things of God. The sermon. Their recent Bible

study. Most conversations was spiritual. There was *never* once a discussion about which site to go see next, which restaurant to hang out at, nothing like that. Just *spiritual* meat. Spiritual clothing.

Near the end of the feast, I remember telling them I had come as a pastor ready to teach them, but was leaving as a student who had been taught a great deal *by* them, by their lives, by their conversations. They had offered me acceptance among them. A sense of oneness. A feeling of family and fellowship. A people who didn't seem to be on any agenda, except to mingle, fellowship and rejoice in their God and His family.

What makes for a great feast site and a great feast year? Not the quality of motels or hotels, or the meals. **It's the people** and how they interact during the feast. What their focus is on, what their mind is on, what their heart is on. I think that's even more important than the quality of the sermons. If the brethren are converted, you'll have the equivalent of dozens of great sermons in our spiritual conversations.

Guyana 1984 pictured PART of what the Feast pictures: the most important part. New people devoted to God, new creations all around the world. Eventually the whole world, and the Gentiles, will be holy to God. That's what the Feast of Tabernacles is really all about.

At that time, you will have brethren from all nations mingling happily with brethren from nations they used to hate. The Jew and the Arab. The white and the black. Those in Belfast, Ireland who once hated one another will come to love another. Those from the inner city ghettos will be converted. Chinese and Filipinos will feast happily with Kenyans and Argentineans.

How and why? Because the greatest of all restorations will be in the human spirit, now given another component, the Spirit of God. This is what the Feast – and the Millennium-- is about: when the whole world will be one with God and one with each other. When the whole world is converted and changed. When peace, love and joy reigns supreme everywhere – because God has changed the natures of all mankind everywhere. That's what the Feast is really about.

When our forefathers were in the Garden of Eden with God, that was a type of what it should be like and once again *will* be like all around the world. They walked with God every day in the cool of the evening – until they decided to listen to the Adversary. SIN entered their lives, their natures were changed, and all their children are born with that nature too. "In sin did my mother conceive me", David says in Ps. 51.

Something devoted to God makes it holy – Lev 27. This whole 1000 years will be devoted to God. Our FEASTS should be devoted to God too. It's SO easy to emphasize the physical at the Feast and forget the real reason we are there. Of course we also take up a holyday offering at the Feast, one of the three times a year that a holyday offering is specifically required by God (**Deut. 16:16-17**).

OUR entire feast of Tabernacles should ALSO be a time completely devoted to God and the things HE says to do at the Feast. It is not a time for self-centeredness. It is a time to focus on God. It is a time to focus on FAMILY, relationships, Bible study, praying, getting ample sleep – and avoiding wild partying late into the night. So let's devote our time to God. It's the time for God's spiritual family to be getting along just great. We are all one body – at least we're supposed to be. Read Romans 12:5 some time. We are part of one another, and all of us part of the Body of Jesus.

Let's move on:

Amos 9:11-15

"On that day I will raise up **The Tabernacle of David**, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; [be SURE to hear my sermons recently about The Tabernacle of David! It's exciting stuff!] 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and **all the Gentiles** who are called by My name, "says the LORD who does this thing.

13 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "**when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. 14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them**; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. 15 I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, "says the LORD your God."

So this WHY the world to come is going to be a place where there is no more war. How can you go fight and kill your brother and sister? When we are all in fact brothers and sisters, regardless of race, ethnic group or tribe or background – how *could* there be war? This is what is meant by turning swords into plowshares. Tanks will be scrapped and used for tractors.

This will be a wonderful time for Gentiles as well as Israelites, for we all shall become children of Abraham, children of faith. All of us will be believers and worshippers of the Almighty. The veil that covers people's understanding will be removed.

Isaiah 2:1-4 (also Amos 4:3-4)

The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains [governments], and shall be exalted above the hills; **And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.** "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; **They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore"**

How many hundreds of people, men, women and children, have been terrorized and horrified, killed and maimed, by war? That will all become a thing of the past. God hasten that day. Man's history is really a story of decisive battles and wars – one after the other. It's about man killing fellow man. A time is coming, when the great Naval Academies, the West Points of the world, and so on – will never again have another student come learn the Art of War.

I'll continue this theme of the Millennial World, in the next sermon, which we'll title, "What the Millennial World could be Like". But get this point, the central meaning of the feast of Tabernacles is:

- to remember this life is temporary and we look forward to the eternal kingdom of God.

- It's also the time of the Great harvest of humanity, when the world will be converted. This is pictured by the great feast of ingathering, when God converts the world. *We'll see much more about this in the next sermon.*
- There will be **Righteous government**: **The Millennium is ruled by the kingdom of God's** spirit born, spirit-being sons and daughters. The Millennium is about those who are still flesh and blood on the earth. It's their time to come to God, be converted, and learn of His ways – taught by members of the kingdom of God, hopefully you and me. We'll be getting 1,000 years experience before the great resurrections at the end of the thousand years.

Isaiah 11:1-5 A prophecy of the righteous rule of King Jesus, the Branch of Jesse

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

3 His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.”

Let's conclude right there for this sermon, and in the next one, we will continue the theme of what the World Tomorrow *could* be like. I'll use scripture, but I'll also speculate a little bit. I hope you listen to it.

Will the Millennium be a huge step BACK in technology – and we do away with cars, computers, cell phones, jet planes? Will we go back to the horse and buggy? Or will it be a time when man's mind – now converted – will be able to discover and use in a godly way some unprecedented new inventions yet to be dreamed up? Hmm.... I hope you'll listen in. The answer may surprise you.

We'll also get into the bit about Satan being released at the end of the Millennium. Why does God do that? How could so many turn to Satan after almost 1,000 years of God's perfect rule? What could possibly attract them?

So be sure to not miss the next message. And please pass the word about this website and its messages to others, if this website is making you think, or if it's spiritually feeding you. Feel free to correspond with me, if you wish. I always appreciate any feedback, encouragement or even questions. Until next time – your brother Philip Shields.

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