

The Feast of Tabernacles

When Jesus is King

Read through this lesson, including the passages of quoted Scripture. The highlighted referenced scriptures support the text - and you can increase your understanding and prove this material for yourself by taking the time to study these scriptures in your own Bible.

Every year in the autumn (or fall), God's people travel somewhere to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and for most of us, it's an exciting time - especially if we are flying to a different country. But why do we do it? Well, it's because God tells us to! Most people today don't keep the Holy Days because they think they are Jewish holidays but God tells us that these are *His* Days. We read about this in the first two verses of Leviticus 23, one of the main chapters in the Bible that lists all of the Holy Days:

The Lord said to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are MY appointed feasts" (Leviticus 23:1-2, English Standard Version, emphasis added).

So these aren't Jewish Feasts, or even *our* Feasts! These are *God's* Feasts and He instructs us to keep them, so that's exactly what we do. We keep the Holy Days as God commanded (see Leviticus 23; Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16) and as Christ and the first Christians did (see, for example Luke 22:7-13; Acts 20:16, Acts 27:9, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). God wants us to keep His Feasts because they teach us about His wonderful plan for mankind and the things that have to happen before we can become part of His "Family"¹ and live forever in His Kingdom.

The seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles are very special because they show us what the world will be like during the Millennium - the time when Jesus Christ sets up God's Kingdom on this earth and rules for 1,000 years. Let's look at some scriptures that show us what this world will be like at that time.

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3, ESV).

So when Jesus is King, many people will *want* to learn about God's Way of Life and obey His teachings! This means that many people will be living the same way of life that

¹ The Bible reveals that God is creating a "family" and that His Plan is to make us part of that family. You can find more information about this in the "The Holy Days and God's Plan" lesson in this series.

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we do now! In time, *everyone* in the world will learn to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days. And *everyone* will learn to obey God's Ten Commandments, which teach us the right way to live.

When Everyone Obeys God

What a difference it will make when everyone obeys God and keeps the Ten Commandments! Can you imagine what it will be like to live in a world where people always get along, where marriages don't end in divorce, and children grow up in stable families? Where people are always kind and considerate to each other, where no one swears or uses bad language, where there is no yelling, fighting and arguing? A world where you are never worried that someone might break into your house and steal your things - or mug you and steal your handbag, wallet or mobile phone?

The Bible shows us that this is what the world will be like when Jesus is King. It will be a world without violence - a world without muggings, murders, rapes or terrorist attacks. Nations will no longer need to train soldiers or produce weapons of warfare because there will be no war! Jesus will settle all arguments that arise between nations so that peace is maintained. People will live in safety, turning their weapons into gardening tools!

He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:4, ESV; see also Micah 4:1-3).

Everyone will live in peace among his own vineyards and fig trees, and no one will make him afraid. The LORD Almighty has promised this (Micah 4:4, *Good News Bible*).

Even the nature of animals will be different in the Millennium. Wild animals will be so tame that it will be safe for children to play with them!

Then wolves will live in peace with lambs, and leopards will lie down to rest with goats. Calves, lions and young bulls will eat together, and a little child will lead them. Cows and bears will eat together in peace. Their young will lie down to rest together. Lions will eat hay as oxen do. A baby will be able to play near a cobra's hole, and a child will be able to put his hand into the nest of a poisonous snake. They will not hurt or destroy each other on all my holy mountain, because the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the sea is full of water (Isaiah 11:6-9, *The Youth Bible, New Century Version*).

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Can you imagine living in a world like this? It doesn't seem possible, does it? Yet this is what the Bible says it will be like when God's Kingdom is on this earth! But there's more.

Peace, Happiness and Good Health for All

When Jesus is King, people will be healed of their illnesses and disabilities. Blind people will be able to see, deaf people will hear, and people who are crippled will leap around like deer! Rain will fall in due season - even in the sun-scorched desert areas of this world - and crops will be plentiful. No one will ever die of famine again and people will always have enough to eat (Isaiah 35:5-7). The Bible also tells us that:

A road will be there; this highway will be called "The Road to Being Holy." Evil people will not be allowed to walk on that road; only good people will walk on it. No fools will go on it. No lions will be there, nor will dangerous animals will be on that road. They will not be found there. That road will be for the people God saves; the people the Lord has freed will return there. They will enter Jerusalem with joy, and their happiness will last for ever. Their gladness and joy will fill them completely, and sorrow and sadness will go far away (Isaiah 35:8-10, *The Youth Bible, NCV*).

There will be a wonderful time of peace and happiness on this earth when Jesus is King. People won't be depressed or sad, and because the world will be a safe place, no one will ever need to be afraid again.

A Time of Trouble

But it won't be like this at first. Just before Jesus returns, the world will be filled with wickedness and violence and there will be a time of *great* trouble - a time of trouble like this world has never seen before. In fact, the Bible tells us it will be so terrible that unless God intervenes mankind will be completely destroyed (Matthew 24:22). Thankfully, Jesus will return just in time to save us!

You would think that people would rejoice when Christ returns just in the "nick of time" to save us from annihilation, but they won't! They will have been deceived by a false religious leader who has poisoned them against the truth and will believe that Jesus is a threat to them in some way - perhaps even an alien invader from outer space. So the nations will stop fighting amongst themselves and send armies to Jerusalem to fight against Jesus. But of course no one can fight against the Son of God and win!

Jesus and the heavenly armies that follow Him will win the battle, and many of the wicked people will be killed (see Revelation 19:11-16). Then Jesus will become the King of the earth and He will begin to teach everyone about God's Way of Life. We don't know

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how long it will take before the whole world decides to obey God, but it won't happen overnight! The Bible tells us that some nations will still be following their own gods even after Jesus returns (see **Micah 4:5**). But He will gradually teach them to obey God and keep His Holy Days.

This is what will happen to the nations who refuse to worship God and refuse to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, or Shelters - as it is also called:

All of those left alive of the people who came to fight Jerusalem will come back to Jerusalem year after year to worship the King, the LORD All-powerful, and to celebrate the Feast of Shelters. Anyone from the nations who does not go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD All-powerful, will not have rain fall on his land. If the Egyptians do not go to Jerusalem, they will have no rain. Then the Lord will send them the same terrible disease he sent the other nations that did not celebrate the Feast of Shelters. This will be the punishment for Egypt and any nation which does not go to celebrate the Feast of Shelters (Zechariah 14:16-19, *The Youth Bible, NCV*).

In the Millennium everyone will learn to worship God and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And if they don't, they will be punished! So before long the whole world will be keeping the Holy Days and, as they do, they will begin to learn about God's wonderful plan for mankind. Then they will have their chance to decide whether or not they want to obey God and live forever as part of His Family.

Our Role in the Millennium

But what will we be doing during the Millennium? Well, the Bible tells us that God's people will be changed into spirit beings when Jesus returns (**1 Corinthians 15:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**) and become kings and priests who help Him rule the world! (**Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:4; Isaiah 61:6**). We will live in Jerusalem with Him (**Zechariah 8:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17**), and help Him as He teaches people about God's Way of Life and turns this world back into a beautiful place (**Isaiah 61:4; Ezekiel 36:33-36**). There will be a lot of work to do, but those of us who have been changed into spirit beings will become part of God's Family and have God's supernatural power to help us!

However, those who are not yet baptized won't be changed into spirit beings when Jesus returns - and that may include some of you young people. So what will happen to you if you are in that category when Jesus returns? Well, you will continue to live your life as a physical human being. And because families are important to God, you can be sure that you will stay with your parents until you grow up - and they will look after you

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and love you just as they do now. From what the Bible reveals, it's also clear that you will still spend time having fun with your friends! (**Zechariah 8:3-5**). And then at some point - at the time God chooses especially for you - you will have your opportunity to become part of God's *spiritual* family too. Until then, you will have a wonderful time growing up as a young person in the Millennium - and God will give you many blessings because you obey Him and live His Way of Life.

All my people will be blessed by the LORD; they and their children will be blessed. I will provide for their needs before they ask, and I will help them while they are still asking for help (Isaiah 65:23b-24, *The Youth Bible, NCV*).

During the Millennium everyone around the world will know who you are! They will know that you and your parents are God's special people and that you have been blessed for obeying Him.

Everyone in all nations will know the children of my people, and their children will be known among the nations. Anyone who sees them will know that they are the people the LORD has blessed (Isaiah 61:9, *The Youth Bible, NCV*).

By watching us, the whole world will learn that the only way anyone can really be happy is by living God's Way of Life. And that's what the Millennium is all about.

Teaching the World

During those 1000 years, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles, when Jesus Christ establishes God's government on this earth, we will teach the nations that God's Way is the *only* way to live. And we will prepare the whole world for what the next Holy Day, the Last Great Day, pictures; the time when all of the dead² will be brought back to life and have their chance to learn about God's Way of Life too (**Revelation 20:5; 11-13**).

What a wonderful time it will be when God's Plan for mankind has been completed and everyone who has ever lived has the opportunity to become part of God's Family and live forever and ever with us in His Kingdom!

² All those who have lived and died, from the time of Adam to Christ's return, who weren't called to understand God's truth in their lifetime. More information about this can be found in "The Holy Days and God's Plan" and "The Last Great Day" lessons.