

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG163 – Feast of Tabernacles 2023

Welcome to the podcast. I am going to speak today about the Feast of Tabernacles 2023. For all of the feasts of this Fall season I have been reaching to the Lord, not just to do a generalized teaching about the meaning of the Feast, or the Day of Trumpets, or the Day of Atonement, but looking to the Lord for something very specific for this year; and I am doing that with this time of Tabernacles. I have been praying quite a bit about it, believing for the Lord to show what the emphasis is for our faith and our celebration during this time.

When we talk about the Feast of Tabernacles, we are talking about the fact that the Lord brought Israel out of their bondage in the land of Egypt, but He brought them out with a purpose. He brought them out to bring them in to the land of Canaan as their possession, as He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So the time in the wilderness is a very rich, rich time to look at spiritually, scripturally; many, many things took place during that time with a great deal of significance behind all of them. But the main purpose of that transition was to bring them from Egypt into Canaan. When they ran into some difficulties after leaving Egypt, then God conscripted them to forty years in that wilderness wandering, leading up to the time of the possession of the land of Canaan. So this entire time of wilderness wandering can be looked at as a time of preparation.

It was obvious from what happened after they came out of Egypt that they were not prepared in their hearts, their minds, their spirits, to go in and possess the land; and so, God kept them in the wilderness for those forty years specifically to finalize their preparation to take the land. I want to look at a Scripture here that talks about this aspect of what God's purpose was from Egypt, through to the wilderness, on into Canaan, and I am going to start by reading Exodus chapter 6, verses 6-9.

“Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.’” So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage.

What I love about these verses is they are so emphatic from God: “I **am** going to do this. I **am** going to bring you out. I **am** going to be your God. You **are** going to be My people. I **am** going to take you from here into the land.” So we see this absolute drive on the part of God, what His intentions were, to fulfill His Word over the children of Israel.

Now I am going to go to Deuteronomy chapter 6, starting at verses 20-23.

“When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?’ then you shall say to your

son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Moreover, the Lord showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.'"

See, He brought them out of Egypt not just to deliver them, but to bring them into the land – "I brought you out in order to bring you in" – to give them the land that He had sworn to the fathers.

Verse 24. "So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always and our survival, as it is today." What we call the commandments, the Law, the statutes, these were all given by God in the wilderness and during this time of the wilderness to prepare Israel to be able to live in the land. They had to live in a righteous way before God, or, He told them, "I will remove you from the land." So it was very necessary that there be preparation for them living there in order not to be dispossessed back out of the land.

What we have here is a couple of steps taking place. We have, number one, the deliverance from Egypt. As you can see here in these verses, you are supposed to teach your sons that God did these great, distressing signs and wonders before our eyes. God was trying impress upon Israel who He was, how powerful He was, and for them to see the mighty deliverance, in order never to forget it. That was step one. And we see this is the reason why Passover itself became an eternal celebration for Israel. I know we are talking about the Feast of Tabernacles here, but we have to get the importance and understand how this progression was to take place in the mind of God.

So, let's back up for a second and talk about the Feast of Passover. We will do that out of Exodus the thirteenth chapter, starting at verses 3-9.

Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten. On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth. It shall be when the Lord brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month [talking about celebrating the Feast of Passover]. For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt."

Notice how they start talking about the sons, and yet then it begins to be applied to everyone: "God brought you" – all of Israel is seen as being delivered out of Egypt, no matter in what century they are celebrating this feast. So it was to be a time of remembrance.

Verse 10, "Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year." So it is an eternal celebration of remembrance that God delivered them out of Egypt. Now we know that God brought judgment in that deliverance to Egypt, to Pharaoh, to his armies; but I also want you to recognize that this was part of the preparation for possessing the land. As much as He was doing to Egypt, He was also bringing a sign to Israel. He was impressing Israel with His great power, with His great

authority, with those great judgments, so that Israel, through its generations in eternity, would never forget what God did for them and what He is capable of doing through His power. So once again, we see this idea of preparation. Now when we get into Tabernacles, we realize again, it is a remembrance for them, as a preparation for the possession of the land.

In Leviticus 23:39 it says, “On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land” – Remember this about Tabernacles (or *Sukkot* in Hebrew): it was never celebrated until they entered the land of Canaan. So, there again, it is a remembrance that is taking place when they are now in the land, having possessed it, of the preparation that they needed to go through in order to possess and remain in the land of Canaan. Verses 39-44,

“When you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations [in other words, this is an eternal celebration]; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall live in booths [or *sukkah*, just to remind them of the tents] for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths [or *sukkahs*, or tents] when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the Lord.

Once they possessed the land and they lived in the land, they would move out of their homes, they would build these *sukkahs* and live in them for seven days, for the purpose of remembering the time in the wilderness; remembering what they went through and what God did for them as preparation to come into the land.

In Deuteronomy chapter 4, starting with verses 1-4, it says, “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you.” Now remember, this happened in Sinai in the wilderness. God gave them the Torah. He gave them the commandments and the teachings. Remember Torah means “command, or teachings.” So He gave them all the teachings that they needed in order that they might possess and live in the land. I am going to read that again:

“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the Lord your God has destroyed them from among you. But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you.”

Again, He makes these illustrations to them. He made an illustration and an example out of Egypt of what His power and His ability was. So now, those who began to sacrifice to or to worship Baal-peor He destroyed in the midst of Israel. “But you who held fast,” He says, “you are alive today. Every one of you that did not go into that worship is alive. So I am trying to tell you, if you follow My statutes, if you follow My judgments, if you follow all these teachings that I am giving you, the training that I am giving

you, the training that leads you from Egypt into the land of promise, of how to go in and possess the land, then you are going to be fine. You are going to live, and you are going to be blessed.”

Verse 5, “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it.” So what was it preparation for? It was not preparation for living in the wilderness; it was preparation for living in the land, in the promises. God gives us promises, but God has to prepare us to continually live in those promises. Otherwise, we will lose the blessing which He has prepared for us.

Verse 6 goes on to say, “So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”” Israel was to be an example to all the nations of the earth of what it was to become a wise and understanding people; and they became that by following the statutes which the Lord had taught them. Verses 7-9 go on to say,

“For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.”

This is such a key we find in the Scriptures, that Israel was to teach and train its sons and its grandsons. It is part of the great Shema, when you read the entirety of it, that you are to teach your children while you are walking in the way, while you are sitting in your home, while you are laying down, while you are standing up. All your day you are to be training your sons, teaching them to remember what was experienced by the fathers. And I think it is one of the problems that we have in the day and age that we are living in, is that in America, as well as in the rest of the nations, we have not been careful to teach our sons the wisdom of God that was given. Remember, this wisdom and statutes were given as an example to all the nations, that all the nations of the world should follow them. Not only Israel, while they possessed and lived in the land, but all nations were to see the example and follow the example of Israel; and they were to live in righteousness in following them.

Verses 10-14,

“Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’ You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the very heart of the heavens: darkness, cloud and thick gloom. Then the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice. [They did not see a form on Mount Sinai, they only saw a voice.] So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments [or the ten things, or ten words, as it would be expressed in Hebrew]; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. The Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might perform them in the land where you are going over to possess it.”

So again, we see this time in the wilderness was a time of preparation; and the Feast of Tabernacles is a remembering of that time in the wilderness, a time remembering all that the Lord did for them, all that

the Lord taught them so that they could continue to follow the commandments, the teachings, the precepts, the wisdom, the Words that God had given them order to continue living in the land.

We see this is such an impetus of this time of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a time of remembering their time of preparation, their time of training to possess and live in the land. So when we begin to look at the Feast of Tabernacles and ask the Lord, "What are we celebrating?" I felt in my heart He is saying, "Celebrate the same thing. Celebrate this as a time where you recognize your preparation today in what I am getting ready to have you walk in, in the possession of the promises and entering into My Kingdom."

I want to look at 2 John, verse 4. It says, "I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father." A lot of times we think in Christianity, "Well, since Christ came, there are no commandments, there are no laws." Again, remember, "law" is kind of an incorrect term. It is teachings that God has given to us. It is the statutes, the commandments; there are commandments that we follow. And John is saying here, this is John the Beloved saying, "I am glad to find some of you walking in the truth, just as you received the commandment to do from the Father." Verses 5-6, "Now I ask you, lady," speaking of the church, "not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it."

I love these verses, because, again, it just flies in the face of this concept that we hear so often in church teaching, "We live in a day of grace, we live in an age of grace. The Law is an old thing; it disappeared in the Old Testament. When Christ came, He did away with the Law." But now John is saying, "No, we are supposed to be following these commandments. And we know what the commandment is – the commandment is to love one another." Part of the criticism that you hear about the Jewish people is, "Oh, they don't follow the Law." Well, I would look at this and say, okay, here is the commandment that we are to walk in. It is not a new commandment; it is the one that we have had from the beginning. What is it? That we love one another. And this is the love that we are to be walking in: love your neighbor as yourself. Love one another. So I would just say, Hey, how are we doing with this? Are we really loving one another? Are we biting and devouring one another? Are we criticizing one another? Are we judging one another? Are we being divided from one another?

This is a commandment from the Lord, and this is what Israel was facing. Israel was in the wilderness for forty years so it would learn the commandments and the statutes that would enable it to go in and possess the land, and live in the land. And this is what the Lord was speaking to my heart – we are in a time when we are being taught. This age we are in, this life we are in, the life that you are now living, this is not a life unto itself, and you live this life and then you die and go on to something else. That is really a misconception. What we realize, what we must realize, is we are living eternity now. We were given eternal life in Christ; we are now living eternity. We are now living in that eternal life that was given to us by Christ in order to have a relationship with God and walk on with Him. So in a sense, this life, as we know it, in the earth, in the flesh at the moment, it is very much a training ground, like the wilderness was for Israel. It is a training for us in our continued expression of eternity. And most of the time, I think people live unaware of that. They live in and about this life. But this life is a preparation. It is a training; it is a training for what is to come. Life does not end with death; this life is a portion of our eternal life that we live on with God, that will have many phases and expressions of it as we exist in this eternity that He has provided for us.

In 2 Peter, starting at chapter 1, verses 2-4, it says,

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

So again, we see that we are not at the end of something; but the cross opened up a life and promises, magnificent promises for us, that we should walk in them. And as we walk in them, we escape corruption. See, I believe so much in this reality that there is a growing in God. There is a growing in our relationship, in our spirit, our mind, our body, in this walk that we have with Him. And I think that is what Peter is expressing, and he expresses it even more clearly as we go on in these verses.

Verses 5-7 say, "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love." He lands right back at the same place John was talking about, this love that we are to have, and express, and walk in as believers. So again, it is very clear here from the words of Peter that there is much to reach for beyond just a salvation experience. All of these things were not given to us, or matured, or finalized, in the moment of our salvation. And that is why he is saying for us to apply all diligence in the way we move in our faith, and that we grow in self-control, and perseverance, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, and love.

Verses 8-11,

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble [he is worried about your forward progress]; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

So you get the feeling of this, I hope, that there is an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God. And what we are doing now is applying this diligence in our preparation, so that this way of entrance will be open to us as we move forward in our relationship with the Lord. Read that verse again on your own, please. I think it is extremely important.

Alright, I want to move very quickly here to conclude this, but I also have to really solidify in your hearts and minds that the life we are in right now is all about our eternal life, and our eternal walk and relationship with God the Father and Christ. Ephesians 1, starting at verses 2-4: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love."

Boy, there is that word love again. Huh, I wonder how significant that really is? Oh, that's right, God is love. So what is he saying here? He is saying you were chosen in Him before the foundations of the world. So now I am talking about eternity. Your eternity started way before you got here. You were

chosen in Him from the foundations of the world, and you existed from the foundations of the world until you were born into this world. And now that you are in this world, you are walking as they did in the wilderness, as a prelude, as a training, as a maturing, as a readiness to move on to that which God has for us in possessing His Kingdom and living out all of our eternal life.

Verses 5-10 say,

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times... [all the times of eternity – He has given us this view. He is doing what He is doing in your life with this view] to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

God is looking forward. He is preparing us to walk in and be a part of the time of the summing up of all things that the heavens and the earth have been about in Christ. We are to be there. We are to be part of it. We are to have a part of it. And He is now preparing us so that we are able to walk in these things.

Verses 11-12, “Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.” We are to be to the praise of His glory. Now as you read these verses, and I encourage you, please, go back and read this part of Ephesians 1. Read all through Ephesians 1, but don’t stop at the end of Ephesians 1; go on into Ephesians 2. Because really, the ideas here and the concepts continue through the chapter division. In Ephesians 2:1-10, it says,

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come...

Not the age we are in only, in the ages to come. That is part of our eternity, that we will live in the ages to come. And this age, this age of the Holy Spirit that we now live in following the resurrection and ascension of Christ, this age is about our preparation for the ages to come.

...so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand [remember, from the foundations of the earth] so that we would walk in them.

These works go on past this time. This time we are in is time of preparation to work the works of God, to do the will of God, that He might be glorified through us in the ages to come.

I hope this strikes your heart on another level, and I hope it helps you to celebrate this great Feast of Tabernacles in this year of 2023 with a vision towards what God is trying to do with the body of Christ and with us as individuals in it to walk with Him, to please Him.

I would just make these points:

Number one, the Feast of Tabernacles is a time to remember the forty years of the wilderness wanderings.

Number two, the wilderness was a time of preparation for the possession of the promises which God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: the land of Canaan.

Number three, the days we are living in now are our days of preparation for the possession of all that God has promised us.

Lastly, I would say, this is a moment in our eternity to prepare for all that God has prepared for us. Let this Feast of Tabernacles be a time to reflect on our eternal life and eternal purpose in God.

Amen.