

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG218 – Tabernacles – Remember God's Miracle Provision

Greetings and welcome to this podcast. This time of podcast is really born out of my own reaching in to the Lord for this year's celebration of the Feast of Sukkot, or Tabernacles; or the Feast of Booths, as it is called. What I would like to do with this podcast is just give you some of the feelings I have had while seeking the Lord, and let you know some of the things I would like to personally be doing during this time to celebrate and enter in to this time of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now, if you are not familiar with the Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot, then I encourage you to go into the podcast archives, and you will find there several different podcasts that have been brought about Tabernacles. You can also go into the Internet to Jewish sites, and they will give you instructions about why and how this feast is celebrated among the Jewish people, and also give you instructions for how to participate, for instance, by building a sukkah, or booth, in order to dwell in. All of these things are available to you, and therefore I do not want to take a lot of time reviewing all of that. As I said, I really want to focus on what my burden has been for this time of Tabernacles.

Tabernacles is a time of remembrance, and this is what the Lord has really been emphasizing to me personally, and it is what I want to make a point of sharing with all of you. Part of Tabernacles is to remember; and I believe that in this year it is something that God really wants us to do, and He is bringing our attention to this idea of remembrance. Tabernacles remembers that God first delivered Israel from Egypt by great signs and wonders and judgments that had never been seen before in the earth, and since have never been seen again. Also, it remembers that after delivering Israel out of the slavery of Egypt, He brought them out into the wilderness. While in the wilderness, God miraculously fed Israel. He gave them water from the rock, their clothing did not wear out, and they had none of the diseases that were found in Egypt. He fought their battles for them. He multiplied them into a great nation during those forty years in the wilderness. And through all of that time, they were covered by a cloud to protect them by day from the sun, and they were also given a pillar of fire at night that stood over the Tent of Meetings and warmed them. And I would say that more important than all of these signs and wonders was the fact that God gave them the Torah, speaking to Moses face-to-face; and it is by the covenant of Torah that God created Israel into a people for His own possession. He dwelt with them in their midst. He dwelt with them physically for forty years.

So, during the Feast of Sukkot, or Tabernacles, the Jews are not merely living and taking their meals in a sukkah, or a booth; they are to remember the miraculous works of God which delivered them and sustained them. They are to teach this history to their children, that their children likewise should never forget the miraculous provision of God's power towards Israel. And I think it is this remembering of God's miraculous power, His provision for us, that is so much what He is leading us to do in this year. We are in a time when many things are happening around us, many things are happening in Israel; and it is necessary that we do not forget that He is a God of miracles, and that He provides for His people. He sustained them in this wilderness.

So as we build our sukkah, and we sit with family and friends and partake of our meals, we should be doing it in a true heart remembrance. We should be recalling, we should be reading the Scriptures that point to this time of forty years in the wilderness, and recognize the power with which God related to Israel; the reality that their clothes did not wear out for forty years. Now, I know that must not be much of a fashion statement, because I am sure that the women would have rather gone to the mall and gotten something new; but their clothes never wore out. The sandals on their feet never wore out. They never had the disease; they had food, they had water, they had the provision, the protection of God. They were multiplying tremendously into a nation. All of these realities are what we should go back and remember. And one of the reasons we need to remember is because of the day that we are living in, and the days just before us – we will probably need again to experience this type of miraculous provision from God during our lifetime. Israel is in a place where they need God to fight their battles as He did. We will need to see provisions provided for us, for Israel, for the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora, by His mighty hand. And therefore, we should take this time of Tabernacles and remember all that God has done, all that He has provided, and remember especially His great power that is able to provide all things to us that we need.

Now, if we want to go back to the roots of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Scriptures, we will need to look at Leviticus the twenty-third chapter. I will just read very quickly some of this, starting with verse 39. “On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, 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.” Going down to verse 43, it says, “so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” So we are to know what happened, and we are to celebrate this time for seven days. The first day is a Sabbath rest, and the eighth day is a Sabbath rest. To me that is significant in what we are talking about, because if we really look at Deuteronomy 5, we see God giving this time of Sabbath for Israel. And I understand that He is talking about the seventh day; but anytime in the feasts or anytime in the Scriptures when He talks about a Sabbath rest or a day of rest, it is to be related to as a Sabbath on the seventh day.

So we look at Deuteronomy 5, starting at verses 13-14. It says, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey,” or the sojourner, whatever. Why is it that the Lord commanded this way of acting on the Sabbath? Well, it is because He does not want us entering into our labors, into our works, trying to provide things and do things for ourselves. He wants us to remember that He has provided all things, and His works are finished, and by faith we enter into those works. That is what triggers the provision and the power of God to work for us.

In verse 15 he goes on to say, “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the sabbath...” So part of the Sabbath is a time of not just resting from our works, it is a time to remember; it is a time to ponder, to bring to our memories, our recollection, and to teach others the memory of what God did, in the Sabbath. So you can see how closely the Sabbath on the seventh day is tied to the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles; because, again, the first day of the seven days is a rest, and the eighth day is also a rest, or a Sabbath; and all of the people are to sit and relate to this as a seventh day Sabbath.

So what do we do? What is the purpose of God in the Sabbath? It is for us to remember that they were slaves in Egypt, to remember His miraculous deliverance, His judgements that brought them out from the land of Egypt; and to remember that He brought them from that slavery into the wilderness for forty years, and there He cared for them and watched over them. And so, all of this is tied to our celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a time to remember; and therefore, it is tied into this idea of a Sabbath.

I also want to go into Deuteronomy 31, and I will read verses 8-12.

“The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. Then Moses commanded them, saying, “At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths [or the Feast of Tabernacles; so this was a very specific time, and he is saying that on the seventh year of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, something very wonderful and specific was to take place], when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. [So you] assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law.”

Interesting that it was at the time of Tabernacles every seventh year that everyone was called together who was old enough to have understanding, and they read through the Torah. So, everybody heard it. And if you did not have any other way of being taught the Torah, every seven years all of Israel simultaneously, as part of this Feast of Booths, was read the Torah. Why? Because, again, it is a time of remembrance; so they are to remember the Word of the Lord that came to them. They are to remember the Torah, the Law. And so, we see the Feast of Tabernacles not just by its connection to the Sabbath, but also its connection to the Torah. The Torah reading is a time of teaching and remembrance of what God did for them during the deliverance from Egypt and the forty years in the wilderness.

I want to go to Deuteronomy the eighth chapter, and I am going to skip around there a little bit and read some verses out of it. But one thing I would recommend for you to do, if you say, “I want to celebrate somehow, myself and my family, the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths, or Sukkot. What is a good way to do that?” Well, I think in this year especially it would be good to read and study Deuteronomy the eighth chapter, and look at this whole thing; go through it carefully, verse-by-verse. I am not going to do that; as I said, I am going to skip around. Another reading for you, and an area to study, is Psalm 78. You can read that as a family together, and you can study the verses there and see what is being talked about. Also, I would encourage you to go into Nehemiah and read chapter 9, starting there and going on even into chapter 10 where it talks about their celebration, their finding the Law, and remembering that they are to be celebrating this Feast of Tabernacles, which had not been done in so long. But study how they found the Law, found out about the Feast of Tabernacles, and how they responded and what they did with it.

So there are three readings that you can go into. Use this as a time in the evening as you are sitting together. Have a meal; if you build a sukkah, then have the meal within your sukkah. If not, just be in your home in your dining room, bring visitors over to share a meal; but after the meal, or before the meal, study these chapters out of the Scriptures with this focus on this idea of remembering all that God did through His miraculous provision, bringing to mind and updating the reality that God can do these things again today in our lives. I believe that because of the day we are living in, we need this kind of

provision of God's moving in our midst, so I encourage you to study these things. Do not just study them in a historical context. Study them both to teach the children the history of the Scriptures and Israel, and how God moved by His mighty hand in power, and how He shepherds and takes care of those whom He loves and covenants with; but also, point to today and say, "God can do this in our lives today, right now, and we should believe for Him to accomplish this in the day we live in" – especially for Israel in this hour of need, as it finds itself in war and threatened by the nations.

I am going to look at Deuteronomy the eighth chapter, as I said. I will start with verses 1-3.

"All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. [So Moses is reminding them of these things again, and he goes on and he says,] you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord."

This is so necessary for us. Moses wants them to remember. And we come to Tabernacles, and we live in booths and we humble our hearts and we remember all that the Lord did, all that He brought forth; and our remembering is such a major part of this time of Tabernacles. He said that He wanted you to know, He wanted your fathers to know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

In verses 4-5, it says "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son." So we are to know these things; we are to teach them to our children so that their children know these things. Then we come to this time where we sit and remember these things very clearly and bring them back to mind. And one thing you will find as you study these chapters that I just mentioned is that God rehearses back to us all of the miraculous provision that He gave during these forty years; and it is all of these things that He has done, that He is able to do, and that He will do in our lifetime.

I want to jump down to verse 11. It says, "Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today." Verse 14: "Then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." I think this is one of the things that we face, and I think that is why this Tabernacles is so important – it is so easy for us to get caught up in life. It is so easy for us to get seemingly far away from the miracles and provision of God that we forget what He has done for us, that we forget what has happened; and in forgetting what has happened, we forget also what is possible to happen for us today.

Going on to verses 15-18,

"He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the Lord

your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

This is so dynamic that we have this relationship with God that we get into. We cannot forget. We must remember all that He has done. We must remember it is by His power. The arrogance of the human heart, the arrogance of the human mind, tends to slip back into the thinking that we accomplish these things, when in fact there is nothing we can do; Christ said, “I can do nothing of Myself but what I see the Father do.” It is so easy for us in this day of technology to feel like we are the miracle workers; but we are not. There has to be a humility that comes in our heart to remember all that God has done, all that He provided, because we may find ourselves living in what seems like a new time of wilderness; and in that wilderness we must remember, He is able to provide for us miraculously.

Let me just read a few verses out of Psalm 78, which I earlier encouraged you to study and read; I want to reemphasize that again. In verse 4 of Psalm 78, it says, “We will not conceal them from their children,” talking about all these works, “but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.” Verses 6-7, “that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” Help us to do this, Lord. Help us to not only remember ourselves, and have such a relationship with You that we understand that Your works are possible in this day of wilderness that many times we seem to live in, in this world that surrounds us; but that we teach our children, and their children, that they not forget the works of God either.

Verses 10-18 say,

They did not keep the covenant of God and refused to walk in His law [talking about those in the wilderness]; they forgot His deeds and His miracles that He had shown them. He wrought wonders before their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea and caused them to pass through, and He made the waters stand up like a heap. Then He led them with the cloud by day and all the night with a light of fire. He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths. He brought forth streams also from the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers. Yet they still continued to sin against Him, to rebel against the Most High in the desert. And in their heart they put God to the test by asking food according to their desire.

This is one thing in our remembering during Tabernacles; remembering these days of the wilderness, we must also remember the disobedience and the rebellion of the people that tested God. Why did they test Him? When you go back and study this concept of testing God, you find at the root of it that they forgot what God had done – they did not remember all that He had done for them. “They forgot His deeds,” it says in verse 11, “and His miracles that He had shown them.” We cannot forget; because when we forget, we are headed for disaster. Believe me, we live in a day and an age when the world is headed into disastrous times; and the great source of it, the greatest source of it, is that we have forgotten the miraculous deeds of the God of heaven, and we have not honored or worshiped Him or given Him the credit and the gratitude for all that He has done. So we go on and read all of the things that God did for them during these times; and in verse 35, it finally says, “and they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer.” We are going through many things right now in this age – I wonder how many of them really are allowed by God just to bring us to this place of remembrance.

I really want to bless this time of Sukkot for you and your family. I bless you to again get into these chapters. Get into Nehemiah 9; go on further into chapter 10. Get into Psalm 78 and read that, study it carefully. Get into Deuteronomy 8; and there are other chapters that we can find in the Scriptures where Moses was reminding Israel. Take to heart this purpose of Tabernacles, that we come before the Lord to remember His mighty works, remember His power, remember His ability to sustain us, to carry us, to protect us, to shepherd us. Let us not be like those who forget the works of God and therefore fail to keep His commandments. Let us not be like those who forget His deeds, that forget His miracles, and forget all that He has spoken and sworn to us, that He has sworn to Israel. Let it be a time of great remembrance.

I bless this to you, to your family, and I believe for it to be a tremendously fruitful time of remembering all that God has done for you personally. And as you remember, be grateful and worship.

Amen.