

## Let Your Tabernacle Teach You

*The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the millennial reign of Mashyach on earth. But what is a tabernacle, and what can staying in one teach us?*

We will soon be on our way! Spirits will be high as we leave for the Feast of Tabernacles. We will gather at one of many Feast sites around the world to hear inspiring and motivating messages from Yahuwah's leaders about the world tomorrow and our part in it. We will enjoy the fellowship of many like-minded believers. The Feast will be a foretaste of the joy that the return of Mashyach will inaugurate.

Excitement will pulsate as we arrive at the Feast. There will be so much to learn and see and do. We will hurry to check into our lodging, whether it be a hotel room, condominium, camper or tent, anxious to begin experiencing the Feast.

But stop! This simple act of staying in a hotel or a tent is too important to overlook. It is so important that Yahuwah named this Feast after our lodging. You see, a tabernacle is a temporary dwelling. Yahuwah commanded the Israelites to build temporary huts or "booths" out of tree branches and live in them during the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:40-42). These booths made this Festival distinctive. It was to be the Feast of Tabernacles or a festival of temporary dwellings.

Today, although it is more appropriate to use contemporary booths, we still follow Yahuwah's command. We still stay in temporary dwellings during this Festival.

Why do we do this? And why would Yahuwah name a feast after our lodging? What are we to learn? Let's search the Scriptures and discover the remarkable spiritual significance of tabernacles.

### **The first lesson**

Yahuwah told the Israelites one purpose for dwelling in Booths in Leviticus 23:42-43: "You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in the booths, 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 Yahuwah thy Aluhym."

Yahuwah led the Israelites, under Moses' leadership, out of Egypt with the promise of giving them the land of Canaan as an inheritance and a rest from their enemies (Deuteronomy 12:10).

But Yahuwah first tested them. He had them sojourn in the wilderness for 40 years to face various tests of faith and obedience. Unfortunately, most failed those tests and were unable to enter the Promised Land, Yahuwah's rest (Hebrews 3:16-19).

As we keep the Feast of Tabernacles, Yahuwah wants us to realize that Israel's testing in the wilderness was a type and example for us (I Corinthians 10:6). We are also sojourners, albeit in a spiritual sense. Peter says that we should "as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11).

We have been called out of spiritual Egypt, or this evil world, into the body of Mashyach. We consider our citizenship to be in heaven (Philippians 3:20). And we must be tested before we can enter Yahuwah's spiritual rest. We must strive to enter the kingdom of Yahuwah. "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience" (Hebrews 4:11).

Throughout the year, most of us live not in temporary dwellings, but in homes. However, as we leave for our sojourn at the Feast, the car sagging with children and luggage, it is an ideal time to reflect on our spiritual sojourn on this earth.

### **Our bodies are tabernacles**

After we get to the Feast and are settled in our temporary dwellings, it is time to consider another vital lesson: Our bodies are tabernacles, that is, our physical lives are temporary. Peter realized this when he said, "Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you" (II Peter 1:13).

This simple truth is lost to many people. They do not base their lives on this realization. They act as if they are immortal. James warned against this approach: "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit;; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:13-14).

Our temporary dwellings remind us that we are mortal. Just as our sojourn at the Feast will end, so will our physical lives. We have a limited time to prepare for Yahuwah's coming kingdom. This thought, coupled with the hope stirred up by the sermons and fellowship at the Feast, builds urgency in us. We must make the best possible use of time (Ephesians 5:16).

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 9:10; "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."

What is more valuable than the salvation Yahuwah is offering us? What is more important than preparing to rule with Amanuwal? Amanuwal said, "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:27).

Yahuwah is training, testing and judging us now. Our reward will be based on our fruits in this life. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Mashyach, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

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### **I want to go home**

The Feast soon nears its conclusion. It has been refreshing and inspiring. We wish we could stay with Yahuwah's people forever, instead of having to go back to our routines at home. But our hotel room or tent is another matter. After a few days, our temporary dwellings are less desirable.

The chairs in the room aren't as comfortable as those at home. We miss our privacy. We are sorry we took our refrigerators for granted. The dirty laundry is piling up. For a second it even appeared to move!

Then the thought hits – “I’m ready to go home.” And Yahuwah wants us to feel this way! But why? Because there is yet another lesson he wants us to learn.

### **Our spiritual home**

Yahuwah doesn’t want us to be satisfied with this life. Rather, he wants us to deeply desire his kingdom. He designed the Feast to foster this desire in us. It heightens the contrast between Yahuwah’s way and Satan’s.

The longer we stay in our temporary dwellings, the more we tend to desire our homes. Similarly, the longer we sojourn in Satan’s world, the more we desire our home in the kingdom.

Paul expressed it this way: “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from Yahuwah, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven” (II Corinthians 5:1-2).

Yes, this life makes us groan. We groan because our frail bodies often become old, crippled or diseased. We groan because of our struggles with our “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (I Peter 2:11). This then causes us to groan for the kingdom of Yahuwah (Romans 8:23).

Abraham dwelt in tabernacles, yet longed for the permanency of his home in Yahuwah’s Kingdom: “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is Yahuwah” (Hebrews 11:9-10).

Paul says we should do the same: “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come” (Hebrews 13:14).

So, as we near the end of the Feast, and we begin to long for our homes, we should be reminded that Yahuwah wants us to leave each Feast longing even more for our permanent home in the Kingdom of Yahuwah.

How wonderful it will be to finally inherit eternal life – to have a permanent home in the family of Yahuwah!