

Bible Study Notes

Wednesday, October 11th, 2017 - Seventh Day - Feast of Tabernacles

The Meaning of Booths (Tabernacles)

Just being in this beautiful Feast house teaches an important lesson. It's merely a temporary dwelling. There is a special aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles - that of dwelling in booths (temporary dwellings). Our physical bodies are also temporary dwellings. We were not meant to live in them forever. There is a reason why God made us out of physical material - out of flesh and bone.

Mr. Armstrong said that Ambassador College was like a fine quality hotel which we were merely being allowed to use for a while. We didn't own it - God did. God owns everything on earth (Ps. 24:1; Hag. 2:8; Lev. 25:23). We don't really own anything we may have or use in this lifetime - houses, possessions, wealth, etc. It's all temporary.

2 Pet. 1:13-14

Peter likened his physical life - his body - to a tabernacle. It was a mere temporary dwelling in which he lived. He knew he would give it up when he died.

1 Pet. 2:11; 1:13-17

Peter described Church members as "strangers and pilgrims" on the earth. He referred to their physical lifetime as "the time of your sojourning." Your physical life is a "mortal sojourn" that will eventually come to an end.

2 Cor. 5:1-10

God gave Adam and Eve physical bodies. Human beings don't have permanent LIFE, but a temporary, physiochemical existence. This human body is merely a physical tabernacle, house or building. It is temporary, not eternal. But, after we die - there is something far better waiting for us.

Don't become confused, as the world is confused, on this point - no human being has ever gone to heaven after dying except for Jesus Christ (John 3:13). Rather, we will be given a NEW body at the time of our resurrection from the dead (I Cor. 15:50-54; Luke 14:14). Those in the first resurrection will be given a spirit body which will never die, never grow old, never decay, and will continue untarnished and be totally perfect forever. God is going to put our "human spirit" - our thoughts, personality and character (Job 32:8) - into a new divine, immortal body which will be composed of eternal spirit like that of God and Christ (I John 3:2; Phil 3:21). We will shine like the sun (Matt. 13:43) as Christ does in his glorified state (Rev. 1:14, 16).

This body can get sick, it can hurt, be physically injured. We would love to be changed right now into spirit beings. It will be that way eventually, but we must be patient! This is what II Cor. 5:4 is all about. Mortality - physical death, decay and corruption - will be swallowed up in life - spiritual eternal life, immortality! But, first you must get rid of sin. There is no sin in God. Sin originated in the mind of Satan. In order to become a member of the God Family, we must put all sin out of our lives! With God's help, of course. That's what Jesus' job is right now, as our High Priest and Advocate (Heb. 4:14-16; I John 2:1).

This is the Feast of Tabernacles. The “tabernacles” portion of it pictures the fact that we are temporary physical beings. When the Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled in the World Tomorrow, we will have been resurrected to immortal life. But, there will also be human beings alive in their physical bodies (tabernacles) during the World Tomorrow, who are developing God’s character and awaiting eternal life as we are doing now! They will have the excellent fortune of having God’s way taught to them directly by God’s Family (Jesus Christ and the resurrected saints).

Regarding II Cor. 5:10 - we in the Church are being judged NOW (1 Pet. 4:17). At Christ’s Second Coming we will find out whether we qualified to govern 1 city, 5 cities, 10 cities, or whatever Christ decides to give us (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27; John 14:2-3). Let’s not become disqualified by neglecting so great salvation (Heb. 2:3). We will receive the reward of whatever we did while “in our body” - during our human lifetime, in our tabernacle. Romans 2:16 and John 5:22, 26-27 show us that God will judge every human being through Jesus Christ. Romans 14:10 says that all will stand before Christ’s judgment seat as individuals.

Heb. 11:8-16

We are heirs now, but not yet inheritors. We will inherit later, as will Abraham (v. 13). Abraham was instructed by God to live in a foreign land which he would later inherit, dwelling in tabernacles (tents) with Isaac and Jacob. Isaac and Jacob also lived in tabernacles but looked toward the future reward, the Kingdom of God!

Matt. 17:1-5, 9

People call this the “transfiguration.” Peter, James and John saw Jesus as the glorified Christ in His ultimate state (as described in Revelation 1:14-16). Moses and Elijah appeared in this vision as well. Notice, they made tabernacles. God want to glorify us, just as He has glorified Jesus (John 7:39; Rom. 8:17-18, 28-30)!

1 John 3:1-2

We are now the sons of God (heirs, not inheritors), and when we are resurrected, we will be like Christ because we will see Him as He is. We will shine like the sun, as Jesus does (Matthew 13:43; Rev. 1:16)!

Phil. 3:10-17, 21

We are being trained in this life so that we may attain future eternal life. The goal is to be in the the first resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ - to be in the Kingdom of God and obtain eternal life. But, there’s a lot of work to do to get there. It’s not automatic. We need to follow ALL SEVEN of the laws of success. True success transcends this lifetime. We need to endure till the end (Matt. 24:13; Heb. 3:6, 14).

If temporary “success” in this life (gaining wealth, power and prestige) ends at death, then it’s not true success because it doesn’t LAST. Everyone wants immortality, but they just don’t have it and don’t know how to obtain it. Most people have lived and died never having heard the true gospel - never having found out the meaning of true success; how to obtain eternal life (John 3:3-8; I Cor. 15 - whole chapter).

Lev. 23:39-44

This is the “Feast of Booths” - or Tabernacles. The name of this Feast is derived from the temporary little huts the Israelites would make and dwell in during the Feast. The Feast of

Tabernacles - dwelling in booths - reminded the Israelites that they journeyed for 40 years in the wilderness in booths. That period pictures our “mortal sojourn” - our Christian life after baptism. When Israel entered the Promised Land, it pictured our entering into the Kingdom of God as immortal Spirit Beings. The Feast of Tabernacles, in addition to picturing the Millennium, should remind us of the meaning of our lives and why we were born!

Neh. 8:14-18

In the Persian restoration, they kept the Feast of Tabernacles the proper way - by living in temporary dwellings.

Book of Ecclesiastes

The book of Ecclesiastes is the “Feast of Tabernacles scroll.” There are many lessons in it which are applicable to this time of year. We live at a much higher level during the Feast of Tabernacles since we save 10% of our income to be used during a very short period of time. We are picturing the World Tomorrow during the Feast, as did Solomon who had GREAT wealth. The book of Ecclesiastes reminds us that this life is temporary. Solomon knew he was going to die and leave all of his wealth to others. He, like Jesus, teaches us to put God first (Ecc. 12:13-14; Matt. 6:33) - to realize that this life isn’t the ultimate goal. Go ahead and enjoy life (Ecc. 2:24; 8:15; 9:9; 11:9), but remember the real goal. (Attending the Feast of Tabernacles isn’t the ultimate goal either, so we shouldn’t be heavy-hearted when we leave. The goal is the fulfillment of what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures!)

Eccl. 1:1-7, 10, 16; 2:1-11, 15-17

Human beings are “vanity” - temporary. The earth, sun and rivers go on and on forever, but humans must die. “Useless!” says Solomon. Solomon was one of, if not the absolute, richest persons who ever lived.

Solomon was going to have to die, leave all of his wealth to another, and not know whether his successor was going to be wise or foolish. Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 and 12:1-8 say that we should enjoy life as much as possible, but also OBEY God and keep the real goal foremost in mind. We are going to “our long home” - the grave (12:7)! Our spirit will return to God when we die. After that, the resurrection (I Cor. 15:22). There is life after death, and that’s the real thing to look forward to. You’ll receive your same mind back again. So strive to make your mind a good one in the here and now. Guard it from the thinking the way of Satan the devil. The really important thing is what is in your mind. That’s what counts.

Eccl. 2:24-25

Go ahead and enjoy life! Eat, drink and be merry. Be a happy person. Don’t go about being “down” about trials you may face. Be positive. Be an overcomer! Realize why certain things make people happy and other things make them unhappy.

Eccl. 3:1-8

There is a time for everything in life. You were born, and you will die, and there’s a time for everything in-between.

Eccl. 9:7-10

Live your life to the absolute fullest! Just don’t get caught up in the false values of this world (I John 2:15-17). You’re going to die - don’t squander your temporary “mortal sojourn.”

Eccl. 12:9-10, 13-14

The conclusion is to obey God because He will bring everything into judgment! OBEY the One True God! Eternal life is the goal because the success, accomplishment, joy and excitement for every new day will never stop, never cease, never grow old and tired!

Spirit-begotten human beings have the hope of eternal life dwelling within them through God's Holy Spirit. The time we spend in our physical bodies, with its temporary tiredness, aches, pains and difficulties, will only last long enough for us to grow in the character of God so that we may be resurrected as immortal spirit beings into God's Family.

The month of "Ethanim" - the 7th month of the Hebrew calendar - means "the month of permanent things." We picture, through keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, the things which will never pass away. Matt. 7:24-25 and Hebrews 12:27-29 reflect this.