Feast of Tabernacles

Bible Study

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Lesson 1: Laying the Foundation of the Feast of Tabernacles in Genesis

I have been going through the Bible study, “Created to Be God’s Friend”, by Henry T. Blackaby. The premise of the study is to guide our minds into a paradigm shift by looking at an eternal perspective of God’s will. The author follows the life of Abraham as an example of the way God initiates His divine purpose through the life of one man.

Abraham was the father of the nation of Israel, (Genesis 12:2). So, if God made Abram the father of a nation, who was his father, and his father, etc. Well, if you count Adam as (1), then count down to Noah as (10), then Abram was (21). Are you wondering why God waited 21 generations to build a nation from which Jesus, the Messiah, would come in order to restore His people to himself after Adam messed up? Me too! The Word tells us, “our ways are not like His ways”, Isa. 3:2, and it also talks a lot about God’s “ fullness” of time.

So, in God’s fullness of time, “The Lord said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you’, Genesis 12:1. Abraham was 75 years old when he finally set out for the land of Canaan, (the promised land, the land now known as Israel), Genesis 12:5

Now, obviously, just like in our lives, a lot happens in 75 years. For instance: children are born; family squabbles happen; family members have to be rescued; we try to make things happen instead of waiting for God’s timing; loved ones die; we have to be strong in our faith to live in a unrighteous culture; and finally, ”God always provides”. During these years we sometimes look through scrap books and ponder over significant parties, vacations, births, graduations and deaths.

This is also the case in Abraham’s life. Life is packed with” peaks and valleys”. And although each word in the Bible about God’s relationship with Abraham has significance, for our study of The Feast of Tabernacles, I want to highlight a few key words describing their relationship, that will be appearing as a foreshadowing as we continue our study.

They are:

Leave and go……Genesis 12:1 (lived in tents) (temporary shelter)

Blessed…Genesis 12:3

Egypt….Genesis 12:10

God Rescues..Genesis 14:1-16

Valley of Kings ..Genesis 14:17-20

God’s Covenant…Genesis 15 and Genesis 17

God destroys wickedness and saves a remnant…Genesis 19

Fullness of Time,,,Genesis 21:1-7

Jehovah- jireh…Genesis 22:13-14 (ram and ram’s horn (shofar).

God credited Abraham as righteous. Now this doesn’t mean perfect. Abraham made mistakes, but God saw in him a willing heart to be obedient. When God put Abraham to the test and asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham was obedient. However, God spared Isaac and provided the needed sacrifice. God substituted a ram in place of Isaac. God told Abraham that since he was willing to be obedient and sacrifice Isaac, that He would not only spare Isaac but would make Abraham the father of a great nation. A nation through which would come Jesus, who would be the true sacrificial lamb that God provided to take on all the sins of the world and redeem us from His wrath.

Lesson Two: God Gives the Feasts to His Chosen People During Their Exodus

There was approximately 420 years or 7 generations between Abraham and Moses. Moses was God’s chosen servant to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt where they had been slaves for 400 years.

Once the Hebrews or Israelites were freed from Egypt they wandered for 40 years until they reached the “promised land” that God had given to them. During those 40 years, God built a nation of people. He gave them rules and the law, The Ten Commandments. And then, He gave them the Divine Appointments. Seven feasts or “dates”, ( thank you for allowing me to bring these God initiated celebrations down to human terms). God inviting us to celebrate these feast would be like God picking up the phone and calling us to ask us out for a date. Instead of using a digital clock and or a calendar on our phones, He used the Sun, Moon and stars, (Genesis 1:14) to set the timing for our Divine Appointments.

He invited us to 7 feasts or festivals, three of which are great Feast which require men to journey to Jeruselem . They are:

Passover

Shavuot (Pentecost) (Feast of Weeks)

Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) (Feast of Booths)(Feast of Shelters)(Feast of Tents)

At this time, I would like to suggest two additional study options. One is a book, titled “A Rabbi Looks at Jesus of Nazareth” by Jonathan Bernis, and a series that you can find on U Tube called, “The Holidays of God”.

There is so much research offered to help in our study of all these feasts. However for our purposes of studying one of the three great festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles or (Sukkot) let’s first go to the scripture.

Recorded in Exodus, God said to the Israelites through Moses, “Celebrate the Festival of Shelters in the autumn, when you gather the fruit from your vineyards and orchards.”

Again in Leviticus 23:43, “Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

These scriptures give me such joy, purpose and delight in my Creator. It is like we are taking an amazing vacation or journey with our God and He is taking pictures of what we are experiencing with Him so that we can bring out the album each year and remember our enjoyment with Him. Only, these are not flat two dimensional photos, these are reminders in three dimensional and sensory activities which connect us on a spiritual plane that we could not otherwise experience or remember.

When I taught preschool, each activity needed to involve as many senses as possible. I had been taught that a child would grasp the learning of a certain project by heightening all their senses during a “hands on” activity. For instance, if you wanted to teach a child about apples, you would have a picture of an apple, a real apple and the word written a-p-p-l-e. Then you would cut the apple, dividing it into sections, discover the seeds, eat the apple and then make applesauce with the leftovers. Right now, I can taste an apple, smell the aroma of the apple cooking and feel the texture of the apples and applesauce in my mouth.

This is exactly what God wanted for His people to experience as He taught them about Himself. He wanted them to remember that He saved them from slavery in Egypt. He wanted them to remember that it was Him who gave them food and shelter during those forty years. He wants them and us to remember that He is the Creator, theSavior, the Provider and the Sustainer.

He also wants the Jewish people and all of us to put aside our current lifestyle situations and go back to a time when God “took the picture” of what He did for His people, the Israelites and later for the Gentiles as he ingrafted, (Romans 11:17). us into the “chosen people” through the blood of Jesus . He wants all of us to remember by bringing out the “album of pictures” and reenact their journey by living in booths or tents annually during this festival.

It was then and is now, a joyful time. It is a time for all Jews and ingrafted gentiles: men, women and children to live out their relationship with God. It is also a time when Jews open their arms to all nations to join in this celebration of thanksgiving to the One God who Saves, Provides and Sustains all of us.

He is real, and cares about our needs. He created the seed bearing plants to feed us, and He uses the symbols of His creation to bring us closer to Him.

Lesson Three – What is the Feast of Tabernacles?

I called a friend of mine, who is a member of Temple Shalom, to ask her about the Feast of Tabernacles. At first, she seemed confused, and then I said, “I mean Sukkot”. She immediately talked about the “High Holy Days” that came before but closely related to Sukkot. They are Rosh Hashanah, (Feast of Trumpets) and Yom Kippur, (Day of Atonement). The holy days are celebrated several days before Sukkot and are almost viewed as one celebration. Rosh Hashanah is the celebration of the Jewish New Year, which marks the end of an agricultural season and prepares the nation for looking forward to the next agriculture season. It naturally creates a time of looking back and looking forward. Just like our New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day. Only, there is a stark comparison. Our culture has turned New Year’s eve and day into a time when we watch a big ball fall in Times Square, New York, and a time of wild and crazy parties when people eat and drink too much. It also reminds us of college football games played and watched all day on New Year’s Day. Typically, we are eating pork roast and sauerkraut for good luck and we are making resolutions, which usually revolve around weight loss and getting into better condition.

Rosh Hashanah is not at all celebrated like we celebrate our New Year’s. In stark comparison, it is “God centered” not “man centered”. Jews are taking a close look at how God has provided for them in the previous year and how they have responded to God. It is joyous day, but also very serious day. Then comes Yom Kippur. “Yom” meaning “day” and “Kippur” meaning “atonement”. A day when a Jew is looking at his/her life in comparison with God’s law. It is a day when a Jew is shaking in his/her shoes because there is no way that they have been able to live up to the righteousness of their creator. It is a day for self reflection and fasting. A day to recognize short comings and a renewal of their relationship with God. A very, very, serious day. A day to remember that God, with one stroke, can punish by withholding all things necessary for their existence. It is a day that man is very, very, small and God is very, very big.

When I was small, actually seven years old, my family belonged to a Catholic church. The Catholic Church teaches that when a child is around seven, they can function in an “age of reason”. This means, that at this age, a child should understand right from wrong. So the Catholic Church chooses this age for a child to “go to confession”. As a child, I remember being very frightened of this process. I had to go into a little dark cubical within the sanctuary. When I entered behind the closed curtain, there was a place to kneel down. Then, I could hear the sliding of a panel, and I could see light behind the panel and could identify that the priest was on the other side of the panel. When this happened, I had been instructed to say, “Bless me Father, for I have sinned”, then I started speaking out all the sins I had committed over a period of time. The priest then talked to me about how I could stop doing what was wrong and gave me some prayers to say. I have learned since this time that I can go straight to God, my Father and ask for forgiveness, but the feeling of atonement stays with me. It is joyous. It is amazing. God has forgiven me and I have another chance. He loves me, He is merciful and He even knows all my sins and still forgives me. It is euphoria! This is the feeling of the Feast of Tabernacles or as the Jews call it, the Feast of Sukkot.

God knew that we would sin, that we would fall as we were trying to walk. He knows that we truly don’t wake up in the morning trying to think of how we can be bad. He does know however, that we are a stiff necked people and we will continue to think that we can manage on our own. So, through the Feast of Sukkot, He reminds us that He is our provider and our sustainer. It is He who gives us seed bearing plants for food and it is He who has created the soil in which they grow. He is the one who gives the rain, He is the giver and the gift. He is the One, through Moses, who brought the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt, and He is the one who gave them manna and quails and water in the desert. He is the one who kept their clothes and shoes from wearing out during those 40 years of wandering to reach the Promised Land, which He gave them. He also gave them the Law, and blessed those who obeyed it and disciplined those who did not obey and removed His hand of protection over those who were defiant and refused to listen and obey.

When God initiated the Feast of Sukkot, He knew that we would have to get out of our “comfort zone” in order to experience the feelings of our own frailties. By requesting us to build “Sukkah”,(flimsy shelters in which we will live for 7 days), God knew we would begin to realize how very much we rely on Him. A Sukkah is a three sided structure, a back and two sides. The front is open, which makes one feel very vulnerable to anything outside the structure. The roof is to be covered with branches and sticks so that you can look up and still see the heavens, the moon, stars, and sun…..His creation. God asks us to eat and visit with others in our Sukkah. It is no wonder children love this feasts. They are so use to the feeling of vulnerability and adventure. But as we grow older, we become rigid to discomfort and vulnerability. Rigid to change, and wanting to control our environment. God wants to remind us that He is in control.

Once we become like little children. (Matthew 18:3), we can enjoy the purity of how God delights in His people. Actually, through the experience of Sukkot, we are like children who are invited to “play” and sleep over with God for a whole week. We dance, sing, tell stories of the greatness of God, eat, sleep and wake up with God. A time of joyful refreshment, because we were once estranged from God but through the mercy and sacrifice of Jesus death and now resurrected, we are able to once again share in the beauty and glory of what the Garden of Eden must have been like when man and God lived in peace and harmony with His creation.

Lesson Four – Agriculture and Typology

I have never really studied “words” and their meaning. However, I have been in a situation when my words were misunderstood, because my meaning of the word was not what the other person’s definition was of the same word. And in the course of a conversation within a newly formed relationship, words can either build up or tear down and maybe even collapse the relationship. It seems that it is so significance to take the time to explain our understanding and meaning of our words. Words can also highlight a meaning that previously could not be communicated.

**Typology**

The word “typology” was one of those words that entered my vocabulary and has helped me to organize and then communicate my study of the scripture. I believe that God revealed this word to me in order for me to help others understand what He is doing through His Divine Appointments, His Feasts.

Let’s first go to the definition of the word “Typology”.

1. A doctrine of theological types; especially, one holding that things in Christian belief are prefigured or symbolized by things in the Old Testament.
2. Study of or analysis or classification based on types or categories.
3. A theory of doctrine of types, as spiritual study.
4. Symbolism

Okay, for simplification, let’s take the last definition of typology which is, “Symbolism”. Now, let’s take the word “Bread” and begin reading the scriptures like a detective searching out all the times bread was used as a symbol in real life situations. A Bible concordance is great for this activity. We could begin by looking in Exodus and read how God told the Israelites to hurry and make bread without yeast before they left the life of slavery in Egypt. And while you are in Exodus read how God provided “Manna” as bread for the Israelites in the desert. Then we could go to Matthew and read when the devil tempted Jesus, who had been fasting for forty days, to turn the rocks into bread. Now go to John 6:35, when Jesus said, “I am the bread of Life”. Wait a minute, wait a minute…..what just happened? Not just symbolism but a statement…..not just classification of the word “bread”, but Truth Spoken. So, taking this activity, and defining the word typology or grouping of a word spoken in scripture, will always, always, always, point to Jesus, who is the real thing, the “**I AM**”.

Now visualize a target, with a red dot in the middle and rings of red circles all around the center of the red dot. The red dot is what you are aiming for…..it is the goal……the real thing. All the other red circles are close to the goal and I guess you could say they are real, but just not the real target.

Now, write the words “bread without yeast” and Exodus 12:8 on the outer red ring of the target. Next write Manna, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you”, Exodus 16: 4, on the next inner red ring of the target. Then write, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread”, Matt 4:3. Now in the very center, the target, write, ”**I AM** the bread of life”, John 6:35.

Now, you may say, but how do these scriptures point to Jesus? Let’s break it down, scripture by scripture. I must also tell you that not only do these typologies point to Jesus, the Suffering Messiah, but also to Jesus, the King of Kings, the Messiah, who is yet to come to take us with Him.

Exodus 12:8 - God gave Moses the command to have the Israelites make their bread without yeast. Why? I am sure the infinite God has so many reasons and so many typologies about that, but I can at least give you two.

1. Yeast is a word is the scriptures that often refers to “sin”. So the bread eaten was to be without yeast or without sin. Jesus said, “**I AM** the bread of life”, and He was the Son of God, the perfect sacrifice because He had no sin, no yeast.
2. Yeast would take too long to rise and this bread must be eaten in haste. Jesus said, “**I** **AM** the bread of Life”, and when He returns it will be in a twinkling of an eye. Quickly, and we must be ready to go with Him.

Exodus 16:4 “I will rain down bread from heaven for you”

1. Jesus said, “**I AM** the bread of Life”, and Jesus is the greatest gift God has given to us to eat and sustain us, (in the form of the Holy Spirit). Also “rain” is symbolic in the scriptures as a blessing. So God gave us Jesus as a blessing to us to give us eternal life.

Matt. 4:3 “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread”.

1. Jesus said, “**I AM** the bread of Life”, He is saying that He is the giver of life, eternal life. He was fully human and fully God, so satan could indeed tempt Him but because He is also fully God, He could not sin. So to turn the rocks into bread, He would be commanding the creation to become the creator, a crafty deception by the enemy. But Jesus turned the tables on satan and reminded him that, “Man does not live by bread alone, but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God.” In other words, He told the enemy that He was the Word of God and that He would bestow life on whoever God the Father gave Him and man would receive not only physical bread but also spiritual bread to live eternally.

John 6:35 “**I AM** the Bread of Life” and John 6:32 “Jesus said to the, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

Truth has spoken, no more to say!

Lastly, a typology could also be defined as a shadow. If you are walking with your child on a sunny day and the “light” \*is behind you, your shadow will be in front of you. You may be aware that the shadow is indeed you and your child, you may even raise your hand to see the shadow’s had raising too. The shadow is indeed real, it does take up space, but it is you who is the real thing.

Typologies are “foreshadows” of things to come as well as shadows of the past. The important thing to remember, though they are real, they are not the “Real Thing”. Jesus, the light\* is the Real Thing.

**Agriculture**

Agr or Ager means “field” in Latin. Cultura is Latin for growing or cultivating. So putting it together, we are describing growing or cultivating in a field.

My mother’s family were farmers. However, I grew up in the city and never even had a garden. In my parent’s later years, they began to enjoy gardening. They seemed thrilled to eat and share their harvest with me, especially lots and lots of tomatoes. I remember feeling a little guilty that I had not done the work, but was receiving all the benefits of my parent’s hard work.

I was born in 1946, and I remember the first T.V. we had. I also remember the commercials, especially about Campbell’s soups. I remember my mom going to the A&P store every Friday night after my dad pridefully brought his cashed paycheck home for the last weeks work. I just don’t have memories of my family growing and harvesting our food. I think I am like many, many others who viewed their grocery store as their garden. Need some food? Get in the car and go to the grocery!

But, in the great scheme of things, it hasn’t been that long that “supermarkets” or “super-centers” were not in existence. In fact, we have been an agricultural culture much longer than the current industrialized, processed food culture we are in now.

So, what does Agriculture have to do with the Feast of Tabernacles? Well, whether we grow our food or big food companies grow it, the crop is still cyclical. Seeds are planted in the Spring/Summer season, weather and growing occur, and the harvest is gathered. How much of that do you control? Do you cause the seasons to change? Do you make it rain? Do you create the seed and the plant that grows from the seed? No, to all the above. Only God can do that. He created the very heavens with the sun, moon, and stars to “mark the seasons”, Genesis 1:14. Also, take the time to read Genesis 1:29-30.

And finally, go to John 1:1-3. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

The Feast of Tabernacles in a Divine Appointment which follows a agricultural cycle. It is a date that God has asked us to go on with Him. It is both a foreshadowing of the future and a shadow of the past. It is a typology which will deepen our understanding of who God is and God will reveal Himself to us in a deeper way. He uses everything to get close to us and for us to know him. The Feast of Tabernacles is also intertwined with His precious gift of what is growing in His fields for our enjoyment and sustenance. He is the Gift and the giver of gifts. He is the real thing!

* Jesus said, “**I AM** the light of the world” John 8:12. Jesus spoke these words during the Feast of Tabernacles when the 75 feet candelabras were lite. Another study of typology!

Lesson Five: Finding Jesus in the Feast of Tabernacles

When studying the scriptures one of my serious oversights was to not recognize that Jesus was a Jew. He was part of the lineage through which the law was given. He obeyed that law and he is the law.

Since the Feast of Tabernacles is one of the three feasts that required men to journey to Jerusalem, Jesus also journeyed to Jerusalem each year for this feast and for Passover and for Shavuot, (Pentecost). The gospels often refer to the timing of events as “during the feast” or “going up to the feast”, or even “Jesus going to the feast in secret”. These historical facts occur during His physical presence on earth. However, we can not keep Jesus in only one timeframe of history. It is true that He came in the flesh on or around 4 B.C. and died on the cross 33 years later and was resurrected three days later, then to ascended to the Father to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We will indeed follow Jesus and His appearances during the Feast of Tabernacles, but we need to look also through a lens of an eternal perspective.

Earlier in this study I suggested a book, “A Rabbi Looks at Jesus of Nazareth” by Jonathan Bernis. On page 61, he writes, “Yeshua’s life and death are mirrored not only in Passover but also in the other six feast days of the Hebrew calendar. Three of these feasts refer to events that occurred during Yeshua’s ministry and the other three to events that will take place when He returns.

These holy feast days are understood by some in the Jewish community as *mikrah,* which means “rehearsal” or “recital.” Paul tells us in Colossians 2:17 that all of these special days have been appointed by God to reveal the Messiah to the world as part of God’s great plan for His creation: “These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in (Messiah).”

Additionally Rabbi Bernis writes about Jesus in Sukkot (Tabernacles)..Pg 67 and 68

“The third and final feast that will see its fulfillment in Messiah’s return is Sukkot, otherwise known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths. Sukkot, which begins five days after Yom Kippur, is a seven-day period during which the children of Israel are to remember their forty-year period of wandering in the wilderness. Specifically they are to recall how God supplied them with food, water, shelter and guidance. During the week of Sukkot, each Jewish family is to live in a small temporary dwelling made of branches. At night they are to look up at the stars and remember God’s promise to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens. This feast also commemorates the last harvest of the year and looks forward to the day when the elect from all over the world will be gathered into the Kingdom of God (see Matthew 24:32). There are so many ways this festival points to Yeshua. We will briefly look here at two of them. Just as God gave the Israelites manna to eat I the wilderness, Yeshua is spiritual bread for all who believe in Him.

He said, “**I AM** the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty…Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. **I AM** the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. John 6:35, 49-51

Rabbi Bernis goes on to say….

“Furthermore, as His people wandered in the wilderness, God provided them with water from a rock (see Exodus 17:6). Paul says that the Israelites “drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was [the Messiah]” (1 Corinthians 10:4). Every day during Sukkot a ceremony was carried out during which the high pries and his assistant would pour out water and wine onto the altar of the Temple as the people sant, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3). It was most likely during this time that Yeshua stood up and cried out in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” (John 7:37-38.”

In the previous paragraph, Rabbi Bernis writes about one of two symbolic ceremonies which occur during the Feast of Tabernacles, one of water and now the second Sukkot symbol, one of “light”.

The following is an excerpt from and article written by David Brickner, “Finding Jesus In the Feast of Tabernacles”

“At the end of the first day of the Feast, the Temple was gloriously illuminated. According to the Mishnah, (part of the oral tradition of the rabbis), gigantic candelabras stood within the court of the women. Each of the four golden candelabras is said to have been 50 cubits high. A cubit is somewhere between 18 and 22 inches, so we’re talking about candelabras that were about 75 feet tall! Each candelabra had four branches, and at the top of every branch there was a large bowl. Four young men bearing 10 gallon pitchers of oil would climb ladders to fill the four golden bowls on each candelabra. And then the oil in those bowls was ignited.

“Picture sixteen beautiful blazes leaping toward the sky from these golden lamps. Remember that the Temple was on a hill above the rest of the city, so the glorious glow was a sight for the entire city to see. In addition to the light, Levitical musicians played their harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets to make joyful music to the Lord. What a glorious celebration! The light was to remind the people of how God’s Shekinah glory had once filled His Temple. But in the person of Jesus, God’s glory was once again present in the Temple. And He used that celebration to announce that very fact.”

I can just imagine the hush that came over the crowd when the oil was lit. Much like all our ooohs and aaahs at the 4th of July fireworks, only better. As the the crowd gazed at the beauty, Jesus reminds His people that this celebration is just a shadow, a typology of the real thing…and He cries out…”**I AM** the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

Jesus is the water, He is the light, He is the great **I AM**.

My prayer is that I am not so busy facilitating the Festival, which is just a shadow or typology of the “real thing” that I miss “Him”. I will trust that the Holy Spirit, who lives in me, the temple of God, will illuminate to me the great **“I AM”.**

Lesson Six: We Celebrate and Look to the Future

As we gather and prepare to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, we are reminded of our relationship with our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. There is an ambiance of children at play. And as Jean Piaget, child educational theorist, teaches…children learn through their play.

One article, that I downloaded during my research on this feast, can be found at:

<http://www.hope-of-Israel.org/tabernac.htm>. I appreciated the author’s recognition that as we celebrate the feasts each year, we also grow in our understanding of the details of the celebration and the foundational learning that occurs. In other words, we may choose to begin to celebrate the feasts, only to recognize that we have so much to learn and the learning will build one year at a time. Building blocks of learning, much like the stone blocks in the wall that Nehemiah restored around the city of Jerusalem. It was hard work placing one stone on another, but he and the families, who persisted with him, did indeed accomplish the work God had given to them.

So as we celebrate the feasts, try to not be so concerned about what you might have not done, but delight in that you have begun! It will not be perfect and celebrated in exact detail as the Jewish nation in the past may have celebrated, but it will be from your heart to God’s heart. And it will be within the present day culture. At this time, we will not sacrifice animals, however we may have a “cook – out” with lamb, hamburgers or kosher hot dogs. I would like to suggest a tradition to include, one which God Himself suggested, the lulav.

“The lulav is a bouquet of sorts that bind together four species of branches, (Leviticus 23). They were the palm, willow and myrtle, along with an etrog [citron]. “The four species (definitively, identified through Oral Tradition as palm, willow, and myrtle) bound together into a lulav, and an etrog [citron] were now part of the ritual. Each day of sukkot, the priests, holding the lulav and etrog in hand, marched around the altar, which had been adorned with freshly cut willow branches. As they circled, they recited a psalm asking God to ‘please save us’.” <http://www.hope-of-Israel.org/tabernac.htm>

In “The Jewish Book of Why” by Alfred J. Kolatch, it reads, “The use of four species of plants is PRESCRIBED IN LEVITICUS 23:40: ‘And you shall take on the first day [of the holiday] the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees [myrtle branches], and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.’ The Bible does not specify precisely which trees and fruits are to be taken. Jewish authorities have interpreted the ‘fruit of goodly trees’ to mean the etrog [the citron], and the ‘branches of [date] palms’ to mean the lulav. The ‘boughs of thick trees’ refers to the myrtle (called hadasim in Hebrew), These four species were to be held in the hand and blessed each day of the Sukkot holiday” (pg 250).

Also, at this point, we need to discuss the last and great day of the Festival of Tabernacles. This is the culmination, the grand finale of the week long celebration. It is also a typology or a foreshadowing of the “Great White Throne Judgment.” The day is called “Hoshanah Rabbah”, meaning “many hoshanahs”.

In “Essence of the Holy Days”, Avraham Finkel says, “Hoshana Rabbah, the seventh day of Sukkot, has a solemn undertone, it is closely linked to Yom Kippur, for it is on this day that the FINAL SEAL, is placed on the verdict that was pronounced on Yom Kippur.

“On Hoshana Rabbah we are mindful of the fact that during Sukkot, judgment is rendered concerning the rainfall for the entire world. The economic fortunes of the world depend on abundant rainfall, so our prayers for rain are of crucial importance for the global economy as a whole.

“This is evident in the special prayers of Hoshana Rabbah. During the Shacharit (morning) service of the first six days of Sukkot, the entire congregation makes on circuit around the bimah with lulav and etrog in hand while the chazzan leads the recitation of the hoshana prayer that is punctuated b the congregation’s saying aloud, Hoshana, ‘Please save!” On the seventh day of Sukkot – Hoshana Rabbah—seven circuits are made, hence the name Hoshana Rabbah, which means ‘many hoshanas.’

“In the hoshana prayers we ask for rain, ‘to give life to the forsaken wastes, to sustain with trees, to enhance with sweet fruits, to rain on the sproutings, to elevate the thirsty earth.’ After the seven processions around the bimah, additional prayers are said, after which the lulav and etrog are laid aside and the hoshana bundle, consisting of five willow branches, is picked up. The hoshana bundle is beaten on the ground five times in accordance with an ancient custom that was instituted by the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.” ***(The Essence of the Holy Days.*** *Pg.94)*

So, what does all this have to do with the future, and what is God teaching us as a foreshadow of what He is doing? The parallel is:

1. Rosh Hashanah – New Year – Day of Blowing (Trumpets) – pictures final warnings of God symbolized by trumpets of Revelation, call to repentance.
2. Yom Kippur – Day of repentance and fasting – Messiah returns, and judges the world, and marries His bride.
3. Feast of Sukkot (tabernacles) – seven days of joyous exuberance and feasting – symbolizing Millennial Kingdom of Messiah, and “wedding feast” of Marriage and Lamb.
4. Hoshana Rabbah – last great day of Sukkot – symbolizes “Great White Throne Judgment, when all whoever lived receive opportunity for salvation.

“On the LAST DAY, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:37-39)

Lesson Seven: Current Typology

Is God still speaking to us? Is He still teaching us? Does He still want to dwell with us? Is He still telling us what He is doing and going to do?

I believe the answer to all of the above is Yes!

When I began studying the scriptures using the word “typology” like a detective would use a magnifying glass, I was amazed. My eyes were open and I saw God in everything! All of His creation wells up and cries out to Him. The sun, moon, and stars are continuing to set the seasons as He commanded them. The seed bearing plants continue to replenish and grow to give us food. God’s blessings of rain continue to give us water. His Holy Spirit is the very air we breath. He has done it all! Created, Redeemed, Restored…..His Kingdom Come!

And from the beginning, His justice prevails. He is Judge. And His judgement will come, just as He has told us. The time will come when this period of grace will end and we will be called to account.

I believe He is telling us that this time is coming upon us. I believe His heart is beating quickly for us. And I believe He is still giving us pictures, shadows, typologies to prepare us. I believe the ministry of Children’s Rescue Center and Springfield, Ohio is in, and of itself a typology.

Why do I believe this?

Over a year and a half ago, I was in my kitchen, starting my morning rituals. I reached up to turn on my CD player to listen to and sing worship songs. When the music came on, I went down! Never had this happened to me. My forehead was on the floor and I was curled up into a fetal or worship position. I felt God’s presence so heavy in the air. He spoke to my heart. He told me that He was anointing me to be a prophet. Since that time, I have changed and my circumstances have changed. When this happened I had been retired for one and a half years from a non-profit ministry, Children’s Rescue Center, where I was a co-director. My husband and I had moved to a small rural community @ 30 miles from CRC, which was located in Springfield, Ohio. I had continued to serve my new rural church, but was enjoying the benefits of retirement and picking and choosing what “I wanted to do”.

Then things began changing. I went to a ladies retreat with my best friend, Nanc, who was the other part of the “co-director” of the CRC ministry. She too had retired. The retreat was not what I had expected. It was held at a state park in September of 2014. The ladies were not what I expected. They were a group of women from a diverse economic level. Some were like me and some were from the population of women I use to serve in the ministry. Women of great faith and poverty. Women who Jesus would have chosen to serve Him. I was getting pulled back into ministry as was my best friend, who was also at the retreat. Oh and by the way, the retreat was around the Feast of Tabernacles and we did indeed sleep in cabins, not our permanent homes. We spent long hours around a campfire, singing, praying, eating, talking and just having fun. I had not yet studied about the Feast of Tabernacles, but God in His infinite mercy was already teaching me.

A few weeks after the retreat, I learned that the CRC Executive Director was resigning effective December 31st of that year. The Board of CRC had decided to not replace the Executive Director but to be “Board” or “Team” run. “Run” is a good word, because the pace really began to speed up. I decided to become a board member as did my friend Nanc. During this time, I had been writing Bible Study Devotionals. I felt compelled to “get the Word out”. I continued to teach classes in forgiveness and to try to do each day what God called me to do and be.

When Nanc and I re-entered the board, it was quite a transition. We did our best to help in ways we could without going back to our original positions. It was good to be back serving in this way.

Another way God was using me was by studying and sharing my interest in the celebration of the Jewish Holidays, which He had given to His chosen people, the Israelites, Notably these are: Passover, Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles.

I shared a Seder meal and taught a church group about Passover. My family shared Passover, rather than the traditional Easter Dinner. Then, following the Jewish calendar and the agricultural cycle, the CRC ministry celebrated Pentecost. During this time, God began to open my eyes to the need of restoring these feasts as Judeo-Christian feasts right on our ministry campus. Concurrently, God was also having us restore two empty buildings on our campus, (a Missions House, for visiting missionary teams, and a Church Building). The CRC Board formed a building committee and determined the future use for the buildings. A mission and vision statement was created. The buildings were inspected and a priority list was created. Then a donation was given to pay down the debt of the CRC, with the prerequisite that the $50,000 be matched by other donors whose money would go to restore the buildings.

Then came a congregation who believed God was calling them to our neighborhood. They did not just want to move into the church building as renters, they wanted to minister with us as partners in God’s work. Even though the church needed a new roof, a new furnace and had mold in the basement, they still stepped out in faith and began holding services in our gym building while money was being raised to restore the church building.

It was sometime in this process that God revealed to me the parallel of what He was doing. Restoring the ministry, restoring lives, restoring marriages, restoring health, restoring the land. And I believe just as Ezra found the law while the temple was being restored, God allowed us to “find” Him in a new way.

People who were interested in what was going on at the campus, just started “showing” up to “come and see” what God was doing. The community garden at the campus was blooming with new growth, a bumper crop! The gym building use increased and new ministries were being birthed.

Then God revealed to me this new message about the Feast of Tabernacles. Then it ALL became clear. He is using us, the CRC ministry as a Typology of His soon second coming….His “Kingdom Come”.

If you look at an aerial photo of the parcel of the CRC campus at 1027 W. High Street, Springfield, Ohio 45506, you will see the similarity of shape and size of the Jewish temple. The garden is shaped as a cross and is our agricultural connection to the cycles of the Jewish calendar. The buildings that are closest to West High Street, the Missions House and the Church Building are the buildings, like the temple in Ezra and King Josiah lifetimes, that are being restored. And during the time of restoration, God has revealed His Law of His Feast of Tabernacles. However the picture is even bigger. Bill Stout, director of the Inside Out ministry, shared a vision God gave him several years ago. It was the vision of a billboard with the message, “Springfield, City of God”. Remember,”agre” is latin for “field” and Jesus himself said during this great feast that He is the water that “Springs” up (Holy Spirit). ie “Spring-field”. I believe God is fulfilling that vision.

We are on a journey. I am not sure when it started. I have heard that a group of people got together over 25 years ago and began praying for Springfield. I know that in the early 1990’s three ministries sprung up: The Nehemiah Foundation, The Sonshine Club and Children’s Rescue Center. Since then, we now have 28 ministries who are “On Fire” to serve the community. We have two hospitals who have become one. We have two high schools that have become one. We have Foundations that have sprung up to financially support the work, namely The Turner Foundation, Springfield Foundation, The Nehemiah Foundation and the and The Wilson Sheehan Foundation. I am sure I am missing others who God has called into existence. I believe God has restored the wall around the city and He is shinning a light on our city. People are still praying for our city daily. I believe people will come from outside our community to “come and see” what God has done here. I believe we are a typology of His second coming and establishing His Kingdom on this earth. Are we the New Jerusalem? No, because the scriptures are clear that His second coming will come to Jerusalem and He will reign in the heart of Israel. But I do believe we are a shadow of that, and in that, we can have great joy!

The Children’s Rescue Center will be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles on October 3rd at 6 p.m. and Sunday morning, October 4th. This will be our first time to celebrate the feast in our ministry. We invite anyone who wants to have a new connection with God and each other to join us in this celebration. Just camp out with us in your own Sukkah. I will be making mine with PVC pipes and tarps, but a simple tent would suffice, however it is important that you can look up and see the sun, moon, and starts. You may sleep over or you may want to just stay for the evening. The 4th of October is a Sunday and we will be celebrating it as the Last Great Day by sharing in the worship service of the New Day Christian Fellowship Church, located on the campus.

You may bring whatever you and your family want to eat and/or share. We will be visiting, singing, praying, listening to worship songs, dancing and just being joyful that we have been chosen to be invited on this date with our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Shalom!