

# Yeshua

# MISHPACHAH



A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word “mishpachah,” meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of “Yeshua”— our Jesus.

## Lessons From The Feasts

Dear Friends,

Twice this summer Sue and I were asked if we’d like to attend a Feast of Tabernacles celebration this fall. The first request was geographically impossible, so after declining the invitation we didn’t give it another thought. The second one, however, was doable. Now I had to do some thinking.

The last time I attended a Feast of Tabernacles was in 1998. It was filled with some of the most spiritually unrighteous, worldly inflamed people I’d ever been with. The Feast was a performance, a show for the people with all the banners and dancing. Little concern was shown for the “clean hands and pure hearts” needed to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

But the families who were inviting us this time were of a different spirit. They were filled with deep regard for the Lord, and serious about living righteously for Him. No this newsletter *isn’t* being written to urge you to keep the Feasts, but to review what followers of Jesus can glean from them.

### How Can Tabernacles Help Your Pilgrimage?

The Feast of Tabernacles (or booths) was one of the three annual festivals in which the people of Israel and Judah had to travel to Jerusalem. The name of this feast came from the requirement for everyone to live for seven days in outdoor tabernacles made of boughs and branches.

Throughout the Older Testa-

ment, God gave the Israelites several reasons for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles:

1. A Reminder Of That From Which God Had Freed Them  
*You shall live in booths 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 when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God** (Lev. 23:42,43).*

The Feast was to remind the Israelites for generations to come of the miraculous manner by which God had freed them from Egyptian bondage. This is an important point to remember when we review later how Tabernacles still helps the followers of Jesus today.

2. A Reminder of Our Sojourner Status

Living in booths reminded the Israelites that they were just sojourners on earth. Earthly existence was not designed by God to be permanent. But at the same time, the years they were given were intended to point to a larger eternal purpose.

The writer to the Hebrew believers clarifies this: “*All these people kept on trusting until they died, without receiving what had been promised. They had only seen it and welcomed it from a distance, while acknowledging that they were **aliens and temporary residents on the earth***” (Hebrews 11:13).

3. A Grateful Expression Of Their Dependence On God

*You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have **gathered in** from your threshing floor and your wine vat; and you shall **rejoice in your feast**, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns...*

***Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Tabernacles, and they shall **not appear before the LORD empty-handed**** (Deuteronomy 16:13,14-16).*

The Israelites worked hard on the land God gave them. Harvest time, the time of in-gathering, was an appropriate occasion to recount the good their God had accomplished on their behalf. The Feast pointed to their utter dependence on their Lord for provision, for He alone was the Source of the rain, sunlight and nutrients necessary for their crops to flourish.

4. A Time To Bring Sacrifice To God

*These are the LORD’s appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as **sacred assemblies for bringing offerings** made to the LORD by fire — the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each*

**Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come**

2 day (Leviticus 23:37).

The Israelites were not to come to the Feast empty-handed. Their journey cost them not only time away from home, but also the finest of their crops and stock.

#### 5. To Know God And To Keep His Commands

*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 Tabernacles, 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.*

*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. Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess (Deuteronomy 31:10-13).*

Every seventh year during the Feast of Tabernacles, families together reviewed the laws of God, from the youngest to even the aliens in the Land. Even for "Christians" today in a democratic society, the goal of reviewing the law to "learn and fear the LORD your God" seems like a foreign concept. But it shouldn't...

#### 6. A Time to Rejoice

*"On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days" (Leviticus 23:40).*

This was an important command. Here was a nation of people surrounded by enemies. Yet, as a testimony of their trust-based relationship with God, He wanted them to devote 8 days to rejoicing in Him!

## The Feasts: A Foreshadow Of Our Spiritual Responsibilities

In many ways the testimony and history that God has given us in the Older Testament are *physical* representations of that which we in Christ need to understand *spiritually*. God's reasons for the Feasts provide the foundations for aligning our *heart motives* as we live in *Covenant-union* with our Father.

The Apostle Paul reminds us of the physical-to-spiritual sequence when he writes, "*The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual*" (1Corinthians 15:46).

For instance, when Jesus at the Last Supper blessed God in sharing the bread and wine, He wasn't doing something unheard of. Jesus was incorporating aspects of the Passover Seder to express a spiritual truth that concerned Himself: "*This is My body...This is My blood.*"

We want to stress this point: ***If you don't understand the foundations in the Older Testament, you can never fully appreciate their spiritual significance in the Newer Testament.***

The relationship between our Father and us in Jesus and His intended way of life for us that is presented in the Newer Testament did not spring up in a vacuum. This is why Jesus and the Newer Testament writers cite the Hebrew Scriptures so often.

Again, we aren't saying that you should keep the form and ritual of the Feasts. But we are encouraging you to gain *spiritual understanding* of why God commanded the Israelites to do certain things, and how these apply to you today.

It would be wrong for you to go back and keep ritual and form if you believed that by so doing you are more pleasing to God. That would be *legalistic perversion* — striving to earn acceptance by performance. Yet, now that Jesus has

come, we who follow Him can glean deep insight from God's purposes for establishing the Feasts.

#### Learning from Passover

God commanded the Israelites to keep the Feast of Passover each year at a specific time:

*For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel (Exodus 12:15).*

The responsibility to remove all yeast from the home was so serious that anyone who failed to do this was cut off from the people. What can we learn about the significance of removing yeast from our lives and our homes?

Jesus told His disciples, "*Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*" (Luke 12:1b). Is Jesus referring to bread yeast here? Paul presses on further to connect "yeast" to sinful attitudes of the heart: "*Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth*" (1 Corinthians 5:8).

Can you see how meditating on the Older Testament and God's commands for Passover can help us today? Do you think that the failure to remove malice and wickedness *from our hearts today* is any less serious a matter than it was for the Israelites to remove yeast from the land?

Can Jesus be speaking to this when He cuts off self-justified religious practitioners at the Judgment Throne with the words, "*Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!*" (Matthew 7:23b)?

#### Learning from Yom Kippur

The Day of Atonement was an annual event in which all Israel came together in order to have their sins forgiven. (Consider

3 God's amazing grace in forgiving people through the vicarious sacrifice of an animal!) Instructions for this ritual were precise:

*When [Aaron and subsequent priests] has finished atoning for the Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he is to present the live goat. Aaron is to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and **confess over it all the transgressions, crimes and sins of the people of Israel**; he is to put them on the head of the goat and then send it away into the desert with a man appointed for the purpose. The goat will **bear all their transgressions away to some isolated place, and he is to let the goat go in the desert... For on this day, atonement will be made for you to purify you; you will be clean before ADONAI from all your sins (Leviticus 16:20-22,30).***

It takes a gracious God to forgive people's sins through the sacrifice of a substitute. It also calls for great trust on the part of the people to believe that the sacrifice has been accepted! Too often, when we today confess our sins, we forget that the Only Sacrifice for those sins has already been made. Yet this is exactly what our Father accepted on our behalf! "*God presented [Jesus] as a **sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood***" (Romans 3:25a).

Consider for a moment the loving choice Jesus made on your behalf. In order to be the perfect sacrifice, He had to become *just like you* in your humanity, yet not give way to sin. "*For this reason he had to be made **like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people***" (Hebrews 2:17).

### The Need to Prepare

The Israelites didn't just casually show up for the Feasts like peo-

ple today do when they attend a church service. All it seems you need to do is sit down and listen. You are the spectator to the performance others have prepared for your enjoyment.

For the Israelites, *preparation* was key to properly celebrating the Feasts. Before each feast, people had to prepare their homes for their absence. They needed to get ready for the often lengthy journey to Jerusalem, and locate others to form a caravan for safety from brigands.

Remember, in preparing for Passover the yeast needed to be removed from the land. Preparing for Tabernacles required booths to be built. **Preparation...**

As you study your Bible try to pay attention to all the times that *preparation* is needed. And take note of the consequences to those who *weren't* prepared.

The spiritual truths that are embodied in the Feasts provide followers of Jesus a means to learn vital spiritual truths. But it begins with preparation. You wouldn't show up at a wedding or birthday without a gift and appropriate attire. In the same light, our Father wants us to consider His reasons for the Feast of Tabernacles, and how to prepare ourselves to meet Him at the Judgment Throne.

### Removing Idols From Our Lives

The Feast of Tabernacles affords followers of Jesus a key opportunity to confront any idolatrous attachments we may have on earth. You may think you have none. But idolatry is one of the most inhibiting factors you may encounter if you desire to wholeheartedly follow Jesus.

Idolatry is one of those subtle sins that slowly takes over like a virus. It can creep into many areas of your life, even into your ministry to others.

While we were at the retreat center, Sue and I didn't own the

property. We worked without a salary under a board of directors. For 8 of our 10+ years there I felt I could leave any time God might call us. But then, imperceptibly, something happened deep inside my motivation. Whereas I once felt like a "steward" of the ministry, I began to feel "ownership."

When we left there, an older prophetic friend, Leon Price, told me, "Even a place can become an idol." As I looked back, I could see that his words were correct. I repented and thanked God for separating me from the idol I'd grown to cherish.

### From Sight to Trust

Paul assures us that "*we live by trust, not by what we see*" (2 Corinthians 5:7). That short sentence is packed with significant ramifications. Studies show that 90% of what we learn and value comes through our eyesight. The rest is acquired through taste, touch, hearing, and smell.

But what you see around you, as wonderful as it is, can also be your worse hindrance in living *fully for Jesus*. That's why preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles gives us a great opportunity to scrutinize our lives to see if we have any idols.

### 1. Idols: Things and Places

Just as the booths reminded the Israelites that they were sojourners on this earth, we too need to remind ourselves of that which is important to our God. Consider the goal of Abraham and of others who were commended for their persevering trust. Note how they pushed past that which they saw with their eyes into a heart trust that centered on eternity:

*"For [Abraham] was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God... Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared*



4 a city for them” (Hebrews 11:10,16).

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the **heavenly Jerusalem**, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of **angels in joyful assembly**, to the **church of the firstborn**, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the **spirits of righteous men made perfect**” (Hebrews 12:22,23).

What does this mean to us today? It means we too should question what truly occupies our devotion.

- **Look around you. Where do your possessions fit into your priorities?**
- **What do you fear losing?**

### 2. Idols: Creed versus Jesus

Is your faith centered more on your denominational creed than on Jesus? Jesus warned the religious leaders against putting their traditions on a higher plane than the pure Word of God. Those leaders knew nothing of loving God or their fellow man. Instead, they were consumed with putting fences around the boundaries of the Law so they couldn't be accused of sinning!

- **Do you identify yourself more by your creed than by your walk as a follower of Jesus?**
- **Is what you know more important to you than how you live?**

Keep in mind that the path Jesus walked may be yours as well: “And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. **Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore**” (Hebrews 13:12,13).

### 3. Idols: Family

Maybe your family has become your idol. Perhaps you are fearful to confront sin in your home because your spouse will object.

Perhaps you give in to your kids regarding activities or media that you know are contrary to God's.

- **Do you overspend to meet most of your children's or spouse's desires?**
- **What is the level of love for your family compared to your love for Jesus?**

Jesus well understood the shock His words made on His hearers:

“Anyone who loves his father or mother **more than me is not worthy of me**; anyone who loves his son or daughter **more than me is not worthy of me**” (Matthew 10:37).

### The Path To Eternity Is Strewn With Shattered Idols

Do you want to rid yourself of the idols that hinder you? Then you need your mind, will, and emotions to be brought into alignment with our Lord's. No one is born with the character of Jesus. To be **transformed** we need to stop being **conformed**:

*Do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of this world. Instead, **keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds**; so that you will **know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed** (Romans 12:2).*

Only by casting aside your man-pleasing, self-gratifying pursuits will you then be able to *hear the Spirit* and be responsive to Him. Then you will be able to discern our Father's will and walk in it.

Fully determine to embrace your sanctification—being set apart for His work in and through you — into the nature of Jesus. Don't let yourself become self-satisfied or complacent about anything on this earth:

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory**, which comes

from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

You're on a journey, so keep pressing onward!

A “Mind-field” of Idols

We often think of idols as some sort of man-made image, an icon we can behold and revere. Yet, our God sees idolatry in His children as a *matter of the heart*. Do you recall the repeated references to ancient Israel as adulterous and whorish? They had chosen to worship idols alongside God rather than adoring Him alone as He calls for.

Idolatry is whatever we desire more than Him or the same as Him. We yearn for things that compete with our loving devotion toward our Lord. Our old fleshly nature keeps vying with our spirit's desire to be transformed. It's an ongoing battle that demands vigilance and response!

In dealing with idolatry Paul offers a simple command: “**Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry**” (1 Corinthians 10:14). John puts it just as simply, “**Dear children, keep yourselves from idols**” (1 John 5:21).

The longing that comes from discontent with what you have emanates from a heart that is vulnerable to all sorts of wickedness. The only way to be rid of these is to *kill them!*

“**Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry**” (Colossians 3:5).

Habitual sin nullifies your inheritance in the kingdom of God. Note that Paul is addressing the church here!

“**The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the king-**

5 **dom of God**" (Galatians 5:19-21).

The apostle to whom Jesus was especially close summarizes the impact of an idolatrous worldly focus:

***Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever*** (1 John 2:15-17).

John shows us the way out of idolatry: **doing God's will**. How do you know what His will is? It begins by studying and prayerfully applying the Bible as made full in Jesus. If you aren't studying the Bible to apply it as living truth, you have idols that aren't being confronted and confessed.

## The Stronghold of Idolatry

[From our book *Demolishing Strongholds*]

In order to flee idolatry you have more to fight than just your sinful human nature. Demonic strongholds will also resist any of your attempts to fulfill God's commands. With the stronghold of idolatry the *here-and-now* will always have more emotional attachment for you than does the *here-after*.

In this culture, pursuit of wealth is one of the strongest attractions this stronghold uses. And that chase for power and prestige has ruined the faith of many people:

***People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have***

***wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs*** (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

A rich man was once asked, "How much money is enough?" He replied, "A little bit more." To crave and yearn for more of earth's treasures and pleasures defies God's will to "seek first His kingdom." You are **unable to be grateful** for what you have because you are disconnected from the Source of peace. "Happiness" seems to be just out of grasp. You long with all your heart for whatever you think will bring contentment. That becomes your next idol.

If you habitually display any of the symptoms below, you may have a stronghold of idolatry:

**FRUSTRATED** Continuous feelings of perplexity; nothing seems to go right

**HOPELESS** Strong feelings of desperation and despondency

**GREEDY / SELFISH** Stinginess or excessive self-indulgence  
**FINANCIAL PROBLEMS**

Habitual pattern of bad financial decisions

**WRONG GOALS / DECISIONS**

Outcome is focused on temporal pleasures and material possessions

**LIVING A LIE** Fear that others will discover the hollowness and superficiality of your life

**APATHETIC** Unconcerned for the feelings or welfare of others

If any of these describe you, stop now! Confess these before our Lord, casting this spirit down by the authority of the name of Jesus. Purpose to turn away from these deceits in your heart, and receive our Father's forgiveness for having preferred the world's values over faithfulness to Jesus alone. Then prayerfully discover how to fill in those old ruts of behavior with transformed ways according to His Spirit.

## The Pilgrimage of Salvation: Preparing Yourself For Eternity

A person bent on idolatry does not concern himself with eternity. The things he sees and craves in this world occupy all his thoughts and focus. Thus he does nothing to prepare himself for what lies beyond.

In a newsletter years ago we wrote about the retired leader of a major denomination for whom God given Mike a word, "There is nothing written about you in heaven." That old gentleman sadly replied, "Twenty-five years ago my brother told me the same thing." All the years during which he'd risen to the top of his denomination he'd been propelled by one idol: desire for prestige. But that man isn't the only one plagued by underpinnings of idolatry.

Our Father intended that our time on earth be a trust-based transformation from the here-and-now to an unswerving focus on eternity. This is what our forefathers in Hebrews 11 were commended for.

Jesus got His point across about trust-based preparation in the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Five prepared themselves in earnest anticipation of the Bridegroom's arrival. Five neglected their responsibilities. The consequences of each choice is revelatory:

***But while [the foolish virgins] were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you*** (Matthew 25:10-12).

We realize that it's hard for those who have embraced any of the so-called *man-centered gospels* of today to even consider that they

6 have any responsibility to prepare for the Judgment Throne. But you do! These false gospels negate so much of the responsibility God calls for in His Word.

Jesus again hammers home the truth of being properly prepared in Matthew 22:1-14, the Parable of the Wedding Banquet.

A king sends his servants to summon the guests who had been invited to his son's wedding. Full of worldly excuses and selfish pursuits, they declined and later even killed the messengers. This group represents those Jewish people who refused to put their trust in the Messiah. They forcefully disregarded all the prophecies of Scripture that had pointed directly to Jesus as Messiah.

Next in the parable, others from the streets and by-ways were invited. They represent the Gentile nations. Even though they responded, not all were prepared. And the consequences for the unprepared?

*But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was **not wearing wedding clothes**. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and **throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.'" (Matthew 22:13).*

The man who didn't prepare for this most honored occasion is a lesson in utter stupidity. He wasn't even on the original guest list! He got invited because those who had been asked refused. This man shows up unprepared. Confronted by the king, he is bound and tossed out.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"  
(Matthew 6:21)

If your heart is set on the things of this world in opposition to God's Word, don't you think our Lord may be speaking to you?

Jesus knew that many would be shallow in their relationship with Him, preferring to seek worldly acclaim and personal ego satisfaction from their religious activities. His warning still stands today!

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does the will of my Father who is in heaven**. **Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers [lawless people]!**' (Matthew 7:21-23).*

Is this what you want to hear at the Judgment Throne?

### Preparing For The Feast

God isn't requiring you to keep the Feasts of the Jewish Calendar. But He *is* calling you to spiritually discern why they were important for Him to institute, and how this awareness can help you prepare to meet Him. As we showed earlier through Passover, Yom Kippur, and Tabernacles, each feast has Newer Testament applications for each of us.

Although gaining understanding from the feasts should be an ongoing part of each of our lives, sometimes, like renewing our Covenant with our Father through communion, we need a special time to examine our lives in light of His Word.

You may want to use the time leading up to the Feast of Tabernacles this October to scrutinize your own life.

#### 1. From what God Has Freed You?

Often we grumble, just like the Israelites (see 1 Corinthians 10:10). Discontented complaint leads to despair and self-pity. This is a good time to review what Jesus accomplished on your behalf (see John 8:36). It's also appropriate to receive forgiveness for not walking in the fruit His Spirit so freely gives.

#### 2. Why Is It Important To Be A Sojourner?

Consider the *important* things in your life (see James 4:4). Do any of them compete with your loving and obedient devotion to God? If they do, repent, confess, and cry out for help. If you are to walk in His steps, you need to get off the path of idolatry!

#### 3. Are You Grateful, Expressing Your Dependence On God?

Dependence on a God Whom you can't see can be difficult. He knows that! This is why living righteously in accordance with His Word yields *answered prayer* (see James 5:16-18; 1 John 1:9). Answered prayer not only strengthens our dependence, it brings glory to our Father.

If you have nothing you really *need* from our Father, not even deeper intimacy, then you are not dependent on Him. Think of the consequences of your lack of dependence, and purpose to cry out for His heart perspective on your relationship with Him.

#### 4. Are You Sacrificing To God?

We no longer need to bring our Lord animal sacrifices. But did it ever occur to you that in your desire to be more like Jesus, *you* are the sacrifice? To be changed and conformed into His image will cause you suffering (see Romans 8:15-17; Hebrews 5:8). But in the process of your sanctification, you put yourself on God's altar — sacrificing all of your temporal and worldly inclinations in order to gain a holy and eternal perspective.

#### 5. How Well Do You Know God's Commands?

Sadly, so many have brought the awesome God of all the universe down to their level. This blasphemous view of Him permits them to live in sin without fear of consequences. Ignorance of His Word makes this possible. That is why the Lord required the



7 Israelites to review His commands every seventh Feast.

The Apostle John warned against setting aside the Word of our Lord: *“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness”* (1 John 3:4). Remember, Jesus told the lawless to *depart from Him* (see Matthew 7:21-23).

Do you have a regular pattern of Bible study in which you are daily looking for new things God would have you apply to your life? Does your study include an adequate penetration of the Older Testament? There is good reason why so many of the Newer Testament writers quote or cite it in their writings. Remember, 2 Timothy 3:16,17 begins with, *“All Scripture is inspired by God...”*

#### 6. A Time to Rejoice

Rejoicing sounds simple, doesn't it? Look around you. Do you and those who are part of your intimate fellowship really know how to rejoice? When you are together, can you all set aside every concern and worry so you can truly worship God with Spirit-inspired exuberance? Can you?

Take Paul's words to heart as you recall that this man had experienced beatings, imprisonment, stoning and shipwrecks: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: REJOICE!”* (Philippians 4:4). It proves to God that your focus is more on Him than on this world when your trust *in the Lord* frees you from despair over circumstances.

### The Older Testament Connection The Feast of Tabernacles and Jesus

Have you read our article, *The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*, concerning the Gospel the early Church embraced? Do you know that Jesus points to this specific Gospel on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles?

Picture yourself there as the

high priest has just poured out the waters of Siloam at the base of the altar. Golden trumpets are sounding, Levites are singing, people are chanting psalms of deliverance and prosperity.

And a loud voice penetrates the cacophony as the fulfillment of those cries:

*‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever trusts in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who trusted in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified* (John 7:37-39).

The last day of the Feast was called *Hosanna Rabbah*, the day of highest praise. Our Lord uses this greatest day of rejoicing at the Feast to tell His listeners the path to eternity — through Him! These were people who had just completed the solemn Yom Kippur fast the week before the Feast. Cleansed of their sins, they had fulfilled God's 6 purposes for the Feast. They were in great jubilation! Then Jesus proclaims to them the key to the New Covenant His Father offers. And, this key is found in the Older Testament.

The words of hope that Jesus announces to them He speaks to all who want eternity with Him. The only Scriptures in existence when He spoke was the Older Testament. The only Scripture that guided the early Church was the Older Testament. Why then do people today focus exclusively on the Newer Testament but ignore the value of the Old? Have you ever asked yourself why there was more relational intimacy and spiritual power in the earliest Church than we see today? Everything they did was based on the Older Testament as it was deepened and made complete in Jesus.

What Scriptures were the Bereans commended for searching

as they verified Paul's teaching in Acts 17:11? The Older Testament.

The Older Testament isn't a book of law only for the Jews. It is a *testimony of grace* for all followers of Jesus throughout the ages. You can never fully appreciate Him and what He accomplished on your behalf if you've never read the 333 prophecies in the Old Testament that pertain to His coming.

If you want to prepare as our Lord requires, whether for the Feast or for heaven, you need to understand the *spiritual significance* of the Older Testament in your life.

Everything that guided the earliest followers of Jesus is found there! Anyone who tells you that all that matters is the “New Testament Church” totally maligns the fullness of Jesus' work.

The laws regarding the Temple service and sacrifice are no longer applicable, but what about God's *moral* laws. Didn't Jesus bring these forth as still applicable to all of us in Matthew 5-7 among other places? As with our understanding of the Feasts, Jesus gave these laws a *heart* interpretation. What is murder? The death of a human only, or *hatred* of one? And adultery isn't a physical act alone, but a wicked motive of the heart — lust.

Our Father's purposes for the Feasts need our careful attention as followers of Jesus to fully appreciate His fulfillment of them. The spiritual aspects of a Christian's life are found in the Older Testament as well as in the Newer. Without understanding these foundations, people embrace hollow religious practices rather than a vibrant trust that sacrifices self and rejoices in God their Maker. Keep this in mind:

***Religion is an idol;  
Faith is a relationship.***

Yours in the journey,

**Mike and Sue**

