

Zech. 14:16 The Feast of Booths

In this passage at the very end of the Book of Zechariah he says there is coming a day when the nations of the world will worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. And they will do this by celebrating the Feast of Booths. With these words I believe Zechariah is looking forward to the Days of the Kingdom of the Son. This means the fulfillment of these words are found in the King, the Lord Jesus Christ! We must always remember that the NT was concealed in the OT. AND, the OT is revealed in the NT. This means that during the Old Covenant God is preparing his people for what is to come in the New Covenant. Paul says in Col. 2:16-17: **“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”** Today, in the Feast of Booths, we have a beautiful picture of the person and work of Christ as we take the Lord’s Supper together. With this in mind, I want us to take a closer look at the Feast of Booths in the OT and show how this feast is fulfilled and being fulfilled today in Jesus.

So, to begin, we must take a closer look at the institution and history of the Feast of Booths. This feast makes up one of three main feasts celebrated by Israel, along with the Passover and the Feast of Weeks. In Deut. 16:13 we find a summary of these feasts: **“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths . . .”** The Feast of Booths (sometimes called the Feast of Tabernacles) began on the 15th day of the 7th month. It followed the Day of Atonement on the 10th day. The official days of the feast lasted 7 days, but another day, the 8th was given in order to wrap everything up. This feast came right before winter and at the end of the harvest. The hard work had come to an end. There was an abundance of food and drink, including new wine, grains, fruits, and vegetables. It was a time of joyful celebration, giving glory to God in providing their needs (also called the Feast of the Ingathering). When this Feast began, ONLY Israelites could take part (Lev. 23:43; Deut. 16:13-16). Every day the people ate and drank, rested, and had fellowship one with another. And throughout history, concerning attendance, this feast is the largest. During the feast, sacrifices were offered to God, both sin offerings and burnt offerings, including sheep and goats. In fact, there were a total of 70 offerings made during the week (keep the number 70 in mind). By faith these Israelites celebrated God’s promise to cover their sins. This was quite the Fall Festival.

Now, I want give some attention to the NAME of this Feast: The Feast of BOOTHs. To the Jews, this is known as the Feast of *Sukkot*. This is the Hebrew Word for “booth.” It is sometimes translated as tabernacle, which is why it may be called the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the same word used when Jacob made dwellings for his cattle in place of *Succoth* (Gen. 33:17). Jonah, as he waited outside Nineveh, made for himself a booth, a temporary dwelling as shelter from the sun. During the feast the Israelites were instructed to construct temporary shelters, or “booths,” made from the branches of palm trees and other green leafy trees. And for the seven days of the feast, they lived in these temporary structures. (I picture a huge bluegrass festival my mother

used to take me to where everyone camped. Kids, I think of a giant tent in the living room that your parents might let you keep up for a few days.)

Now, it is interesting that ONLY twice does the OT refer to specific times of celebration: 1) Solomon's temple was dedicated during the Feast of Booths (1 Kings 8). 2) During a great time or revival described in Neh. 8:13-18 after Israel's return from exile. I think this one of the reasons Zechariah mentions this Feast during his day. So, before turning our attention to the NT and the Lord's Supper, let me read God's instructions for this feast from Lev. 23:39-43 and point out that this was a GREAT TIME of CELEBRATION where the people REMEMBERED what God had done for them. **"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."**

With this in mind, turn with me to John 7. Here we find the Jews of Jesus' day celebrating the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem. And in about the middle of the Celebration, Jesus goes into the temple and teaches the people. And on the very last day of the Feast (probably the 8th day), Jesus stands up and says, vv. 37-38: **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" I have three truths as we celebrate the Lord's Supper.**

1. It is a Feast of Provision. After the 2nd temple in Jerusalem had been built and during the time of Jesus, there was a tradition added to the Feast of Booths. During the Feast (maybe daily), the priest/s would draw water from the Pool of Siloam, a very famous historical pool of water often used for ritual washings. Though Jesus did not need this event to say what He said, nevertheless, He uses this tradition as a picture. And we cannot miss the importance of Jesus' words. Think of the context! All the people, celebrating the Feast of Booths, rejoicing in God's provision. And then, this man stands up and proclaims, **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to ME."** This is amazing! He doesn't say, *"God will provide."* He says, ***"I will provide."*** He is saying, *"If anyone comes to me, I will quench your thirst."* What a statement! Here, Jesus shifts the provision of the most fundamental need (water), to Himself.

Do you remember the Samaritan woman Jesus met at the well in Samaria? As she went to draw water, Jesus says to her, **"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life"** (John 4:13-

15). At another time Jesus tells his disciples: ***“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh”*** (John 6:51).

Today, we remember God’s ultimate provision. And He doesn’t merely deliver us from physical bondage, but delivers us from sin and death. Brothers and sisters, the Feast of Booths was given to Israel and us as a picture, as a type, as a beautiful celebration until the antitype comes, until this Feast finds its fulfillment in Christ. Today, we remember Jesus, particularly that through his birth, his sinless life, his death and atoning sacrifice, his resurrection, and his ascension, by the Spirit, we celebrate because God has provided all our needs according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

And let me bring our attention briefly to Jesus’ words, ***“If ANYONE comes to me . . .”*** If you remember, the Feast of Booths was only for Jews. But, in Jesus, we find that here we are today . . . We are Gentiles. This is exactly what Zechariah prophesied, that in the “last days” the nations of the earth would celebrate the Feast of Booths. Even the 70 sacrifices during the Feast picture the table of nations found Gen. 10-11. Today, as we celebrate and remember God’s provision in Christ, we find this fulfillment.

2. It is a Feast of Joy. In the OT Feast of Booths, Israel remembered all the blessings of God, particularly his mercy and his goodness. The people were told to use palm trees to build their booths because these trees had the richest and largest of leaves. (I think of Pam and Kristen, as they love their Palm trees.) They celebrated this feast as they remembered all the blessings of God, as he cared for them in the desert with miraculous water from the rock, with manna from heaven, with quail to eat, etc. In the Feast of Booths, the people celebrated God’s physical provision with joy. But, mainly, it was a feast of joy because the people were reminded that they were brought from bondage to blessing, from slavery in Egypt (through the desert) and finally into the Land of Canaan.

It is interesting that when Jesus rode down the Mount of Olives the people gathered palm leaves, crying out with great joy, **“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”** (John 12:13). Today, as we take the Lord’s Supper, as we remember, we come with the greatest of joy. In the New Covenant, because Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises found in the Feast of Booths, we always rejoice. In this regard, every day, every hour, every second, we celebrate with joy.

Because of Christ, Heb. 12:22 says, **“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,”** (Heb. 12:22) Today, we remember with great joy!

3. It is a Feast of Renewal. Probably the most important part of the Feast of Booths was the reading of the Law of God. At the Feast, the priests were commanded to read the entire Book of the Law, the TORAH (See Deut. 31:9-13). And as they read, they were renewed by the

instructions of the Word, the commands to live godly, all the stories of God's faithfulness. When Jesus stood up at the Feast of Booths in his day and said, *"If anyone comes to me, I will quench his thirst; I will give him eternal life,"* He was saying, *"Listen to my words!"* In the Great Commission, what does Jesus tell us? **"Go into the world, baptize, and . . . TEACH THEM TO OBEY ALL MY COMMANDS."** John says to us, **"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"** (John 1:1). When Peter, James, and John went up on the Mountain with Jesus and he was transfigured before them, do you remember the voice from heaven and what the voice said. God said, **"This is my beloved Son, listen to him"** (Mark 9:7).

Every time we gather around the Word of God as the church (and take the Lord's Supper), by the Spirit, we are being renewed. Every time we gather the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and the particular words of the Gospel of Christ and applies them to our hearts and to our minds and we are renewed. Those of you who are Christians know this to be true!

Brothers and sisters, we need this renewal found in Christ. We are commanded to take the Lord's Supper "until He comes." "Until He comes," we celebrate and we remember. Though we are no longer wandering in the desert as Israel did, we are still in this world. We still wait for ALL the promises of God to be fulfilled. As long as sin, death, and the devil remain, as long as we are in these bodies, as long as the troubles of this world continue, we know that in Christ, our sins are covered, the wrath of God has been removed, and we are ultimately safe. And in Christ, God will lead us to a new heavens and a new earth with a new body. By the Spirit, we are being renewed day by day. We no longer build booths. WHY? Because the Word has become flesh and by the Spirit he dwells among us (John 1:14).

Today, as we take the Lord's Supper, Jesus is the TRUE Israel. In his humiliation, his incarnation, his taking on flesh, all his testings in this life including how Satan tested him and he came through victorious; his entire life of humiliation, of suffering, of death, and his ultimate victory in the resurrection is the reality of the Feast of Booths. In Him, we have EVERYTHING we need for life and godliness. God has provided for our greatest need, the reality of sin and death and separation from God. There is no greater provision for the Christian. This we celebrate today in the Lord's Supper. In Christ, we find the greatest of joy. This is why we sing songs of celebration, songs of victory, songs of rejoicing! This is why we say with the Apostle Paul: **"Thanks be unto God who has given us the victory in Christ Jesus"** (1 Cor. 15:57). Also, in Christ we find daily renewal by the Spirit. Even Zechariah in his day looked forward to a day when Grace Baptist Church would celebrate the "Feast of Booths" as he said in 13:1: **"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness."** On that day, v. 9: **"They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people, and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"** And in 14:8: **"On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem . . ."** And in v. 16: The nations **"shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths."**