

## COME TO THE WATERS

### INTRODUCTION

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, the Jewish feast of Tabernacles takes place. It's part of the 3 autumn feasts of Israel – Tabernacles. As a reminder, at a very high level this is what the feasts represent:

DAY	FEAST	THEME	TEACHING
1 (19/9/2020)	Trumpets - Rosh Hashanah	Repentance & New beginnings. Jewish New Year	Last Days & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ
10 (28/9/2020)	Atonement – Yom Kippur	Redemption	Judgment & God's grace
15-21 (2/10–9/10/2020)	Tabernacles – Sukkot – Booths or ingathering	Rejoicing	God with us & Ingathering

In John chapter 7 we read how Jesus attended the feast of Tabernacles, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, the great day of the feast, Jesus made a proclamation. I believe His proclamation, particularly this year as we deal with the virus crisis and we watch world end-time events taking place, is incredibly important, so today I will focus on those words Jesus spoke in order for us to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us right now.

### MESSAGE

**John 7:37-38** 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. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'

### WATER FROM THE ROCK

Jesus never said anything without reason and he often related what he said to what the people were seeing and doing at the time or with things that were occurring at the time. Therefore, something must have prompted Him to speak about coming and drinking from Him. I believe it was this: It happened that as part of the celebrations, the priests performed a water libation ceremony.

On the first morning of Sukkot a procession of priests went down to the pool of Siloam to bring up to the Temple a golden container of water sufficient to last throughout the seven days of the feast. The water was brought up with great ceremony. The shofar was blown and the pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for the feast waved their lulavs as the priests carried the water around the altar. The great Hallel (Psalms 113-118) were recited. Then the priest on duty poured out the contents of two silver bowls: one held water and

the other held wine. This was an act of prayer and an expression of dependence upon God to pour out his blessing of rain upon the earth.

On the last or "great" day of the feast, the water libation rite reached its climax. The priests circled the altar seven times and then poured out the water with great pomp and ceremony. This was Hoshana Rabbah, the great "HOSHIANA," (which translated is "save now").

The ceremony referred to these verses from Isaiah:

**Isaiah 12:2-3** (NKJV) Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' " 3 Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.

1. This was a massive joyous celebration.
2. It was all about the wonderful salvation in God.
3. It led into a time of praying for God to bless them with rain.

What has water got to do with salvation. Sukkot remembers the people in the wilderness. They were totally reliant on God, not only for shelter, but for food and water, without which they would have died.

In Exodus, God gave them water out of a rock, that water saved them, it kept them alive. The Jews celebrated it. We know that the rock represented Jesus. He was with them in the form of a Rock. Today we know Him as the Rock of our salvation!

Praying for rain was also about survival. Without rain, there would be no crops and the people would starve. Once again, when God provided rain, He provided salvation. Today we still pray for rain, but we also pray for the rain of the Holy Spirit to bring revival.

## **JESUS PRESENCE AT SUKKOT OR TABERNACLES**

Against this backdrop Jesus stood up and boldly proclaimed to the people, "If a man 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."

Imagine the uproar his statement must have caused! The priest had just poured out the water libation as an appeal to the Creator God to provide water for the people, and Yeshua (Jesus), as if to answer the prayer, tells the people to come to Him for water. What a radical statement and shocker to the crowd.

What Jesus was revealing to the people was that He, the Messiah was in their midst. The Rock who gave them water in the desert was there with them, offering a different kind of water. He offered living water, living water provides eternal life.

- Little did they realise that Jesus, Yeshua, the Messiah and Great Saviour was celebrating the feast with them.

- He was offering them a drink from the well of salvation.
- That drink would initiate a fountain from within them that would flow with living water.

***Today Jesus is once again calling us to drink from Him.***

- ***Do you know this Jesus? Or are you like the woman at the well who did not know Him, and had to first experience Him as her Messiah.***
- ***Have you possibly grown cold in your walk with Jesus? Do you need to ask Him to refresh that fountain of living water and change it from a trickle to a rushing bubbling fountain once again.***

## **AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

While this celebration points to Jesus, the Rock and the well from which we can draw salvation, it also points to the presence of Holy Spirit in our lives.

**Isaiah 44:3** (NKJV) For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;

- The pouring of water and the overflowing floods refer to the Holy Spirit/
- I will pour My Spirit on your descendants.

**Joel 2:28-29** (NKJV) "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

The priests in their libation ceremony would draw water from the Pool of Siloam.

- People would lie next to the Pool of Siloam for an angel to come and stir the waters. If they got in the waters, they would be healed . The living waters of Siloam became associated with the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Feast of Tabernacles comes at a crucial juncture in Israel's agricultural cycle—the end of one agricultural year and the beginning of the next. The farmers finish harvesting the grapes, figs, pomegranates and dates. Soon the ripe olives will be picked. Sukkot is thus a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

But this is also the time when thoughts and prayers turn anxiously toward the year's first rains, which in Israel often begin soon after Sukkot.

The celebration as described in the Jewish Ceremonial Laws, the Talmud, also pointed symbolically to the Holy Spirit:

"He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life. At the conclusion of the first festival day of Tabernacles they descended to the court of the women where they had made

a great enactment. There were there golden candlesticks with four golden bowls on the top of each of them and four ladders to each, and four youths drawn from the priestly stock in whose hands were held jars of oil... there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the place of the water-drawing. Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands, and sing songs and praises. And Levites without number with harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and other musical instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women, corresponding to the fifteen songs of ascents in the psalms..." (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 51a and 51b).

Oil, light, rejoicing – all of these symbolise the work of the Holy Spirit.

The moment we believe in Jesus and drink from the Living Water that He offers, we receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. It is He that enables that fountain of living water to start bubbling up in us when we are born again. It is Him who illuminates God's word to us so that we can grow spiritually, and it is His power in us that helps us live the victorious Christian life.

Tabernacles is a time not only to encounter Jesus and the eternal-life giving water that He offers, but it's a time to encounter the fresh oil and new wine that comes from the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives!

- The priests held in their hands jars of oil.
- The courtyards of Jerusalem were fully illuminated by the light at the place of water drawing.
- Hand in hand with drinking from Jesus is the anointing, the light, the joy and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

***Tabernacles represents the ingathering - the rapture in our understanding.***

- ***Will we be like the five wise virgins who are full of the oil of the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit, or is there not enough light in us today?***
- ***If the trumpet sounds and our Bridegroom comes to fetch us, His bride, are we ready.***
- ***How is our walk with the Holy Spirit today?***
- ***Do we need to ask our God for a fresh touch, new wine and fresh oil?***

## **CONCLUSION**

Sukkot is an eight-day long feast. That's a lot of feasting! The first evening and day are special, but the end of the feast even more so. In fact, the last day is the epitome of the Festival of Sukkot. "Hoshana Rabba" (a request for great salvation) is on the seventh day, followed by "Shmini Atzeret" (holy eighth day of the assembly) and "Simchat Torah" (Joy of the Torah).

It's a celebration utterly unbridled joy of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, which surpasses even the joy of Sukkot. It is celebrated with dancing. Can this possibly point to the joy of finally being raptured and finding ourselves in God's presence?

Is it possible that with all that is taking place around us, we have forgotten about the wonderful life and future have in Jesus Christ.

Is it possible that we have stopped focusing on the powerful indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and that the fountain of life that is within us, has slowed to a trickle.

- Have we neglected the amazing anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- Have we grown cold and the fire is no longer burning as bright as it should.
- We are the priests today and our body is the temple. Do we need to once again fill not our hands but our hearts with jars of oil like the five virgins who were ready for the bridegroom.
- Do we need an infilling of fresh oil and new wine. God is offering us such an encounter today.

The feast of Tabernacles is also known as the feast of Ingathering. For Christians, this must represent the rapture. People everywhere are saying that Jesus is coming soon. The prophetic signs are all in place. These include the corona virus crisis. Are we ready?

Today once again, like He did on the last and greatest day of the festival of Tabernacles, cries again in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

- Jesus is calling us into a fresh, dynamic, life changing adventure in Him.
- He is reminding the backslider that they have drunk from the fountain of life.
- The Holy Spirit is present in this feast. He is the source of the fountain in our innermost parts. He wants the trickle to become a gushing river of life.
- Call on Him today. Ask Him for a fresh infilling, fresh oil and new wine.
- Ask Him to change that trickle of living water into a mighty rushing river of His presence and anointing in and through our life.

I close with this scripture: **Revelation 22:17** (NKJV) And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.