

END TIMES AS PICTURED IN THE FALL FEASTS

Week 10 – Jesus' First and Second Comings

Fall Feasts: Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. All occurring in the 7th month of the Jewish calendar. The #7 means completion! Fall feasts and end times come together.

I'm suggesting that the. . .

Feast of Trumpets (time of repentance) will be fulfilled in the Tribulation

Yom Kippur (time of restoration) will be fulfilled at Jesus' Second Coming

Feast of Tabernacles (time of God tabernacling/dwelling w/ man) will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom

The Feast of Tabernacles is the final feast, the 7th feast in the 7th month in the Jewish religious calendar. Seven is the number of completion. The Feast of Tabernacles is also known as THE Feast, the Season of our Rejoicing, and the Feast of Ingathering. Why is Tabernacles called THE Feast? Tabernacles coincides with the final harvest in Israel.

What is the message of the Feast of Tabernacles? In Ex. 25:8 God told the Jewish people He desired to dwell with them. Because each feast that God gave Israel has a prophetic aspect – each feast looks ahead to a fulfillment in Jesus - the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus will dwell with man!

In Lev. 23:33-43 God told the children of Israel to dwell in booths for 7 days. These booths are called sukkahs which were crude temporary shelters. The root word for sukkah is woven. These booths were to be purposely flimsy. The roof was to be made of branches that were placed in such a way that they could see the sky between the leaves and palm fronds branches and look at God's heaven – and thank Him for His provision as they wandered in the wilderness. The leafy construction/the flimsy construction of the booths teaches us that we need to depend upon God for everything while we live temporarily on this earth, looking forward to the day when God will dwell with us when He will tabernacle with us! The fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles will be the Millennial kingdom.

The Feast of Tabernacles, in Biblical times, celebrated the final harvest of the Jewish year – the ingathering of the final crops. This feast is also known as The Season of Our Rejoicing Harvest is a time of abundance and joy.

Matt. 8:11 - *I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.* Jesus is teaching that believing Gentiles will sit down with believing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (note the context of this passage). Rabbinic Judaism (as taught by the Rabbis – not from the Bible) teaches that the Jewish people should invite strangers/guests

into their booths. *Ushpizin* is the Aramaic word for guests. Guests could include the underprivileged and Gentiles.

Why is the Feast of Tabernacles also called the Feast of Ingathering? Key words/thoughts: Harvest time; Israel providing for the strangers, Israel chosen by God to witness to the nations and to act as God's instrument of blessing for the world. Again, the Feast of Tabernacles is the ingathering of the final harvest in Israel's agricultural season (Ex. 23:16). Consider the harvest. . . .

After Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well and proclaimed Himself as the Messiah, she ran to her friends and said, *Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?*" ³⁰ Then they went out of the city and came to Him. By that time the disciples were with Jesus, and Jesus told them as the people from Samaria came to Jesus: *lift up your eyes and look at the fields*, look at these people coming toward us. These people *are already white for harvest!* Harvest equates to people – to souls!!!

During the Millennial Kingdom there will be many coming to faith in Jesus. Zech. 8:23 - *Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."*

Did you ever wonder why the Jewish people on the day of Jesus' triumphal entry gathered with Him on the road to Jerusalem and called Him the Son of David? Luke 19:11 tells us that the people thought at this time the kingdom of God would appear. The kingdom on earth will be the time during which Jesus, the Son of David, will sit on the throne of David, tabernacling/dwelling with man. Did you ever wonder why the Jewish people at Jesus' triumphal entry cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road? Lev. 23:40 - they were to take palm branches, myrtle branches and willow branches at the Feast of Tabernacles – the final feast – looking forward to when God would dwell with man. The people were hailing Jesus as King. Thus we hear them crying out: *Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!* And we see the great multitude in Rev. 7:9-10 from all nations, tribes, and tongues *standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,* ¹⁰ *and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

WHY must there be a Millennial Kingdom?

- God promised His kingdom to be established on earth – given to the Jewish people. It was prophesied. If God is faithful, and He is, there MUST be a Millennial Kingdom.
- The Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. When God cut the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12, Gen. 15. . . .), God promised Abraham land, a seed, and a blessing. The Abraham flows out into. . .
 - The Land Covenant – Deut. 28 – Deut. 30

- All the land that God promised Abraham will be given to Israel in the Millennial Kingdom (Eze. 48).
- The Davidic Covenant – II Sam. 17
 - God will not only give Abraham multiple descendants, but He will also give Abraham and his seed the Messiah (Gen. 15:5; Gal. 3:16).
- The New Covenant – Jer. 31:31 - *Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*

The Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and the Feast of Tabernacles have yet to be fulfilled. We look back in Scripture so that we can look forward. And so we read Gal. 4:4 - *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*

MESSIANIC EXPECTATION, MESSIANIC FERVOR – the people were living in the excitement of the coming of the Messiah. Are we living in the excitement of the second coming of the Messiah? What do we celebrate at Christmas? We celebrate the birth of the promised Messiah. The One Whom God promised to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 49:5-6).

Before the birth of Jesus the angel Gabriel was sent by God to tell Zacharias that he would have a son who would be named John. John would be the herald for the Messiah; John would announce the Messiah Jesus Who would come as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. At Jesus' first coming, He came to die for sin. He is THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE (the perfect Passover Lamb). The announcement of John's birth was given to Zacharias who was serving in the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of SACRIFICE! What a message God proclaimed to the world. We have a sacrifice theme laid out for us at Jesus First Coming!

The people in Judea were discussing all that was transpiring prior to Jesus' birth (Luke 1:21; Luke 1:63; Luke 2:18) and they were MARVELING at the happenings.

The Christmas accounts from Luke and from Matthew – speak to Jesus' FIRST COMING and His SECOND COMING!

First coming:

Luke 2:8-12 - *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."*

Why would an angel of the Lord appear to shepherds? Shepherds were the lowest of the low! These Jewish shepherds were under a rabbinical ban since they were living in the fields. Because they were with their flocks in the field 24/7, they couldn't obey the regulations in the Law re: washings, and purification rites, and foods. They were shunned by the Jewish community. God's grace reaches down to the lowest of the low.

Where were the shepherds watching their flock? Micah 5:2 - But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting."

There were two Bethlehem's in Israel. One in Galilee – 6 mi. NW of Nazareth (Josh. 19:10, 15) and this Bethlehem in Judah. Micah 5:2 specifically tells us that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah.

- Ephrathah means FRUITFUL.
- Ephrathah was the ancient name of Bethlehem.
- Ephrathah in Jesus' day was just to the north of where the people lived. It was part of Bethlehem.
- Ephrathah was the northern part of Bethlehem - on the road to Jerusalem.

Sheep that were destined to be sacrificed in the Temple in Jerusalem had to be tended/kept in fields 24/7 – year round within a certain radius of the Temple in Jerusalem. Ephrathah, on the northern outskirts of Bethlehem, was in that radius. Scripture tells us in Micah 5:2 that JESUS came into the world in the part of Bethlehem known as Ephrathah – where only sheep that were going to be sacrificed in the Temple were kept! This is the Christmas message!

In Ephrathah there was a tower – a watch tower called the tower of the flock – for those flock of sheep that would be sacrificed. This tower was used by shepherds for protection – against enemies – against wild animals. According to writings by the Rabbis, this watch tower was the place where ewes were brought to give birth NOT to ordinary lambs but to lambs that were destined for Temple sacrifice in Jerusalem. Alfred Edersheim (Jewish believer now with the Lord) wrote a classic book entitled "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah." See Book 2/Chapter 6 for information re: the tower of the flock. Rabbinic writings talk about this watch tower. It will be the place where the Messiah will be revealed. Again, ewes, mama lambs, were brought to the tower of the flock to give birth to lambs destined for Temple sacrifice. We find Scripture that tells us about that watch tower in Genesis 35:21 which records the death of Rachel, the wife of Jacob, after she gave birth to Benjamin. It appears that she was buried near the tower of Eder, the tower of the flock. "Rachel" means "ewe"! This area was a place of sorrows. At Jesus' first coming, He would suffer and die.

Micah 4:8 - *To you, O tower of the flock, to you shall it come – even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.*

Scripture doesn't say that Jesus was born in a stable or in a cave. Did Mary and Joseph travel to this tower of the flock after they were told that there was no room at the inn? Bible commentators and historians have speculated as to where Jesus was born. Some have suggested a stable; Scripture doesn't tell us that He was born in a stable. Some have suggested a cave; Scripture doesn't tell us that He was born in a cave. I'm suggesting that Jesus was born in this tower of the flock. Scripture doesn't state that Jesus was born in the tower of the flock; however, Scripture points to that possibility. Scripture does tell us that Jesus was laid in a manger. There were mangers, feeding troughs, in this tower of the flock – for the sacrificial lambs. The tower of the flock was well-known in the Jewish culture. It was part of the sacrificial system. Something to at least ponder. Consider if Mary gave birth to Jesus in this tower of the flock where sacrifice was the focus, what a message God was proclaiming to the world: Here is My Son - the perfect Lamb of God Who will be sacrificed for sin! Proverbs 18:10 – He, JESUS, is a strong Tower!

The GLORY OF THE LORD shone around the shepherds. The Glory of God, as seen by man, is God's manifested presence. Kavod – weighty-ness – His character, His attributes, His reputation. In the OT God chose to manifest Himself in the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day as He led the people through the wilderness. The glory of God filled the tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem. We read of the glory of God departing from the temple in Jerusalem in the book of Ezekiel because of the abominations in Israel. The glory of God is back at Jesus' birth. John 1:14 - *The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Can you imagine how brightly the glory of God shone that night? AND YET – many didn't see!!!!

The angel speaks of "good tidings of great joy. . . ." Isa. 41:27 tells us that the Messiah will bring good tidings at His first coming! These good tidings speak of the Gospel – of forgiveness of sin. And these good tidings would be for ALL people – both Jews and Gentiles. God's plan of salvation is offered to the WORLD!

The Angel tells the shepherds this would all happen in the City of David – the ancient Bethlehem where David was born. The Jewish shepherds knew that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David (II Sam. 7; Jer. 23:5; Psalms).

A Savior? Being saved is a very Jewish teaching in the OT! God told the Jewish people in Isaiah 46:13: *I will place salvation in Zion – Jerusalem for Israel My glory.* Isa. 45:22 – *God told Israel, "Look to Me and be saved"!* The Hebrew word for salvation is YESHUA!

The Messiah would be born. Isa. 7:14 a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son; Isa. 9:6 unto us a Child is born.

We have in the angel's message the mention of a SIGN: the Babe would be wrapped in swaddling cloths. Luke 2:12 – *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.* ALL babies were wrapped in swaddling cloths so that their limbs would be straight. How are they, the shepherds, going to find this special baby, this Savior, wrapped in swaddling cloths if ALL babies were wrapped this way at birth? Think OT/Hebrew Scriptures. . . . Think of what God required of the

Jewish people re: sacrifices. The sacrifices had to be without blemish. Lambs born to ewes in the place where the sacrificial lambs were kept (in the tower of the flock) --were wrapped in swaddling cloths. Animals coming into the world, kicking and flailing and bruising themselves would no longer be eligible for temple sacrifice. (Lev. 22:27 – lambs, goats and bulls were eligible for sacrifice at 8 days old!) The lambs destined for Temple sacrifice had to be wrapped in swaddling cloths! So that they wouldn't bruise.

As part of the sign we read that the Babe was to be found lying in a manger – feeding trough/stall. In lowliness the Savior came.

Luke 2:13-14. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on EARTH, peace toward men on whom God’s sovereign pleasure rests.” And then the angels departed.

Luke 2:15 – let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass which the LORD has made known to us!

Did the angel tell the shepherds where to find the Baby? NO! Did the shepherds ask? NO! How many mangers could there have been?” Historical resources tell us that MANY of the homes in these towns had mangers. Mangers could be as simple as a ledge protruding from the wall inside the house. Hay would be placed on that ledge for the livestock. Mangers could be found in side-rooms in homes. And, oftentimes there were mangers in the “livingrooms – in the main room of a home. Animals were kept in many of the homes (I Sam. 28:24; Judges 11:31). The shepherds might’ve had to comb the entire city looking for this baby in a manger. Luke 2:16 tells us that they came with HASTE and found Mary and Joseph and the Babe. The shepherds knew where the sacrificial lambs were birthed and kept. The tower where the sheep were born, the sheep destined for Temple sacrifice might very well have been the birthplace for Jesus Who came first as the Suffering Servant – the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

The account of the shepherds in Luke speaks to the Messiah Who came as the LAMB OF GOD/the ultimate sacrifice – Who came to die for our sins at His first coming. He’s coming again. Time has gone by and we’re waiting. Scripture speaks to a GAP between the Messiah’s first coming and His second coming. We’re looking for Jesus’ any moment return, His imminent return.

In the book of Matthew we’re going to look at the Magi who appear on the scene following a gap, a gap of possibly two years from the time of Jesus’ birth. And, we see the wise men visiting Jesus with a different “agenda” than the agenda of the shepherds. The Jewish shepherds found Jesus as a newborn lying in a manger (Luke 2:12, 16). The wise men were Gentiles. The Magi saw the star when Jesus was born; however, it took them time to travel across the desert from Persia to Jerusalem (Matt. 2:1) – the city where King David reigned and where the Messiah will reign as King at His second coming. At Jerusalem the wise men encountered Herod who told them to go to Bethlehem – and they did and . . . they found Jesus in a house – NOT lying in a manger (Matt. 2:11). AND, He was a “Child,” not a baby (Matt. 2:11).

Matt. 2:1-2 - *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is He who has*

been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

The shepherds find Jesus as the LAMB of God Who would be sacrificed at His first coming. The Magi look for a King. Jesus will return, at His Second Coming, as King of Kings. There is a gap between Jesus’ first and second coming. There’s a gap between the shepherd’s visit and the visit by the wise men.

The Magi were not kings. They were king makers. The wise men looked for kings! In the book of Daniel we are introduced to the wise men who were known as those who interpret dreams (Dan. 2:1-4). When they could not interpret King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, their lives were threatened. Enter Daniel, a faithful Jewish boy who interpreted the King’s dream. Result: Daniel was given the responsibility of Chief Administrator/master over the wise men (Dan. 2:48). Daniel wrote about when the Messiah would appear in Israel (Dan. 9:26). Do you think he might’ve shared that with the wise men? I believe so. And that information was passed down from generation to generation among the Magi – the wise men. Fast forward to the time of the wise men’s visit to Jerusalem to look for the king of the Jews. History teaches that their king, the Persian King, King Freidas IV, was deposed. The wise men, the “king makers,” were looking for a new king. And so they traveled to Jerusalem to find the One they had heard about through Daniel, the One Who would be the King of the Jews – JESUS!

The Magi brought the child gifts: gold – symbolizing royalty; frankincense - speaks of deity; frankincense was used on the altar of incense (in front of the Holy of Holies) in the Temple; myrrh – was used to embalm the dead. These gifts truly depict the Messiah Who is God (represented by frankincense), Who would die for sin (represented by myrrh), and Who will return and reign as King (represented by gold).

In the Christmas account in Matthew and Luke, we see God’s complete plan of salvation. We so clearly see Jesus’ two roles: the Suffering Messiah, the LAMB of God; and the Conquering King. We see His two comings. Are we MARVELING at God’s AMAZING plan? Are we fervently anticipating His any moment return for us?

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

QUESTIONS:

Was anything new to you in this lesson? If so – what?

How do you understand the Feast of Tabernacles?

How do you now understand Christmas?

What is impacting you and how?

How do the Christmas accounts fit into the big picture of the Bible?

How do the Christmas accounts fit into end times?

How will you celebrate Christmas this year?

With whom are you going to share these truths?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

MARVEL at God’s gracious plan of redemption!

Attend the Chanukah/Christmas Celebration on Sunday, 12/20, at 3 p.m. in the Hayden Chapel