

39 - Feast of Tabernacles

by Ben Torrey

As we celebrate Chuseok, let's remember God's wonderful provision through this past year and His care for our ancestors as He cared for the Israelites in the wilderness.

Duration: 9:27

Scripture: Leviticus 23:34-36, Zechariah 14:16-17, Matthew 6:33, John 7:37-38

Topics: "Feast Of Tabernacles"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles and its connection to the coming of the Messiah. He highlights the tradition of pouring out water on the altar and how it symbolizes God's provision and care for His people. The preacher then references Zechariah's prophecy, which speaks of a future day when all nations will gather in Jerusalem and a stream of living water will flow from the temple. This prophecy is seen as a foreshadowing of Jesus' declaration that He is the living water, inviting all who thirst to come to Him and be refreshed. The sermon concludes with a reminder to celebrate and give thanks for God's provision, while eagerly anticipating the return of the Lord and the fulfillment of His promises.

Transcript

Good evening once again, this is Ben Torrey. I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all of you on this Feast of Chuseok. Let me also extend to you my greetings for a very special Sukkot, or Feast of Tabernacles, the biblical fall harvest festival.

You see, they're actually the same day. Chuseok falls on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Korean and Chinese lunar calendars. Tabernacles falls on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Jewish lunar calendar.

These two calendars are actually one month apart from each other, so the 8th month of the Korean calendar is the same as the 7th month of the Jewish and biblical calendar. Therefore, the Feast of Chuseok and Tabernacles are actually at the very same time and have very similar meanings. Both feasts are times of giving thanks for the harvest.

In America, we have our Thanksgiving Day in late November, which seems a bit odd to me. By then, the harvests are long over and we feel winter coming on. Better to celebrate Thanksgiving closer to when the harvesting is actually being done and the weather is still nice for all sorts of outdoor activities.

Korean Protestant churches celebrate Thanksgiving on a Sunday in November, having been influenced by American missionaries. This seems unfortunate to me. Since Korea has already been celebrating from ancient times, at least since the time of the Silla Kingdom, a perfectly good Thanksgiving time at Chuseok.

Not only that, it is actually the same as the biblical day of thanking God for His provision and for future blessings. While there are ancestor-worshipping rituals associated with Chuseok, which Christians rightly do not observe, the basic meaning and joy of the feast coincide very closely with the biblical meaning. In the Bible, it is also a time of remembering ancestors and God's care for them in the wilderness.

It seems to me that we could have a wonderful time enriching our celebration of Chuseok by tying in some of the special meanings rather than ignoring the special time and attempting to replace it with an entirely artificial Thanksgiving day later in the year. Let me share with you some things about tabernacles. You might find them interesting.

Tabernacles or sukkot in Hebrew refers to the tents that the Israelites lived in during their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness. The keeping of the feast is commanded in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. Let's look at these passages.

The first one is Leviticus 23, verses 34-36 and 39-44. Also, in the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, that's the harvest, you shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days. On the first day shall be a Sabbath and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath.

And he shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees and branches of palm trees and boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And you shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year.

It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths seven days.

All that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths. That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the Feast of the Lord. In Deuteronomy 16, 12-13, we read, And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondsman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine.

And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son and thy daughter, and thy manservant and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless, and the widow that are within thy gates. We also read in the prophet Zechariah that this feast will be kept when the Lord returns to establish his kingdom on earth at the end of the age. All nations are to gather in Jerusalem to keep the feast.

At that time the Mount of Olives will split apart in a great earthquake, and a stream of water will flow from the temple in Jerusalem to the east and to the west. I'll read some verses from Zechariah 14, verse 4. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west.

And there shall be a very great valley, and half the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. Verses 8 and 9. And it shall be in that day that living water shall go out from Jerusalem,

half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea. In summer and in winter shall it be.

And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. And then verses 16 to 17.

And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoso shall not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. This last passage is particularly interesting because the feast was concluded in Jerusalem on the greatest day, with the priests pouring out water all over the altar as a reminder that God provided the rain for the harvest and to remind him that he needs to keep providing it for the coming year.

Deuteronomy chapter 11 tells of how the promised land is the land that drinks the water provided by God from heaven, unlike Egypt, which is irrigated from the Nile River. God had his eyes on his own people in their land. This was remembered by pouring out the water.

Zechariah's prophecy speaks of the day when all the earth will come to honor God for his provision and be watered to east and west from Jerusalem. There's also a wonderful connection to all this in the New Testament in John's Gospel chapter 7. It was the feast of tabernacles. Everyone went up to Jerusalem with their families, just like Korean families all hitting the roads to their ancestral homes.

Jesus declined to go with his brothers and sisters. He did go later, however. When he got there, he found everyone talking about him because of all that he had been doing up to that point, and the association of the feast with the coming of the Messiah in the last days.

Let's look at this wonderful passage in verses 37 and 38. What a wonderful connection. So as we celebrate Chuseok, to be watered to east and west from Jerusalem.

We're going to remember the day when the Lord poured out the water on the altar and people remembered Zechariah's prophecy. It was with this backdrop that Jesus cried out, I am the living water. Drink of me, and out of your belly shall flow living water.

What a wonderful connection. So as we celebrate Chuseok, Let's remember God's wonderful provision through this past year and His care for our ancestors as He cared for the Israelites in the wilderness. Let's rejoice and praise God, eating all kinds of special foods, and let us look forward with joy to the Lord's wonderful return when all the earth shall worship Him even as we remember that He has given Himself to us as an eternal spring of cool, fresh, living water so that we, in turn, may refresh this dried up and sin-sick world with that new water.

Enjoy your chusok, your tabernacles, and your thanksgiving. Good night.

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