

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Part Two

Last week we looked at the first part of the Feast of Tabernacles—the Blowing of Trumpets. The Feast of Tabernacles was such an important feast in the life of Israel, it had its own special day set aside to announce its approach. There are several reasons why this feast was the most important feast of the year.

Naturally, it was the most important feast because not only was it the last harvest of the year, the things that were being harvested were the fruits and nuts—particularly the grapes. The grape harvest was the most joyous harvest in Israel.

Spiritually, it was the most important feast because during this feast, all the sins the nation had committed during the previous year would be forgiven on the Day of Atonement. This forgiveness of the people's sins would lead to a time of great thankfulness and rejoicing during the final part of the feast—the Feast of Booths.

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram, And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram, A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.

Numbers 29:1-11

The Blowing of Trumpets was observed on the first day of the seventh month, while the Day of Atonement was observed on the tenth day of that month. Even today, the Jews celebrate this feast. These first ten days are a solemn time of introspection for the Jews and they even have a special name for them—the “Days of Awe” (*Yomim Noroim*). It's the time when all Jews are concerned with their personal, *moral* condition.

In today's Judaism, the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippor*) is the day on which sin is removed from the heart of the Jew. Of course, all this is based on the actual events of the natural feast God gave Israel. On both the Day of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, special sacrifices were commanded to be offered. These sacrifices were *in addition to* the ones that were already being offered daily and monthly. Spiritually, this speaks of the fact that as we partake of each of these different feasts, we must remember that everything we are experiencing is based on the sacrifice of Jesus and upon *our response* to that atonement.

Because of the blood of Christ, we have been redeemed. But we are still responsible to obey His commandments. We are still responsible to offer the *whole burnt offering*—that is, offering up our lives as a living sacrifice (*Rom. 12:1-2*). We are still responsible to continue offering the *meat offering*—that is, presenting the works of our hands to the Lord. We are still responsible to continue offering the *sin offering*—that is, we must keep confessing our sins to the Lord Jesus (*1 Jn. 1:7-9*).

Also, on both these feast days, the people were commanded to rest from their own labors (*you shall do no servile work*) and gather together to worship the Lord (*ye shall have an holy convocation*). The idea behind doing no servile work is that they were to stop occupying their minds with all the needs and desires of their own natural lives, and turn their thoughts and attention towards God; toward His purposes and His desires.

The idea behind having a holy convocation was to discourage too much *individualism*; to keep the reality before the people that they were part of something bigger and greater than themselves. They were part of a body of people; and whatever they did affected *the rest* of that body of people. So it is with us in the spirit. The deeper we go in God, the more we should be concerned with the needs and desires of our Lord, rather than with the needs and desires of ourselves. This is the real meaning of the Sabbath. Those who keep *plenty of time* on their hands for undistracted communion with the Lord, and who seek to do only the will of God in all areas of their lives, they are the ones who are walking in *the reality* of what the Old Testament “rest” or Sabbath represents.

Also, the deeper we go in God, the more we should realize that we are part of something that is a lot bigger and much more important than our own puny little lives. We are part of the body of Christ—and even though we may not be able to see the affects that our actions have on the rest of the body, the fact remains that those actions (*good or evil*) affect the rest of body.

Let me pause here for a minute and say a little something regarding corporateness and individualism. There are a lot of former church people who are wondering around outside the Religious System, who are what I would call “*Lone Ranger Christians*”. These are people who are not answerable or accountable to anyone. It's just them and Jesus. I'd like to say that unless God has specifically put a person in that kind of a situation, that kind of a walk is a very dangerous walk because I've seen many of these “*Lone Ranger Christians*” get totally deceived over the years.

God never intended believers to live *individualistic* lives. He designed us for relationships—*spiritual* relationships. His design for the body of Christ is the same as it is for the natural body. Each member of the natural body is attached to, and knows how to interrelate and function with, other members of the body. No member dwells alone. God's design for the body of Christ is the same—that we be closely related to one another; that we edify one another; that we pray for and counsel one another; and that we correct one

another. His design is that we be answerable to one another and that we know how to *submit* to one another. This is why Paul said what he did in the books of Ephesians and Colossians about the body building itself up in love.

*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is **the head**, even Christ: **From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.***

Ephesians 4:15-16

Please notice the proper way the body of Christ is to grow and walk in spiritual unity. Each member must *first* have their own individual relationship with the Head—the Lord Jesus Christ. Each member must “grow up” into that Head individually. But that is not the end of the story. Paul said the *growth* of the body is the result of “effectual working” of “every part”. In other words, even though the growth originates in the Head, it comes *indirectly* to the rest of the body through the effectual working of every part. When it comes to actual growth, it’s no longer an individualistic thing. It’s no longer a “me and Jesus” thing. That growth is the result of corporateness. It’s the result of each member being able to receive from and give to the other members of the body.

The same thing applies to the spiritual unity of the body of Christ. The *unity* of the body originates in the Head, but it comes *indirectly* to the rest of the body, as the body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies. Once again, when it comes to the actual unity of the body, it’s no longer an individualistic thing. It’s no longer a “me and Jesus” thing. That unity is the result of corporateness. It’s the result of each member giving to, and receiving from, other members of the body. Paul said the same basic thing to the Colossian believers.

*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding **the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.***

Colossians 2:18-19

How does the body of Christ “increase with the increase of God” according to Paul? Once again, the increase originates from the Head, but it comes *indirectly* to the rest of the body through the “joints and bands”—which are the individual members of the body. These joints and bands minister “nourishment” to the body and “knit” the body together.

“Lone Ranger Christians” can’t help the body of Christ grow; nor can they provide any spiritual nourishment for it; nor can they help knit it together; nor can they help it edify itself in love. They are too disconnected, too selfish and self-consumed, to be of any real value to the rest of the body. Even when they do come in contact with another members of the body, they can’t flow with them in the Spirit because they don’t know how to submit to the other members and they refuse to be corrected by anyone. In order to

help the body of Christ, you have to be connected to other parts of that body; you have to know how to function with them; and you have to be able to flow with them in the spirit. This is why the body of Christ is so sick and weak. It's members are all disconnected from one another and they are serving *themselves*, not the rest of the body. It's all about what Jesus can do for me. It's all about me getting my family saved, or about me getting my financial problems solved, or about me getting delivered from my sins, or about me being blessed, or about me pleasing the Lord, or about me reaching perfection—me, me, me.

When God began calling people out of the churches in the 50's, in order to lead them into a walk that was deeper than Pentecost, He led some of those people to form Christian communities. So during the 50's and the 60's, all kinds of Christian communities were established because God was emphasizing the importance of corporateness—that is, learning how to pour out to the rest of the body and learning how to *function together* as a spiritual unit.

It's easy to *talk* about being one in the spirit. But the fact of the matter is, being one in the spirit means a lot more than simply loving one another, or forgiving one another, or seeing and talking to one another once in a while, or even believing the same doctrine. Being one in the spirit means that we are in a real *spiritual relationship* with other parts of the body; that we are learning how to lay down our lives for those other members; and that we are learning how to function together with them in the spirit as a team, as a spiritual unit, as a spiritual family. The majority of those who have left the churches these last few years couldn't flow together in the spirit if you payed them a million dollars. If they came together and tried live in a community situation it would be a joke. Either the thing would never get off the ground because they wouldn't know how to submit to each other and would end up fighting each other; or it would turn into a religious cult because one man would end up becoming *the* leader.

God isn't raising up a bunch of *individuals* to be his last witness in this age. He's raising up a *corporate man* to be that testimony. That corporate man will be comprised of little groups who have learned how to flow together and function together. God is raising up a people who know how to submit to one another; who have voluntarily made themselves answerable to one another; who know how to lay down their lives for one another; who know how to give up their own rights, their own individualistic ways seeing and of doing things, and even their own goals and dreams, in order to flow together in the spirit.

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for **brethren to dwell together in unity!** It is like the **precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard**, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: **for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even **life for evermore**.***

Psalms 133:1-3

The Psalmist said something very profound about this kind of corporate body life. Most people miss it when they read because they are reading it from an individualistic perspective. He talked about *spiritual unity*. But notice *the kind* of unity he is talking about. He's not talking about the kind of unity that comes from people who are living their own individualistic lives. He said: "... *how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to **dwell together in unity***".

There is a special kind of unity, a special kind of blessing, that can only be experienced when brethren *dwell* together. There is a level of anointing that only comes when brethren dwell together. The Psalmist refers to it as: “*precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments*”. Then he says, FOR THERE the Lord commanded the greatest blessing of all—life forevermore.

We have no idea just how *individualistic* we are. We all have our *own* homes, our own cars, our own jobs, and our own separate lives. But I've seen people who have *really* given up everything to follow the Lord. I've been with people who have given up their homes and lived in little trailers, or cabins, or small houses with other people, in order to learn how to function together in the spirit. I've seen people who were willing to give up their jobs and not have any money of their own—but receive all they needed from the community. I've seen people give up their *individualism* in order to come into a deeper walk with Jesus and with other brethren and it's a glorious thing to behold.

Do you want to have a taste of the glory of the next age? It's THERE—in corporate body life. Do you want a preview of how we are going to function together in the kingdom? It's THERE—in corporate body life. It's there that you will find a kind of unity, glory, and an anointing that you will never experience anywhere else. However, there's a price to pay in order to have this kind of life.

Since I have been privileged to experience that kind of life with those kinds of people over the years, I have an advantage that most Christians don't have. They don't know anything about corporate body life and they wouldn't be interested in such a life, even if you tried to explain it to them. They love their “*me and Jesus*” Christianity and they think that's the ultimate experience. They have no idea what they are missing.

I'm not telling you to run off and try and start a Christian community. God has to be leading people in such an endeavor or it will fail miserably. My point in sharing all this is simply to get us to look into our own hearts and honestly consider what we would do if God asked us to give up our individualistic lives to move into some kind of a community situation. Would we be willing to do it?

Giving up our individualism and moving into a community situation would be very hard for the vast majority of today's Christians—even for those outside the system. Not only should there be a willingness to do something like this, there should be a desire it. We should yearn for this kind of life because there is where the God commanded the greatest anointing and blessing.

Okay; let's move on. When the Day of Atonement finally arrived in Israel, a very special and solemn event would take place. God would forgive all the sins of the people, which they had committed for the past year. Studying this particular feast is very interesting because it shows so clearly the relationship between what God has commanded us to do, and what He alone can do. While the priest was making an atonement for the sins of Israel, the people were not only commanded to rest and gather for worship, they were commanded to *afflict* their souls.

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth

*among you: **For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.** It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Leviticus 16:29-34

There were so many things that were different about this particular feast. Concerning the High Priest, the Lord told Aaron that he was not to wear his usual garments of purple and blue, or the Ephod, which he was required to wear at all other times. Instead, he was to wear only white linen garments. These white garments symbolized various things. They represented the *humility* the High Priest was to be walking in on this day. They also represented the purity and holiness of the occasion. Also, the white linen would produce the least amount of perspiration, which is symbolic of man's religious self-effort.

Concerning the people, twice in this passage the Lord says: “*ye shall afflict your souls*”—which most scholars assume to mean fasting. Even today, the one day of the year when Jews are required to fast is Yom Kippur. This day was even referred to as “*the fast*” in the New Testament by the writer of Acts, when he was describing Paul's journey to Rome.

*Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because **the fast** was now already past, Paul admonished them, And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.*

Acts 27:9

Fasting is an important function of the Christian life. When a person fasts, his body gets no nourishment from external sources (ie: food). The body eventually becomes weak and energy must be drawn from our spirit man. We have to call on the Lord to strengthen us. As we do, this makes us more sensitive to the voice and the leading of the Holy Spirit. In one sense, for our part, this is what the Day of Atonement is all about—learning to depend less and less on this natural life to sustain us, and learning to depend more and more on the Spirit of God in our new man to sustain us.

However, fasting is only *part* of what constitutes afflicting the soul. Notice what the Lord says to some of those in Israel, who were fasting the wrong way and for the wrong reason, and who were complaining because God was not honoring their fast.

Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Isaiah 58:3-6

God acknowledged the fact that these people *had* fasted. He didn't say they were liars. He said they were deceived. They didn't fast the right way and they didn't fast for the right purpose. Though they did abstain from food, they didn't abstain from *pleasure*. They did abstain from food, but they continued to *exploit their workers*. They abstained from food, but they refused to humble themselves because there was *strife and debate* among them. They abstained from food, but they were not contrite of heart because they continued to *smite* each other with *the fist of wickedness*.

So afflicting the soul entailed more than simply abstaining from food. It required that the people humble themselves before God and before the brethren, and that they acknowledged their sins. It required contrition of heart and spirit for those sins, and repentance for those sins, and a turning away from those sins. This was what God required of the people. He had no intention of forgiving their sins if they were not humbling themselves before Him and seeking forgiveness for those sins.

The people knew this. That's why no other day of the Hebrew calendar was equal in importance to *Yom Kippor*. On this day, the *whole nation* would wait in sober anticipation to see if God would accept the blood of the sacrifice on behalf of their past sins. Indeed, the success of the whole religious year *hinged* on whether or not the High Priest was received by God when he entered behind the veil, into the Holy of Holies. The people were well aware of the possibility that the Glory of God could flare out and slay him, like it did Nadab and Abihu (*Lev. 10:1-2*)—if God did not accept the blood that would be sprinkled before the Mercy Seat. In fact, they were so aware of that danger, they eventually adopted an extra-biblical custom of tying a rope with bells to the priest's leg, so that if he was killed, the bells would stop ringing and they would know he was dead. Then they would use the rope to drag him out.

And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the

*Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and **offer him for a sin offering**. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to **let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness**.*

Leviticus 16:5-10

Before the High Priest could make atonement for the sins of the people by taking the blood of the sacrifice behind the veil, he had to make an atonement for himself, his house, and for the other priests. Also, there were two goats involved in the offerings that day. One goat was slain and the other one—called the “scapegoat”—lived. The one that was killed was used for a sin offering. But the priest would lay his hands on the head of that goat and confess all the sins of Israel. Then the goat would be led away into the wilderness by someone.

Both these goats represent the work of Jesus in the atonement. Like the first goat, the Lord was slain for a sin offering—He was slain for the sins of the whole world. If there had been only one goat, that would have signified that Jesus came only to *forgive* our sins. But because there were two goats, we can see that Jesus not only forgives our sins but also removes our sins. The goat that was led into the wilderness represents the removal of sin from us so we can live a *righteous life* in this world.

*And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and **sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times**. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and **bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock**, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:*

Leviticus 16:12-15

Every element of the ceremony of the Day of Atonement was prescribed by statute. The atonement had to be made exactly as the Lord commanded. The penalty for deviation or carelessness was death. Today, because of the blood of Jesus, we can come boldly before the Throne in the Holy of Holies. In Israel, only the High Priest could come before that Throne once a year. When you consider the contrast, it gives you some idea of the power of the reconciliation that was made by the Lord Jesus on the cross. The blood of the bull was for the sins of Aaron and the other priests, while the blood of the goat was for the sins of the people of Israel. The blood from both these animals was sprinkled upon and before the Mercy Seat. This provided forgiveness for all the sins of the nation, which they had committed during the *preceding* year. Then the scape goat was sent into the wilderness, and the sins of the people went with it. Again, this meant that the sins of the nation, which they had committed during the *preceding* year, would not be remembered by God.

It's important to note that this whole ritual on the Day of Atonement had to do with forgiving and removing the sins of the people from the *preceding* year. It made it possible for the people to start off the new year with a clean slate. It had nothing to do with present or future sin. The reason this is important is because there are many ministers who teach that God has already *forgiven* all our sins—past, present and future. That's a lie. Provision was made through the Cross for the forgiveness of all past, present and future sin. But this is not the same as actually forgiving all past, present and future sin.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Romans 3:23-25

Jesus was the propitiation for all sin. He was the sacrifice that is available for all sin. But every person must individually repent of his or her sin in order for that propitiation to have any affect. And even then, the affect is only on the “*sins that are past*”. When we initially come to Christ in true repentance, His blood becomes an “atonement” for all our sins that are past; just like on the Day of Atonement in Israel, when all their *past* sins were forgiven. But from that point on, when the people of Israel sinned, they still had to bring the appropriate sacrifice for that sin to the priest; they still had to confess the sin onto the head of that sacrifice; and they still had to ask for forgiveness—and the same is true of us. After our past sins have been forgiven and sent into the wilderness, we must confess our present and future sins to our Great High Priest and Sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek forgiveness.

*But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, **as pertaining to the conscience** . . .How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?*

Hebrews 9:7-9 & 14

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers **once purged should have had no more conscience of sins**. But in those sacrifices **there is a remembrance again made of sins every year**. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*

Hebrews 10:1-4

Another error that's taught regarding the Atonement is that Jesus' death on the Cross removes the very "conscienceness" of sin from a person's life. This is based on the preceding passages. But again, the subject in these passages is the literal Day of Atonement, and how it differs from the Atonement made by the Lord Jesus. The conscienceness of sin that is being referred to in these passages is not present and future sins, but sins that are *past*. The very existence of the rituals of the Day of Atonement reminded the people of all the sins they had committed the previous year. That was the whole point of this day—to get all those *past* sins covered and forgiven. During this day, they were to be thinking about all those sins and repenting of them. Their heads were to be hung low in shame during the whole ritual.

The writer of Hebrews is simply explaining the difference between the type and shadow under the Old Covenant, and the spiritual reality under the New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, we only experience our personal Day Of Atonement *once*. After that, there will be no more remembrance of *past* sins. We don't have to experience the personal, spiritual fulfilment of Atonement every year. We don't have to review and repent of our *past* sins over and over again.

Israel's literal Day of Atonement contains various levels of truth. So far, we have been looking at the concepts of forgiveness and removal of sin, particularly past sin. But there is another level of truth revealed in this day; and it has to do with becoming one with God. When the High Priest of Israel went behind the veil, he was doing so as a *representative* of the people. When Jesus went through the veil, He did so as a *forerunner*. He wasn't just representing us—He paved the way for *us* to go through the veil ourselves.

*That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which **entereth into that within the veil**; Whither **the forerunner is for us entered**, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Hebrews 6:18-20

A forerunner is a trail-blazer. He goes ahead of the rest and clears the way, making sure that it is safe for them to follow. Jesus did not enter into the Holy of Holies for Himself alone. He paved the way *for us*. We are to follow Him through the veil, into the Presence of God.

*Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, [Holy Place] accomplishing the service of God. But into the second [Holy of Holies] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that **the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing***

Hebrews 9:6-8

Entering the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle of Moses represented, among other things, entering the Presence of God. The writer of Hebrews said that while the Old Covenant and Priesthood remained in

force, the way into God's Presence was not yet made manifest. This is why the Son of God had to come and initiate a *new* covenant and a *new* priestly order. He blazed a trail through the veil so the way into the Holy of Holies would be revealed. While the first covenant stood, the path into the Holy of Holies was blocked. But that veil has been torn; the trail has been blazed. The writer then explains what going beyond the veil means, and here is where most believers get confused, for he appears to make conflicting statements. First he says going behind the veil represents passing into the heavens.

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is **passed into the heavens**, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession...Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an high priest, who is **set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens**...But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building...It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but **the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these**. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but **into heaven itself**...*

Hebrews 4:14; 8:1; 9:11 & 23-24

Jesus' going beyond the veil represents entering heaven. He passed into the heavens and sat down on the right hand of God. Since it is clear that going beyond the veil means passing into the heavens, most everyone has assumed that when the writer of Hebrews talked about Jesus being our forerunner, he meant that He made a way for us to "go to heaven" someday, either when we die, or else in the mythical "Rapture". But if this is the whole picture, why did he go on to say:

*Having therefore, brethren, **boldness to enter into the holiest** by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, **through the veil**, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; **Let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Hebrews 10:19-22

The veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies represents the flesh or the body of the Lord Jesus. This is why the Gospels record that the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom when He died on the Cross. The veil being torn signified that the way *into* the Holy of Holies was now open. While it is certainly true that Jesus has passed into the heavens and has cleansed the true sanctuary, and while it is true that we should anchor our hope on Him, it is *not* true that entering beyond the veil *for us* means dying and going to heaven. The writer of Hebrews stated very clearly that we are to follow our forerunner through the veil *today*, not after we die. He said we are to "draw near". Draw near to what? Draw near to the Presence and Person of God *behind* the veil. How are we supposed to follow Jesus beyond the veil? Through the "new and living way" that He has instituted by His blood. How then are we to reconcile the

seeming contradiction between these two ideas? Does going through the veil mean passing into the heavens or does it mean entering into God's Presence. Actually, it means both. Passing into the heavens has to do with going beyond the veil *physically*. After His resurrection, Jesus passed into the heavens *physically*. Following Jesus physically beyond the veil is a future hope. However, we do not have to wait to enter beyond the veil physically in order to go beyond it *spiritually*. Right here an understanding of the difference between our spirit, soul and body becomes crucial.

Because our *spirits* were saved and regenerated instantly, they now dwell in heavenly places with Christ. They now dwell behind the veil, in the very presence of God. Our *bodies* have not yet gone behind the veil and neither will they do so until they are glorified when Jesus returns. So going beyond the veil physically is a future hope. The spirit is already there, and the body will go there at the resurrection.

So the reference to going behind the veil today has to do with our *souls*. It's in the realm of the *soul* that we must "draw near" to God behind the veil. It's in the realm of the soul that we must enter into the Holy of Holies by the new and living way.

However, in order to go behind the veil and live in the presence of Almighty God, that soul has to be *completely* purged and purified from every vestige of Satan, sin and self. This is, I believe, the central purpose for the real Day of Atonement. It's during this *spiritual season* of Atonement that our personalities will be made fit to *permanently* dwell in the presence of a Holy God. The soul—that is, our minds, our wills, our desires, and our emotions, will be completely and fully cleansed, once and for all. This will be the spiritual fulfillment of the Jewish feast. We will be made one with God, in truth.

This will take a special work of redemption; and I believe this special work is exactly what the apostle Peter is talking about when he penned the following words:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, **Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.***

I. Peter 1:3-5

This "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" is not a reference to our initial salvation experience because Peter had *already* experienced that. Nor was it a reference to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, for Peter had already experienced that as well. He's talking about something God has in store for those of us in the last days—those of us who have been "kept by the power of God" as a result of our being faithful to Him. I believe the salvation Peter is talking about has to do with the soul—especially the *mind*. I think it has to do with the sealing of our minds.

You see, no matter how pure we allow God to make our hearts, the enemy has been given the power and authority to shoot his thoughts into our *minds*. Nobody can take that power from him because it was given to him by God. This is the main reason Paul tells us to: "...take captive every thought to make it obedient

to Christ' (II. Cor. 10:5 NIV). Thoughts can also come from our own hearts, and from our fallen flesh nature as well, but the Christian who is really serious about his walk with the Lord will be putting that fallen nature to death, and he will be allowing the Holy Spirit to change that old heart and cleanse it.

But Satan and his demons are different story. You can't cleanse them or change them. You can't crucify them, and you can't stop them from shooting their thoughts into your brain, no matter how pure and holy you have become. Of course, we don't have to accept the thoughts they shoot into our brains; nor do we have to act on them or obey them. But right now, we have no power to stop them.

However, by the time this Day of Atonement is finished, that whole situation will have changed because God is going to *seal the minds* of the saints who are afflicting their souls in this hour. This is one of the purposes of the sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation chapter seven. Those people will not only be sealed in order to protect them from the coming judgements and wrath of God, their *minds* will be sealed too, so the enemy will no longer be able to shoot his thoughts into their brains. This is why, when you see that same group a little later in Revelation, it says they have the name of God written in their foreheads.

*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written **in their foreheads**.*

Revelation 14:1

The fact that these people have the *Father's* name written *in* their foreheads reveals two very important truths—for those who have ears to hear. First of all, it reveals that these people are walking in the Feast of Tabernacles. It doesn't say they had the name of Jesus or the Holy Spirit written in their foreheads because they have progressed past their *Passover* relationship with Jesus, and also their *Pentecostal* relationship with the Holy Spirit, and are now walking in a *Tabernacles* relationship with the Father.

Secondly, the name of the Father was written **IN** their foreheads, not on their foreheads. Name means nature. So what John is describing is a people who have the nature of the Father fully formed in *their* minds. He is describing a people whose *minds* are under the complete government (or control) of the Father. He is describing a people whose *minds* have been permanently and completely filled with the nature, the thoughts, the wisdom, and the desires of the Father. The thoughts and desires of the Father fill their minds so completely, there is simply no room for anything else. John was describing a people whose minds have been *sealed* and the enemy will never again be able to shoot his thoughts into them.

I believe that the salvation of the last days that Peter referred to is the *salvation of the mind* in the sense of it being sealed. Those who experience this sealing will be those who have been faithful to do their part—which is to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. As we continue to obey the Lord in this area, one of these days, He is going to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. He will seal that mind and permanently *fill it with Himself*. The central theme of the Day of Atonement is God making His people fit to dwell with Him in holiness. Making us fit to dwell with Him requires that God does something and we do something. God's part is to provide the sacrifice and the blood, the priest, forgiveness and redemption. Our part is to "afflict our souls" during this season. Afflicting our souls has to do with *self-denial*.

The Three Deaths		
Death To The World	Death To Sin (The Sin Nature)	Death To Self (Self Life)
The Feast Of Passover	The Feast Of Pentecost	The Feast Of Tabernacles
Baptism With Water	Baptism With The Holy Spirit	Baptism With Fire (Judgment)
Jesus Christ	The Holy Spirit	God The Father
Egypt Deliverance from the bondage of slavery	Sinai The receiving of the Law to define sin	Jordan River Where the people had to be circumcised again
Outer Court	Holy Place	Holy Of Holies

I am including the chart I put in the message on Passover because it helps to see the difference between the various feasts and the spiritual realities that correlate with them. In type, the Scripture reveals three deaths we must pass through if we are to be *fully* transformed into the image of Christ. The first death is *death to the world*, which is represented by in the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. The second death is *death to sin*, which is represented by Israel’s coming to Mt. Sinai. It was there that God gave the people the Torah (Law), which defined sin and showed them how to sanctify themselves. The third death is *death to self*, which is represented by Israel’s crossing over Jordan and taking the Promise Land.

Death to self is by far the hardest death we must experience because it is *we* who must die. This death is also the least understood—even by many of those who preach it. I see so much confusion wherever I turn, with regards to this type of death because most people *lump* all three of these deaths together and call it *all* death to self. But the fact is, death to *self* is not the same as death to sin or death to the world. When we are dying to sin or the world, we are denying ourselves things that are sinful, or immoral, or unlawful before God. Death to self has to do with denying ourselves things which are *not* sinful or immoral. It has to do with denying ourselves things which are lawful and acceptable before God.

If you want to know what real death to self is, look at the life of *Jesus*. Jesus walked in death to self—and the “*self*” He denied was not worldly or sinful. The things Jesus denied Himself were things that were *acceptable* before God. Sin, iniquity, worldliness—these are not the things we must deny when it comes to self. The denial of self involves the denial of those things that we can legally and morally partake of, but which will hinder the life of Christ from coming forth in us. The reason most believers cannot and will not embrace the *true* death to self message is precisely because the things we are required to deny ourselves in *this* death are things which are lawful and acceptable before God.

I listened to a message the other day by a minister who was telling some people in his congregation how to overcome things like smoking cigarettes and pot, drinking alcohol, and watching pornography. I thought: “My God! These people can’t even bring themselves to lay down the things they know are *sinful* before God. How much *less* would they be willing to lay down things which are acceptable to Him!?”

Jesus consistently laid down *His own will* in order to have the life of His Father come forth in Him. Sin wasn't even an issue; worldliness wasn't an issue. The things He may have desired for Himself were lawful things; they were acceptable things before God. So is it possible for believers like you and me to have desires of our own that are *not* sinful or worldly? Or is every single desire of the self-life evil and wicked?

For most ministers, the answer is that *every* desire we have is sinful and wicked. Sorry, I don't believe that for a minute. There are many *human* desires that are not wicked and evil, according to the Law of God. Did you ever have a desire to get married? You think that's a wicked desire? Do you think God sits up in heaven, condemning every person who has a desire to get married because that desire is sinful or worldly? If so, your view of God is perverted.

Many times, we have a desire to minister to people that we run across, or we have a desire to help someone who is in trouble, yet these desires are *not* really coming from God. Do you think God sits in heaven, condemning every person who has a desire to help others when that desire is not coming from Him? Do you realize the human heart can desire *good* things? Do you know the human heart can desire *moral* things? When the heart desires something good, or something that is morally acceptable before God—but which will hinder His Spirit from coming forth in us—that's when we need to die to *self*. That's when the *real* death to self message comes into play.

When we desire *sinful* things, we need to *die to sin*. When we desire *worldly* things, we need to *die to the world*. When we desire *good* and *proper* things that will hinder the life of Christ from coming forth in us, that's when we need to *die to self*. Many Christians are willing to die to their sinful *self*, or their worldly *self*; but they aren't willing to die to their *good* self or their *religious* self. But in this season of Atonement, God is commanding us to afflict our souls. He is requiring that we turn away everything, that we lay down everything—both legal and illegal; both good and bad; both moral and immoral—that will hinder the life of Christ from coming forth in us.

*The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly **and deny yourselves**, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. Anyone who **does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people.***

Leviticus 23:27-29

The issues of the literal Day of Atonement were so serious, God said any Israelite who did *not* deny himself would be “cut off” from Israel—and the same is true of the *spiritual season* of Atonement, which we are now living in. Christians who are trying to go on in the deeper things of God, but who are not denying themselves, are being cut off from God's Israel. They are being deceived by false doctrines or bogus religious experiences; or they are going into deep self-deception regarding their own spiritual condition. It's a very serious time we are living in.

It's important that we know the difference between the kind of death God is requiring of those who are going past Pentecost, and the kind of death we experience as we walk in the other two feasts. All Christians must take up their cross and deny themselves if they want to be a disciple of Jesus. But the *level of death*

we experience will be different, according to where we are in God; just as the level of spiritual life we experience will be different, depending on how mature we are in the spirit. Since we are now in the *spiritual season* of Atonement, the level of death that is being required of those who are seeking to walk in Tabernacles is *total* and *complete*. The object is to *do* absolutely nothing but what the Father tells us to do; to *say* absolutely nothing but what the Father tells us to say; to *desire* absolutely nothing but what the Father causes us to desire; to *go* absolutely nowhere except where the Father tells us to go, etc. The object in *this* feast is to have every part of our being under the total government of the Father.

However, God is not requiring this kind of death from those who are still walking in the Feast of Passover or the Feast of Pentecost. People in these two feasts couldn't handle this kind of death. It would be a burden much too heavy for them to bear. There is a certain amount of "death" these folks are required to walk in; but it's not the *complete* death that is being required of those who are walking in the Tabernacles.

It's important that we understand God isn't requiring the *same level* of death from everyone who is a Christian because if we don't realize this, we will end up hurting others because we will try to put the same yoke we are required to wear on them—and they won't be able to handle it. If we don't understand what's going on in the spirit, we will try to put a yoke on people that God is *not* requiring them to carry.

For instance, people who are having a problem laying down cigarettes or drugs or alcohol will never be able to *bear the yoke* that comes with Tabernacles. You can forget it! If you try bringing them into this kind of a walk while they are still bound in those types of sins or the world, they'll *snap* and end up back in the bars! What people like that need is a *better* salvation (Passover) experience; or maybe they need to be baptized in the Spirit and receive *power* to defeat these kinds of sins.

These kinds of people aren't even a candidate for Tabernacles.

So let's ask God to give us wisdom as we deal with other people.

Amen.