

IS THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES STILL RELEVANT FOR CHRISTIANS TO CELEBRATE TODAY?

While the Jews were travelling from Egypt to Canaan, God Almighty through His servant Moses commanded them to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days starting from the fifteenth day of the seventh month, known as Tishri or Ethanim, when they had gathered in the fruit of the land. The first and eighth days were to be Sabbaths meaning that there was to be on those days an entire suspension of ordinary labour of all kinds. On those days they would hold holy convocations in which the priests taught the people the law of God, including the proper manner of conducting worship and reminded them of the great deeds God had wrought for them in the past. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13) For the entire seven days they were to make an offering by fire unto the LORD according to each person's ability.

They were further instructed to take the "boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook" and to rejoice before the LORD seven days. They were to dwell in booths for the duration of the feast. The essence of their dwelling in booths was to remind them that God Almighty made them to dwell in booths, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 23:33-43) During the celebration in the land of Israel, the natural Jews erected booths on the flat roofs of houses, in the streets or fields while the celebrants carried light branches of various trees in triumphal procession, singing psalms and crying "Hosanna!" which signifies, "Save, we beseech thee!" -Psalm 118:15,25,26.

After the Babylonish captivity the Jews under Nehemiah the Governor and Ezra the Priest read the Scriptures and on realizing the importance of the Feast, celebrated it with great joy. – Ezra 3:1-5; Nehemiah 8:14-17

It is important to point out that of the three great festivals which God Almighty ordained that His people should celebrate in time of old, it is only the Feast of Tabernacles otherwise called the "Feast of Ingathering", that Christians should continue to celebrate. The others, the Feast of Weeks and the Passover are no longer to be celebrated in the Christian era.

It was because of the significance or relevance of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Christian era that Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, took active part in its celebration. He addressed the people "in the midst of the Feast" as it is written: "Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

On the "Last and Great Day" of the Feast Jesus Christ made a clarion call on all people of goodwill who are thirsty for the truth and salvation of God to come to him for succour as it is written: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Many people believed on him on that occasion. (John 7:1-38). Why did Jesus Christ the founder of Christianity celebrate the Feast so actively. It was no doubt to serve as an example to his disciples. If we are true Christians, then we must follow his example. (John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21)

Christ is now present among men in spirit in fulfilment of Ezekiel 37:27; Revelation 3:3 and chapter 21:1-7, helping, blessing and guiding sincere worshippers of God to His perfect Kingdom which all Christians, be they kings, queens, heads of state or commoners are praying for. – Matthew 6:9, 10. See also Matthew 18:20.

The Feast of tabernacles held during the Jewish era were only types or shadows of greater things in the Christian era. (Hebrews 10:1) By virtue of the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ "once for all" there is no longer any need for sacrifices of animals which used to obtain during the typical celebration of the Feast. (Hebrews 10:10; 1 Corinthians 5:7; etc) Moreover, the letters of the law need not be observed by the spiritual Jews or true Christians now on earth. – Romans 6:14; Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:14-16; 2 Corinthians 3:5,6.

It should be pointed out that the Tabernacle today is no longer the movable tent building or booths in which the Jews dwelt during the Feast. Rather, the Tabernacle is Jesus Christ, "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands..." (Hebrews 8:1,2; 9:11; Isaiah 33:20) Now that Jesus Christ, the Tabernacle of God is now with his people in spirit, it is required of all to celebrate this Feast in his honour. – Revelation 21:3; John 5:23.

Moreover, there is also a prophetic command that all people who had unknowingly been walking contrary to the will of God, should celebrate the Feast for their own blessings. God declared through the prophet Zechariah: "And it shall come to pass, that every one 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 will 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. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. " – Zechariah 14:16-19.

Jerusalem in the above text does not mean Jerusalem in Israel but God's organization, the "New Jerusalem" from above. (Galatians 4:26; Revelation 21:2) Egypt means the ungodly. (Isaiah 31:1; Revelation 11:8) Rain in this context symbolizes blessings. Isaiah 55:10,11; Ezekiel 34:26; Hebrews 6:7.

During the Feast of Tabernacles 2019 which will be celebrated this year in Salem City, Warri, Nigeria from Sunday 15th December to Sunday 22nd December 2019, members and friends of the GKS Feast sumptuously on the word of God which gives life.(Isaiah 55:1-3; John 6:27) No fewer than 16 public lectures on various topics of the Bible are delivered for the enlightenment of the sheep of God. These include the address of the GKS President Bro. G.O. Ifeacho to the Feast celebrants, which for this year is entitled: "SINCE GOD SEES OUR HEARTS IN ALL WE DO, WE SHOULD BEWARE" All people of goodwill are cordially invited to this important annual Christian festival.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." – Revelation 22:17