

**NOTES**  
**ON**  
**THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS**

by

Charles H. MacIntosh

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*"Things new and old."*

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**Leviticus 23**

One of the most profound and comprehensive chapters in the inspired volume now lies open before us, and claims our prayerful study. It contains the record of the seven great feasts or periodical solemnities into which Israel's year was divided. In other words, it furnishes us with a perfect view of GOD's dealings with Israel, during the entire period of their most eventful history.

Looking at the feasts separately, we have:

- the Sabbath,
- the Passover,
- the feast of unleavened bread,
- the first-fruits,
- Pentecost,
- the feast of trumpets,
- the day of atonement, and
- the feast of tabernacles.

This would make eight, altogether; but it is very obvious that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place. It is first presented, and its proper characteristics and attendant circumstances fully set forth; and then, we read "**These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons**" (Ver. 4) so that, strictly speaking, as

the attentive reader will observe, Israel's first great feast was the Passover, and their seventh was the feast of tabernacles. That is to say, divesting them of their typical dress, we have, full, redemption; and, last of all, we have the millennial glory. The paschal lamb typified the death of CHRIST (I Corinthians 5:7); and the feast of tabernacles typified "**the times of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began**" (Acts 3:21).

Such was the opening and such the closing feast of the Jewish year.

Atonement is the foundation, glory the top-stone; while, between these two points, we have the resurrection of CHRIST, (ver. 10-14), the gathering of the Church, (ver. 15-21), the waking up of Israel to a sense of their long-lost glory, (ver. 24-25) their repentance and hearty reception of their Messiah (Ver. 27-32). And that not one feature might be lacking in this grand typical representation, we have provision made for the Gentiles to come in at the close of the harvest, and glean in Israel's fields (Ver. 22). All this renders the picture divinely perfect, and evokes from the heart of every lover of Scripture the most intense admiration. What could be more complete?

The Blood of the Lamb and practical holiness founded thereon - the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, and His ascension into Heaven - the descent of the Holy Ghost, in Pentecostal power, to form the Church - the awakening of the remnant - their repentance and restoration - the blessing of "**the poor and the stranger**" - the manifestation of the glory - the rest and blessedness of the kingdom. Such are the contents of this truly marvellous chapter, which we shall, now, proceed to examine in detail. May GOD the Holy Ghost be our Teacher!

**"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings."**

*The place which the Sabbath here gets is full of interest.*

The Lord is about to furnish a type of all His dealings in grace with His people; and, ere He does so, He sets forth the Sabbath as the significant expression of that rest which remaineth for the people of GOD.

It was an actual solemnity, to be observed by Israel; but it was also a type of what is yet to be, when all that great and glorious work which this chapter foreshadows shall have been accomplished. It is GOD's rest, into which all who believe can enter now in spirit; but which, as to its full and actual accomplishment, yet remains (Hebrews 4). We work now. We shall rest by and by.

In one sense, the believer enters into rest; in another sense, he labours to enter into it. He has found his rest in CHRIST; he labours to enter into his rest in glory. He has found his full mental repose in what CHRIST has wrought for him, and his eye rests on that everlasting Sabbath upon which he shall enter when all his desert toils and conflicts are over. He cannot rest in the midst of

a scene of sin and wretchedness. He rests in CHRIST, the Son of GOD, who took the servant's form. And, while thus resting, he is called to labour as a worker together with GOD, in the full assurance that, when all his toil is over, he shall enjoy unbroken, eternal repose in those mansions of unfading light and unalloyed blessedness where labour and sorrow can never enter. Blessed prospect! May it brighten more and more each hour in the vision of faith! May we labour all the more earnestly and faithfully, as being sure of this most precious rest at the end! True, there are foretastes of the eternal Sabbath; but these foretastes only cause us to long more ardently for the blessed reality - that Sabbath which shall never be broken - that **"holy convocation"** which shall never be dissolved.

We have already remarked that the Sabbath occupies quite a unique and independent place in this chapter. This is evident from the wording of the fourth verse, where the Lord seems to begin afresh with the expression, **"These are the feasts of the Lord,"** as if to leave the Sabbath quite distinct from the seven feasts which follow, though it be, in reality, the type of that rest to which those feasts so blessedly introduce the soul.

**"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover"** (Ver. 4, 5).

Here, then, we have the first of the seven periodical solemnities - the offering of that paschal lamb whose blood it was that screened the Israel of GOD from the sword of the destroying angel, on that terrible night when Egypt's firstborn were laid low. This is the acknowledged type of the death of CHRIST; and, hence, its place in this chapter is divinely appropriate. It forms the foundation of all. We can know nothing of rest, nothing of holiness, nothing of fellowship, save on the ground of the death of CHRIST.

It is peculiarly striking, significant, and beautiful to observe that, directly GOD's rest is spoken of, the next thing introduced is the blood of the paschal lamb. As much as to say, "There is the rest, but here is your title." No doubt, labour will capacitate us, but it is the blood that entitles us to enjoy the rest.

**"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein"** (Ver. 6-8).

The people are here assembled round the Lord, in that practical holiness which is founded upon accomplished redemption; and, while thus assembled, the fragrant odour of the sacrifice ascends from the altar of Israel to the throne of Israel's GOD. This gives us a fine view of that holiness which GOD looks for in the life of His redeemed. It is based upon the sacrifice, and it ascends in immediate connection with the acceptable fragrance of the Person of CHRIST.

**"Ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire."** What a contrast! The servile work of man's hands, and the sweet savour of CHRIST's sacrifice! The practical holiness of GOD's people is not servile labour. It is the living unfolding of CHRIST, through them, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

**"To me to live is Christ."** This is the true idea. CHRIST is our life; and every exhibition of that life is, in the divine judgment, redolent with all the fragrance of CHRIST. It may be a very trifling matter, in man's judgment; but, in so far as it is the outflow of CHRIST our life, it is unspeakably precious to GOD. It ascends to Him and can never be forgotten. **"The fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ"** are produced in the life of the believer, and no power of earth or hell can prevent their fragrance ascending to the throne of GOD.

*It is needful to ponder deeply the contrast between "servile work," and the outflow of the life of CHRIST.*

The type is very vivid. There was a total cessation of manual labour throughout the whole assembly; but the sweet savour of the burnt offering ascended to GOD. These were to be the two grand characteristics of the feast of unleavened bread. Man's labour ceased, and the odour of the sacrifice ascended; and this was the type of a believer's life of practical holiness. What a triumphant answer is here to the legalist, on the one side, and the antinomian on the other! The former is silenced by the words, **"no servile work;"** and the latter is confounded by the words, **"Ye shall offer an offering made by fire."**

The most elaborate works of man's hands are **"servile;"** but the smallest cluster of **"the fruits of righteousness"** is to the glory and praise of GOD.

Throughout the entire period of the believer's life, there must be no servile work; nothing of the hateful and degrading element of legality. There should be only the continual presentation of the life of CHRIST, brought out and exhibited by the power of the Holy Ghost. Throughout the **"seven days"** of Israel's second great periodical solemnity, there was to be **"no leaven;"** but, instead thereof, the sweet savour of **"an offering made by fire"** was to be presented to the Lord. May we fully enter into the practical teaching of this most striking and instructive type!

**"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and ye shall wave the sheaf Before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an the lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings"** (Ver. 9-14).

**"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept"** (I Corinthians 15:20).

The beautiful ordinance of the presentation of the sheaf of first fruits typify the resurrection of CHRIST, who, **"at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,"** rose triumphant from the tomb, having accomplished the glorious work of redemption.

His was a "**resurrection from among the dead;**" and, in it, we have, at once, the earnest and the type of the resurrection of His people. "**Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.**"

When CHRIST comes, His people will be "**raised from among the dead;**" (*ek nekron*) that is those of them that sleep in JESUS. "**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished**" (Revelation 20:5). When, immediately after the transfiguration, our blessed Lord spoke of His rising "**from among the dead,**" the disciples questioned among themselves what that could mean (See Mark 9). Every orthodox Jew believed in the doctrine of the "**resurrection of the dead,**" (*anastasis nekron*). But the idea of a "**resurrection from among the dead,**" (*anastasis ek nekron*) was what the disciples were unable to grasp and, no doubt, many disciples since then have felt considerable difficulty with respect to a mystery so profound.

However, if my reader will prayerfully study and compare I Corinthians 15 with I Thessalonians 4:13-18, he will get much precious instruction upon this most interesting and practical truth. He can also look at Romans 8:11, in connection. "**But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead (*ek nekron*) dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.**" From all these passages it will be seen that the resurrection of the Church will be upon precisely the same principle as the resurrection of CHRIST. Both the Head and the body are shown to be raised "**from among the dead.**" The first sheaf and all the sheaves that follow after are morally connected.

*It must be evident to any one who carefully ponders the subject, in the light of Scripture, that there is a very material difference between the resurrection of the believer and the resurrection of the unbeliever.*

Both shall be raised; but Revelation 20:5, proves that there will be a thousand years between the two, so that they differ both as to the principle, and as to the time. Some have found difficulty, in reference to this subject, from the fact that, in John 5:28, our Lord speaks of "**the hour in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.**" "How," it may be asked, "can there be a thousand years between the two resurrections when both are spoken of as occurring in an 'hour'?" The answer is very simple. In verse 28, the quickening of dead souls is spoken of as occurring in an "**hour;**" and this work has been going on for over eighteen hundred years. Now, if a period of nearly two thousand years can be represented by the word "**hour,**" what objection can there be to the idea of one thousand years being represented in the same way? Surely, none whatever, especially when it is expressly stated that "**the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.**"

But, furthermore, when we find mention made of "**a first resurrection,**" is it not evident that all are not to be raised together? Why speak of a "**first**" if there is but the one? It may be said that "**the first resurrection**" refers to the soul; but where is the Scripture warrant for such a statement? The solemn fact is this: when the "**shout of the archangel and the trump of God**" shall be heard, the redeemed who sleep in JESUS will be raised to meet Him in the glory. The wicked dead, whoever they be, from the days of Cain down, will remain in their graves, during the thousand years of millennial blessedness; and, at the close of that bright and blissful period, they shall come forth and stand before "**the great white throne,**" there to be "**judged every man**

**according to his works,"** and to pass from the throne of judgment into the lake of fire. Appalling thought!

Oh! reader, how is it in reference to your precious soul have you seen, by the eye of faith, the Blood of the paschal Lamb shed to screen you from this terrible hour? Have you seen the precious sheaf of firstfruits reaped and gathered into the heavenly garner, as the earnest of your being gathered in due time? These are solemn questions, deeply solemn. Do not put them aside. See that you are, now, under the cover of the Blood of JESUS. Remember, you cannot glean so much as a single ear in the fields of redemption until you have seen the true sheaf waved before the Lord. **"Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God."** The harvest could not be touched until the sheaf of first fruits had been presented, and, with the sheaf, a burnt offering and a meat offering.

**"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves, of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord"** (Ver. 15-17).

This is the feast of Pentecost - the type of GOD's people, gathered by the Holy Ghost, and presented before Him, in connection with all the preciousness of CHRIST. In the Passover, we have the death of CHRIST; in the sheaf of first fruits, we have the resurrection of CHRIST; and in the feast of Pentecost, we have the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the Church. All this is divinely perfect. The death and resurrection of CHRIST had to be accomplished, ere the Church could be formed. The sheaf was offered and then the loaves were baked.

And, observe, **"They shall be baken with leaven."** Why was this? Because they were intended to foreshadow those who, though filled with the Holy Ghost, and adorned with His gifts and graces, had, nevertheless, evil dwelling in them. The assembly, on the day of Pentecost, stood in the full value of the Blood of CHRIST, was crowned with the gifts of the Holy ghost; but there was leaven there also. No power of the Spirit could do away with the fact that there was evil dwelling in the people of GOD. It might be suppressed and kept out of view; but it was there.

This fact is foreshadowed in the type, by the leaven in the two loaves; and it is set forth in the actual history of the Church; for, albeit GOD the Holy Ghost was present in the assembly, the flesh was there likewise to lie unto Him. Flesh is flesh, nor can it ever be made ought else than flesh. The Holy Ghost did not come down, on the day of Pentecost, to improve nature or do away with the fact of its incurable evil, but to baptize believers into one body, and connect them with their living Head in Heaven.

Allusion has already been made, in the chapter on the peace offering, to the fact that leaven was permitted in connection therewith. It was the divine recognition of the evil in the worshipper. Thus is it also in the ordinance of the **"two wave loaves;"** they were to be **"baken with leaven,"** because of the evil in the antitype.

But, blessed be GOD, the evil which was divinely recognized was divinely provided for. This gives great rest and comfort to the heart. It is a comfort to be assured that GOD knows the worst of us; and, moreover, that He has made provision according to His knowledge, and not merely according to ours.

**"And ye shall offer with the bread, seven lambs without blemish, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams; they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Ver. 18).**

Here, then, we have, in immediate connection with the leavened loaves, the presentation of an unblemished sacrifice, typifying the great and all-important truth that it is CHRIST's perfectness and not our sinfulness that is ever before the view of GOD. Observe, particularly, the words, **"ye shall offer with the bread, seven lambs without blemish."** Precious truth! Deeply precious, though clothed in typical dress! May the reader be enabled to enter into it, to make his own of it, to stay his conscience upon it, to feed and refresh his heart with it, to delight his whole soul in it. Not I, but CHRIST.

It may, however, be objected that the fact of CHRIST's being a spotless lamb is not sufficient to roll the burden of guilt from a sin-stained conscience - a sweet-savour offering would not, of itself, avail for a guilty sinner. This objection might be urged; but our type fully meets and entirely removes it. It is quite true that a burnt offering would not have been sufficient where **"leaven"** was in question; and hence we read, **"Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings"** (Ver. 19). The **"sin offering"** was the answer to the **"leaven"** in the loaves - **"peace"** was established, so that communion could be enjoyed, and all went up in immediate connection with the **"sweet savour"** of the **"burnt offering"** unto the Lord.

Thus, on the day of Pentecost, the church was presented, in all the value and excellency of CHRIST, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Though having in itself the leaven of the old nature, that leaven was not reckoned, because the divine Sin Offering had perfectly answered for it. The power of the Holy Ghost did not remove the leaven, but the Blood of the Lamb had atoned for it. This is a most interesting and important distinction. The work of the Spirit in the believer does not remove indwelling evil. It enables him to detect, judge, and subdue the evil; but no amount of spiritual power can do away with the fact that the evil is there - though, blessed be GOD, the conscience is at perfect ease, inasmuch as the blood of our Sin Offering has eternally settled the whole question; and, therefore, instead of our evil being under the eye of GOD, it has been put out of sight for ever, and we are accepted in all the acceptableness of CHRIST, who offered Himself to GOD as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, that He might perfectly glorify Him in all things, and be the food of His people for ever.

Thus much as to Pentecost - after which a long; period is entered to roll on ere we have any movement amongst the people. There is, however, the notice of **"the poor and stranger"** in that beautiful ordinance which has already been referred to in its moral aspect. Here we may look at it in a dispensational point of view.

**"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the**

**corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord your God" (Ver. 22).**

Provision is here made for the stranger to glean in Israel's fields. The Gentile is to be brought in to participate in the overflowing goodness of GOD. When Israel's storehouse and winepress have been fully furnished, there will be precious sheaves and rich clusters for the Gentile to gather.

We are not, however, to suppose that the spiritual blessings with which the Church is endowed in the heavenlies with CHRIST are set forth under the figure of a stranger gleaning in Israel's fields. These blessings are as new to the seed of Abraham as they are to the Gentile. They are not the gleanings of Canaan, but the glories of Heaven - the glories of CHRIST. The Church is not merely blessed by CHRIST, but with and in CHRIST. The Bride of CHRIST will not be sent forth to gather up, as a stranger, the sheaves and clusters in the corners of Israel's fields, and from the branches of Israel's vines. No; she tastes of higher blessings, richer joys, nobler dignities, than ought that Israel ever knew. She is not to glean as a stranger on earth, but to enjoy her own wealthy and happy home in Heaven to which she belongs.

This is the "**better thing**" which GOD hath, in His manifold wisdom and grace, "**reserved**" for her. No doubt, it will be a gracious privilege for "**the stranger**" to be permitted to glean after Israel's harvest is reaped; but the church's portion is incomparably higher, even to be the Bride of Israel's king, the partner of His throne, the sharer of His joys, His dignities, and His glories; to be like Him, and with Him, for ever. The eternal mansions of the Father's house on high, and not the ungleaned corners of Israel's fields below, are to be the church's portion. May we ever bear this in mind, and live, in some small degree, worthy of such a holy and elevated destination!

**"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Ver. 23-25).**

A new subject is introduced here, by the words, "**the Lord spake unto Moses**," which, let me remark in passing, affords an interesting help in classifying the subjects of the entire chapter.

Thus, the Sabbath, the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, are given under the first communication. The wave sheaf, the wave loaves, and the ungleaned corners, are given under the second; after which we have a long unnoticed interval, and then comes the soul-stirring feast of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month. This ordinance leads us on to the time, now fast approaching, when the remnant of Israel shall "**blow up the trumpet**" for a memorial, calling to remembrance their long-lost glory, and stirring up themselves to seek the Lord.

The feast of trumpets is intimately connected with another great solemnity, namely, "**the day of atonement**."

**"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement,**

**to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God . . . it shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath" (Ver. 27-32).**

Thus, after the blowing of the trumpets, an interval of eight days elapses, and then we have the day of atonement, with which these things are connected, namely, affliction of soul, atonement for sin, and rest from labour. All these things will find their due place in the experience of the Jewish remnant, by and by.

**"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"** (Jeremiah 8:20) such will be the pathetic lament of the remnant when the Spirit of GOD shall have begun to touch their heart and conscience.

**"And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall Be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for her firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart," &c (Zechariah 12:10-14).**

What deep mourning, what intense affliction, what genuine penitence there will be, when, under the mighty action of the Holy Ghost, the conscience of the remnant shall recall the sins of the past, the neglect of the Sabbath, the breach of the law, the stoning of the prophets, the piercing of the Son, the resistance of the Spirit! All these things will come in array on the tablets of an enlightened and exercised conscience, and produce keen affliction of soul.

But the blood of atonement will meet all.

**"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness"** (Zechariah 13:1).

They will be made to feel their guilt and be afflicted, and they will also be led to see the efficacy of the Blood and perfect peace - a sabbath of rest unto their souls.

Now, when such results shall have been reached, in the experience of Israel, in the latter day, for what should we look? Surely, THE GLORY. When the **"blindness"** is removed, and The veil is taken away, when the heart of the remnant is turned to the Lord, then shall the bright beams of the **"Sun of righteousness"** fall, in healing, restoring, and saving power upon a truly penitent, afflicted, and poor people.

To enter elaborately upon this subject would demand a volume in itself. The exercises, the experiences, the conflicts, the trials, the difficulties, and the ultimate blessings of the Jewish remnant are fully detailed throughout the Psalms and Prophets. The existence of such a body must be clearly seen, ere the Psalms and Prophets can be studied with intelligence and satisfaction. Not but that we may learn much from those portions of inspiration, for **"all Scripture is profitable."** But the surest way to make a right use of any portion of the Word of GOD, is to understand its primary application.

If, then, we apply Scriptures to the Church or heavenly body which belong, strictly speaking, to the Jewish remnant or earthly body, we must be involved in serious error as to both the one and the other. In point of fact, it happens, in many cases, that the existence of such a body as the remnant is completely ignored, and the true position and hope of the Church are entirely lost sight of. These are grave errors which my reader should sedulously seek to avoid. Let him not suppose, for a moment, that they are mere speculations fitted only to engage the attention of the curious, and possessing no practical power whatever. There could not be a more erroneous supposition. What! is it of no practical value to us to know whether we belong to earth or Heaven? Is it of no real moment to us to know whether we shall be at rest in the mansions above, or passing through the apocalyptic judgments down here? Who could admit ought so unreasonable? The truth is, it would be difficult to fix on any line of truth more practical than that which unfolds the distinctive destinies of the earthly remnant and the heavenly Church. I shall not pursue the subject further, here; but the reader will find it well worthy of his calm and prayerful study. We shall close this section with a view of the feast of tabernacles - the last solemnity of the Jewish year.

**"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord . . . Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye 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" (Ver. 33-43).**

This feast points us forward to the time of Israel's glory in the latter day, and, therefore, it forms a most lovely and appropriate close to the whole series of feasts. The harvest was gathered in, all was done, the storehouses were amply furnished, and the Lord would have His people to give expression to their festive joy. But, alas! they seem to have had but little heart to enter into the divine thought in reference to this most delightful ordinance. They lost sight of the fact that they had been strangers and pilgrims, and hence their long neglect of this feast.

From the days of Joshua down to the time of Nehemiah, the feast of tabernacles had never once been celebrated. It was reserved for the feeble remnant that returned from the Babylonish captivity to do what had not been done even in the bright days of Solomon.

**"And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness" (Nehemiah 8:17).**

How refreshing it must have been to those who had hung their harps on the willows of Babylon, to find themselves beneath the shade of the willows of Canaan! It was a sweet foretaste of that time of which the feast of tabernacles was the type, when Israel's restored tribes shall repose

within those millennial bowers which the faithful hand of the Lord will erect for them in the land which He swore to give unto Abraham and to his seed for ever. Thrice happy moment when the heavenly and the earthly shall meet, as intimated, in "**the first day**" and "**the eighth day**" of the feast of tabernacles!

**"The heavens shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."**

There is a fine passage in the last chapter of Zechariah which goes to prove, very distinctly, that the true celebration of the feast of tabernacles belongs to the glory of the latter day.

**"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"** (Leviticus 14:16).

What a scene! Who would seek to rob it of its characteristic beauty by a vague system of interpretation falsely called spiritualizing? Surely, Jerusalem means Jerusalem; nations mean nations; and the feast of tabernacles means the feast of tabernacles. Is there anything incredible in this? Surely, nothing save to man's reason which rejects all that lies beyond its narrow range.

The feast of tabernacles shall yet be celebrated in the land of Canaan, and the nations of the saved shall go up thither to participate in its glorious and hallowed festivities. Jerusalem's warfare shall then be accomplished, the roar of battle shall cease. The sword and the spear shall be transformed into the implements of peaceful agriculture; Israel shall repose beneath the refreshing shade of their vines and fig-trees; and all the earth shall rejoice in the government of "**the Prince of Peace**." Such is the prospect presented in the unerring pages of inspiration. The types foreshadow it; the prophets prophesy of it; faith believes it; and hope anticipates it.

NOTE. - At the close of our chapter we read, "**And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord**."

This was their true character, their original title; but in the Gospel of John, they are called "**feasts of the Jews**." They had long ceased to be the Lord's feasts. He was shut out. They did not want Him; and, hence, in John 7, when JESUS was asked to go up to "**the Jews' feast of tabernacles**," He answered, "**My time is not yet come**;" and when He did go up it was "**privately**," to take His place outside of the whole thing, and to call upon every thirsty soul to come unto Him and drink. There is a solemn lesson in this. Divine institutions are speedily marred in the hands of man; but, oh! how deeply blessed to know that the thirsty soul that feels the barrenness and drought connected with a scene of empty religious formality, has only to flee to JESUS and drink freely of His exhaustless springs, and so become a channel of blessing to others.

~ end of chapter 23 ~

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