

## The Spiritual Challenges from the Feast of Booths

In Nehemiah Chapter 8, the Lord had moved on his people and caused a spiritual revival in their hearts and they sought the Lord with one mind. They were eager to hear God's word and discovered that they were instructed to celebrate the Feast of the Booths. This special feast included the usual daily sacrifices but in addition it involved them living in temporary shelters made of tree branches for seven days. This was to testify of God's awesome work when he brought them out of Egypt and how he wonderfully kept them in the wilderness.

But what are some of the spiritual lessons or challenges for us today?

1. The feast was to testify how God had cared for them and made them flourish when Israel was living in temporary shelters, open and vulnerable in the hostile environment of the wilderness.

**Challenge. If we are walking in Christ's will, he will make us not only survive spiritually but also flourish and multiply in what seems a naturally impossible place.**

2. The nation of Israel was brought out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God. The salvation of Christ is even more potent to bring us out of our Egypt. Amazingly the coming out of Egypt was just the beginning and so it is with our spiritual walk. Are we making progress? Are we carefully seeking and pursuing the will of the Lord for our life? I trust that when our pilgrimage is finished, we will not find ourselves only a little distance from the Egyptian border.

**Challenge. We cannot just rely on the fact that we have come out of Egypt. Christ is expecting us to daily go on into the length and breadth of his life.**

3. God had brought Israel into a place of great dependency in the wilderness and there he sustained, multiplied and guided them. Spiritual progress is often retarded because we have not allowed God to bring us to a place of dependency on him. The human heart has a natural aversion to things being out of our control and we yearn to construct our own earthly securities. The need to wrestle to gain control of every situation is an indicator that God has to make us much more dependent on him. We say that we believe and trust in the Lord Jesus but often our actions and attitudes may say something very different. In reality, how dependent are we on the Lord Jesus?

**Challenge. It is in a place of real dependency on Jesus Christ that we will see our spiritual life flourish and multiply.**

4. A person in a temporary shelter has to travel light and can move quickly at the Lord's command. We have to live in houses and have bank accounts but they cannot be our security. Are we using our resources to construct our own earthly security, in accordance to the Spirit of this World? We have to have a very light

hold on all in our possession, buildings, belongings, finances and time. We should be constantly looking to see how to use our resources could benefit the Lord and release immediately what ever is required. When was the last time we gave a sizable amount of money away to someone in need? That might be a good indicator of how lightly we are “holding on” to worldly things.

The joy of the Lord is our strength and the root meaning of the word strength is a fortified place or fortress. God cannot give us the real Joy of the Lord while we rely on this world’s defences and securities.

**Challenge Although we live in houses we should live as if we are sheltering in a booth, holding our goods with a light touch, obedient to Jesus and solely dependent on him. The reward for living in this spirit and manner is the enormous Joy of the Lord and the beginning of spiritual paradise.**

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