

Jesus In The Feasts (Part Five): Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 07-Oct-25; Sermon #FT25-01PM

We love to read histories of other times and think about the glories of various empires and nations and ethnicities. We like to go on vacation and tour places that have retained the feel of the past and kind of get an idea of what it was like to live in those times, and most of the times it is people, shopkeepers, restaurateurs, and others that are just taking your money. Because they know that nostalgic feeling that will get them a lot of money.

We like to reminisce and tell each other how much better life used to be when society was smaller, the pace slower, the people kinder. We exaggerate how much better Grandma's cherry pie was than *today's* cherry pie. I mean, the cherries were much better, much bigger, much sweeter. They never bruised or rotted. They were just wonderful. Right?

Nostalgia combines two Greek words, *nostos*, which means homecoming, and *algos*, which means pain. Early on, doctors considered it a form of melancholy to be nostalgic. It was an anxiety manifested by being away from home. It is what we in English, not using those fancy Greek terms, would call homesickness. Basically the same thing.

This nostalgia, homesickness, accumulated associations of longing for the past, especially one's personal past, back to one's earliest memories, usually memories of childhood when life seemed like it was warmer, sweeter, easier, and the stresses of adulthood were years away. All we had to do was bask in the safety of our home and all the good things that were provided for us and go out and play.

Oh, those were great times.

Overall, nostalgia tends to be more positive than negative. It may begin as a kind of melancholy or even a minor depression, but it frequently moves on from that to improve your mood. You begin thinking about those good times

that you had when you were younger, and your emotions begin to take on a more positive feeling because it triggers those feelings of warmth or happiness, and it spurs, actually, coping mechanisms within the mind that help to deal with the original melancholy, and it begins to reduce stress and it starts getting your mind off your worries. It actually starts your subconscious solving the problems.

Nostalgia is also a factor in bringing together or amplifying unity among people with similar feelings and memories. So in families or between husband and wife or friend groups or community groups, if you have that same feeling of nostalgia, it actually draws you together and people use this in order to get things done actually in the community.

Hey, you like wearing kilts. All the Scots come and wear kilts and before long they are having Scottish games and doing things in the community as a bunch of Scots. That spurred underlying feeling there is a nostalgia for that heritage. So it provides in that way social support and helps tighten and expand connections. It forms bonds within whatever the community is.

So the loneliness of the nostalgia can lead to restoring relationships.

Now, nostalgia also plays a part in preserving cultural heritage. I just used the example of Scots, but it does this for many other ethnic groups. (I mean, just go to Pittsburgh.)

Preservation of buildings and cultural artifacts and methods of and ways of speaking keep ethnic groups together. And they pass such culturally unique things to later generations so that you feel that bond not just between people of the same age, but the younger people get involved and they help pass that on.

Finally, nostalgia helps give an individual a sense of meaning in life. You probably never thought of it this way. I had not. But that nostalgia grounds the person in an identity, be it a culture, a religion, a certain place, like a birthplace, or some other unique factor that he or she will try to grow or preserve and defend as a core element of who they are. They do not want to give it up because they see it as an intrinsic part of themselves. So a person feels at home in that identity, and he believes it makes him what he is.

At its base, it is nostalgia that led him to that place.

Now the central symbol of nostalgia is home. We know the sayings, "Home is where the heart is." How many times have you seen that in a Hallmark store? "Home sweet home." "There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like home," said Dorothy.

Human beings long for the stability, security, belonging, permanence, and joy of home. That is where we feel the most wanted, we feel the most at ease, where we feel most secure.

And you know what? There is a paradox in all of this. We get nostalgic for home, but sadly we never truly find it as an adult. You know why? Because we never truly had it.

You see, much of nostalgia is a lie that we tell ourselves. A lot of nostalgia is composed of self-deception, manufactured memories stripped of all the bad parts and softened to comfort us when we are down or stressed. The past may indeed seem better in some ways, but if you really think about it honestly, it had its own share of stress, loss, privation, contention, sin, and just pure ugliness.

You know why? Human nature does not change. People were just as bad back then as they are today. And when we get nostalgic, we think of those times stripped of all the bad things, and we fool ourselves into thinking that that is how it really was.

But we are just not old enough, probably, to tell the difference because our parents kept us cocooned a bit from all of those things. Maybe not, depends on your parents, but that is just how it is.

So humans long for a golden age, an age of nostalgia when things are great. But you know what? They tend to look for that golden age in the past, like it has already happened and they are missing out because they were born too late.

But you know what the message of Scripture is? That the golden age is in the future. We are looking forward to it and it does not matter when we were born. If we follow the right way, as Clyde was talking about, we are going to enjoy it for eternity.

We will not need nostalgia. We live it every day, forever.

Now, this is Part Five of my sermon series, "Jesus in the Feasts." Do not think you missed a whole lot in those first four because each one just was for that particular holy day. If you want to go back and listen to those that is fine. But my idea for today is about the Feast of Tabernacles, obviously, since this is the holy day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

And just to let you know, I know there are several people here that probably did not hear those, so I will give you my idea for this series. I have posited that while these holy days do have prophetic implications in showing us the major steps in God's plan, that is not their primary purpose. Their primary purpose is to point us to Christ and His various offices and roles which we see in Scripture.

And so Christ is called our Passover. He in Unleavened Bread is the bread of life. In Pentecost, He is the ultimate firstfruit, the first of the firstfruits. In Trumpets, He is proclaimed and acclaimed our divine King, who is there, present with us. In the Day of Atonement, He is our atonement.

It is wonderful how God named these to give us this understanding.

Now the Feast of Tabernacles is no exception to these. Christ has a role in this holy time. He is our tabernacle. He is our eternal, abiding place. We can say, *He is home*.

Let us go to Leviticus 23. We will start in verse 33 so we can get the command for the Feast of Tabernacles.

Leviticus 23:33-36 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month [we are on that day right now] shall be the Feast of

Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.'

We will get to that one the next holy day because I think what Christ is in the Eighth Day is just fabulous. So I will give you that little teaser right now.

Let us go drop down to verse 39.

Leviticus 23:39-43 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the Lord for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.'

He often says, "I am the Lord your God" when He is specifically emphasizing something that we need to do or not to do.

A few details here put dwelling in booths during the Feast in perspective. A booth or a tabernacle are quite similar. You could say that they are synonyms, words that mean pretty much the same thing. And any good dictionary will show this.

Booth came into English through Old Norse, meaning a dwelling and even then it had the connotation of being temporary, impermanent. That is a big thing in the understanding of these words.

Tabernacle comes to us from Latin and that was the word that they used for tent or hut, and of course they had to have a tab-er-na-cle. A four-syllable word for tent. English are so much better at that, simple words. But it also, in Latin, tabernacle implies a temporary shelter.

God gets to this in verse 42. Let us just read that again.

Leviticus 23:42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths.

The Feast of Tabernacles was also to remind them that God made the children of Israel live in booths. Have you ever thought of it that way? Not that they were just crossing the wilderness and they decided to live in booths, but actually, God was the causation of this. God *made* the children of Israel dwell in booths for that whole trip. Forty years they had to live in a temporary dwelling, a tent, a hut.

He did it purposely. That is what this means that "God made them." He had a purpose for them to dwell in booths. He wanted every generation of Israelites to remember all the things He had done to release their forefathers from slavery, that He provided for them all that they needed across all those 40 years and all those miles that they walked across the wilderness.

So, dwelling in booths, in a temporary dwelling, was to remind them, even after they had come into the Promised Land, of what kind of God they served.

God, their God, was a God of liberty. He was a God of abundance and providence that never ended. He was a God of might. He was a God of security. And a God of top-notch leadership. He is a God who keeps His promises.

This is the primary lesson of dwelling in booths.

Now in verse 42, which we read, God explicitly commands "all who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths." I looked at all kinds of commentaries on this. I wanted to get as much as they would give me about this, and most of the commentaries that I read brushed this idea of native Israelites off.

They just said, Ah, this is the way Moses (or P or L or whatever person or group they thought wrote it) just meant all Israelites. But the wording is specific. Native Israelites, it says. That ignores God's inspiration.

A native Israelite suggests one born under the covenant. Kind of like, what do they call that citizenship that you get when you are born in America? I cannot remember the word they use, 'something' citizenship.

But you were born under the covenant. If you are a male, you were circumcised on the eighth day, you grew up learning all the ways of God all your life. And so all those who were native Israelites had been in the covenant since birth, and had to live in booths.

This object lesson of dwelling in booths has special significance to those who have a covenant relationship with God. A person that fits this category has much to learn about that relationship, both his obligations as well as his blessings, by or through living for a week in a booth, with not all the comforts of home but in a temporary dwelling in which we are missing things from home, from what we are used to.

Now, let me just make sure you understand this right now.

God did *not*, negatory, did *not* intend living in a booth to elicit a feeling of privation. Did you ever think about that? I mean, we have heard that in sermons before. But that was not His idea at all.

Remember, it is the *Feast* of Tabernacles. What does God say we are going to do? We have tons of tithe. Right? We can go to the best restaurants. We can be with our friends and fellow spiritual Israelites, and God says you can have whatever your heart desires during this time, and I want you to rejoice even though you are living in a temporary dwelling.

So we are supposed, at this time, to have the experiences and the creature comforts, if you will, of whatever, within the bounds of proper godly conduct. I mean you can look at that in Deuteronomy 14:22-27. God tells us

you can have strong drink if you want. Just, you know, do not get drunk. Enjoy it, do not just slug it down. Smell it, taste it, swirl it around your mouth a little bit.

Understand how the rich live, if you will, for this week. But do not overdo it. That is what He wants us to do.

And have you ever thought about this?

We come here and we stay in a temporary dwelling during the Feast, during the Eighth Day too. Sometimes we come a day or two early or stay a day or two late. And how much time, how much waking time do you spend in your temporary dwelling? Not very much. You get shut of that place as soon as you can and go out among the brethren, or you go out and do those things that God says you can do at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Most of the time, we are in services or out fellowshiping, eating, being entertained one way or another. We sleep there, so yeah, we spend maybe 8 hours, 9 hours you know, at a time there, but our eyes are closed and it is dark and the best we can enjoy is the nice mattress, if you like it.

So we sleep there, we get ready there. Perhaps we will have somebody in and entertain for a little bit. And we put all our stuff there which increases exponentially through the Feast. So it becomes a storage room and that is about it.

Our Feast is usually outside of that temporary dwelling. So the booth or tabernacle is the central figure of the feast. But most of our activities takes place outside it. It is kind of interesting to think about.

So let us just get this point again.

The booth or the tabernacle is the central figure of this Feast. It is right in its divine name. This is always called the Feast of Tabernacles except for the time or two it is called the Feast of Ingathering.

And in the past, I am sorry to say, and I have done this myself, we have made this symbol about us, about ourselves. We say it is our bodies, our

physical flesh that is temporary dwellings as we journey through the world to the promised land in God's Kingdom. And there is some insight there, and it applies secondarily. It is not primary though.

But the symbol of the tabernacle or booth more accurately represents Christ. I will be explaining this through the rest of the sermon. Not as a temporary dwelling though. Because we have gone past the children of Israel under the Old Covenant. Now we are the Israel of God under the New Covenant and the New Covenant is permanent. It is for forever.

So the symbol is of Christ, not as a temporary dwelling, but as our God-ordained dwelling as we navigate through this spiritually perilous world to a far better one that He has prepared for us.

Let us start working on this in John the first chapter, verses 1 through 5 and then we will jump down to verse 14. All of these holy days, all these feasts point to Christ and something greater than the idea expressed in the physical thing that is the basis for the symbol or the type. So when we get here to Tabernacles, we are going far beyond the idea of a tent or a temporary dwelling of some sort into a more permanent abode.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it [could not understand it].

Let us go down to verse 14.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is a well-known passage. We can probably quote parts of it because we have heard it so often. But it actually has a very deep connection to our subject but we cannot see it in our English translation.

Now the connection appears in verse 14, and it is in the verb *dwelt* or *dwelt*, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In the Greek (here I go trying to pronounce Greek again) the word is *eskno*. It is *Strong's* number 4637 if you care to look it up. It is the verb form of a more well-known word, *skn*. And that word means tent or tabernacle. So, if we were to translate this verse literally, it would say the Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us.

The verb *eskno* implies pitching a tent (not pitching a fit). Or it can imply settling into a space or a place or to take up residence. So what we are being told here by John is that when Jesus came as a man, He took up residence with us, among us. He dwelt, He really came. God came! He came in flesh, and He decided He wanted to live with us—and He did.

Now John's purpose in using this word is to emphasize that the Word really became human. He really was human. He was not some phantom, not some double-natured thing where there was Jesus on one hand and the Christ on another, like the Docetists said where Jesus was the one that died up on the cross, but Christ escaped before He could die. And all these weird ideas that people have had.

He was telling us that Jesus was a human being. He had God's nature, so He truly was God, but He was like us. He tabernacled with us. He lived our lives with us; He did a lot better than we did. But He was there living life under the same conditions that we live life.

And so He dwelt among us. He was really human, not just flesh and blood, but also living as we do.

It is an allusion, this word *eskno*, to the Tabernacle in the wilderness where God, the same One, the Word, dwelt among the Israelites for 40 years. He dwelt in a tabernacle. That was His home. That was His throne, a temporary tabernacle, a dwelling made of cloth and badger skins and over frames and all that, able to be assembled or dismantled in short order as needed for them to journey.

But He decided that was not good enough. That was not close enough. That was not real enough to people, so He decided with God's input, obviously, They decided that His dwelling with humanity in a physical body would be more personal and relatable than it was in the wilderness in a tabernacle.

So instead of a tent, He clothed Himself with flesh. And that was His tabernacle, if you will.

Now the apostle then testifies in the rest of verse 14 that we beheld His glory. The glory is described in two ways. First, the glory of being the only begotten of the Father. He was unique. He was the Son, the beloved Son of the Father. And second, the glory of grace and truth that they could see and hear. It came from Him all the time, His every action was a college course, a master's course in living a human life perfectly.

And they beheld that glory day after day for three and a half years. I am talking about the disciples, but anybody who would see Him saw the expression of His glory in terms of the way He acted and spoke. In other words, He displayed His glory as divine, He was the divine Son of God, and it manifested as full of grace. That is, full of lovingkindness and covenantal love that He showed to everybody. And also full of truth.

And that phrase, using those two words, grace and truth, or lovingkindness and truth, echoes Exodus 34:6. Let us just go back there just to touch the base here, so you understand the connection. We have already heard about this, this Feast. Martin talked about it this morning. This is when He revealed Himself to Moses and He proclaimed the name of the Lord, right? Remember, name is identity. He was telling Moses about Himself and His glory. And so in verse 6,

Exodus 34:6 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth."

That is in Hebrew *hesed*, lovingkindness, covenant love, and *emet*, truth. John picks this up in John 1:14 and says that He was full of grace and truth, the Greek equivalent of those two Hebrew words.

What is He saying? Remember, we are talking about glory here. Why did God have to shield Moses' face when He passed by? Put him in a cleft of a rock so that he would not be burnt to a crisp with the glory of God? Because He was *God*, right? And in the New Testament, John says that same God, full of grace and truth, did not have to dim Himself. He was in flesh and blood but He was the same God. He was the same God because He was full of the same righteous character that expressed itself in grace, or lovingkindness, and truth.

The only difference between the One that appeared in Exodus 34 and the One that appeared in John 1 was the flesh that He put on in order to tabernacle with us. He dimmed His glory, as it were, so that He could live side by side with us and show us the way.

The effect of what John says in John 1:14 is to declare that God manifested Himself as a fleshly man and His character did not change. His character in John 1:14 was the same as the character that was expressed in that sermon He preached to Moses in Exodus 34:6. So, the same God that lived in heaven was the same God on earth, without His glory.

But that is not even true. It was without the big light, the big power of His glory that He had in heaven. That was shielded for our protection. But it was the same God in character that lived in heaven and lived among us on earth.

Let us move forward into John 15 because this theme continues on. It uses different words, but John is still trying to get this idea across to us that He lived with us. And this puts us under certain obligations because He has chosen us to live with Him.

So, He tells His disciples here during His Passover message.

John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide

in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Really interesting section of Scripture, especially in terms of what we are doing today in the Feast of Tabernacles. The metaphor is a little different; not a lot, but it uses a different word. The meaning is the same, even though the Greek word is different.

He emphasizes abiding. You shall abide in Me, I in you. The word underlying abide is *men*. It is *Strong's* number 3306, and it means to remain or to continue, to stay or reside, lodge, dwell, or sojourn. You sojourn for a time in Myrtle Beach for the Feast.

However you want to define it in terms of an English word, an English synonym, it connotes remaining in the same place over a period of time. It can be a short time or it could be a long time, but you are remaining in the same place or state or condition for a period.

He uses the metaphor here of the vine and the branches. The branches, individual called-out ones, the individuals among the elect must abide or remain in Him or with Him. They must be attached to Him or as He also says, *in* Him. He is our dwelling place where we remain or lodge or dwell for a time.

Now we are human. We think of time in finite bits: a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year, decade, century, millennium. We can expand our mind out to thinking, well, maybe, you know, maybe a millennium. That is still way, way more than we have ever lived. But not too much longer than, let us say, Noah lived. Noah walked with God for a long time.

But you know what? Those are piker figures. God wants us, Christ wants us to remain in Him *forever*, for all eternity. Not just for a few years of our

physical lives, but He wants us forever. He loves us forever if we are part of His elect, His Bride. He wants us side by side with Him forever.

So He is our dwelling place where we remain for a time and in this life, that would be our whole converted life. Say you were called at 30 and you die at 70 or 80 years. Well, that is your time as a branch abiding in the vine. But that is just the beginning. That is just where we learn to prepare for what is ahead. Because even though we die, He gets our spirit and He is eager to plug that thing back in and give us a spirit body so that we could abide in Him forever, for all eternity.

It is hard to fit in our finite brains where we use only 10 or 15% most of the time, or less. But this is an Old Testament concept. What I am talking about is the very finite time of our physical lives. That is an Old Testament concept, that we dwell with God now. And that is fine.

But you have to remember that the children of Israel were very physical beings and they did not have the Spirit of God. But they understood the concept that we are supposed to abide with God or they might say Yahweh. And in the covenant they would know that, that they were dwelling with their Lord, because their Lord lived in Jerusalem or He lived in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. And so they had this concept, and those few who had the Holy Spirit understood that there was a lot more behind that than just the physical idea of God being near.

We are going to go through a series of scriptures now where this idea appears time after time after time after time in the Old Testament. Most of these are in the Psalms. We are going to start in Psalm 27. We are going to just go right through the book of Psalms and pull out several of these. There are a lot more than I wrote down in my notes, so I did not cherry pick these basically. I just went through my concordances and picked out several of them that are representative of this idea.

Psalm 27:4-5 One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. For in

the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

The Temple was up on a rock, Mount Moriah, and He would be hidden in His secret place. Normally you think of the secret place as the Holy of Holies or the Holy Place.

Let us just leave that as it is. We are not going to explain too much. I think the concept is fairly clear.

Let us go a few more chapters to chapter 31 and we will just pick up one verse here, verse 20.

Psalm 31:20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

Next chapter, Psalm 32, verse 7.

Psalm 32:7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Most of these were written by David. He understood this quite well especially when he was being chased around Judah by Saul, and he had to frequently find hiding places, but he understood that his ultimate hiding place, his ultimate secret place, was God Himself. So he wrote it in the Psalms.

Let us move forward to chapter 46. We sang chapter 46 earlier and we had to stop at the end of the third line. We will just pick up the first verse here.

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

And so we will not fear. And that idea goes through the rest of the psalm, but we just want to pick that out very quickly.

On to chapter 61, verses 3 and 4.

Psalm 61:3-4 For You have been a shelter [temporary dwelling] for me, a strong tower [it is stronger even, there] from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever.

David is showing his conversion here and how he had understood that this metaphor stretches a lot further than just our physical life.

Psalm 61:4 I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. [Think about this.] Selah.

He is telling us here with just that little word selah. . . Usually commentators think it is a musical interlude where you have time to think about the lyrics that had just been spoken of. And you could say, "Oh, that's what David meant."

He is actually preaching the gospel here in his own way. He is saying there is more to this concept of dwelling in a tabernacle, dwelling in a tent. This goes on forever. What does that mean?

And then he adds the idea "I will trust in the shelter of Your wings." What has he just brought in? Our heart, faith. I will trust in the shelter of Your wings, I will trust that You are there, that You are enclosing me like a hen will enclose her chicks to protect them.

Let us move on. Chapter 71, verse 3.

Psalm 71:3 Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress.

So He has given a command to deliver him, to save him. It is God's will that he be saved. Again, the metaphor can be taken another step higher. It is not just a deliverance from his physical foes, but it is a salvation in a spiritual sense, and God has given that command.

And do you remember what it says about God giving commands? They do not come back to Him empty. God is working salvation in the midst of the earth. He made that command that you be saved.

Just put this together with what we saw in the last chapter. You have got to trust that God has made the command that you are going to have salvation. So trust in that. He is the Rock. He abides continually. He does not change. And He is strong and durable, and we can trust in that. We can find security in Him because He is our fortress.

Let us move on to chapter 84. We see this idea developing. And like I said, I did not cherry pick these, but it seems to be progressing in understanding, it keeps adding on stuff that we can understand.

Psalm 84:1-2 How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!
[Remember, Christ is our tabernacle.] My soul longs, yes, even
faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for
the living God.

What does that tell you? The sons of Korah made the connection for us, "I long for Your tabernacle." And then by the time we get to the end of that chapter, my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. It is the same thing. It is a parallelism.

Psalm 84:3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young—even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You. [And how long will that praise go on? Forever. Think about that.] Selah.

Let us imagine the nice harp music playing while we meditate on what David just told us.

Let us move on to chapter 90. Moses was in on this doctrine as well in Psalm 90 and 91.

Psalm 90:1-2 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Again, he makes the connection here. He is our tabernacle, our dwelling place.

Psalm 91:1-2 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide [Is that not interesting, from John 15.] under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."

I will have faith.

Let us move to Isaiah the eighth chapter. We will pull out one verse here, verse 14.

Isaiah 8:14 He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Why is that? He will be a sanctuary to whom? Those who trust in Him. What was the problem with Israel and Judah? They never trusted Him. They were faithless scumbags, pardon my French. They did not have it in them to trust in Him. And so He became a rock of stumbling for them, a trap and a snare. And they came under His wrath and both of those kingdoms fell.

Let us move forward to chapter 57, verse 15.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

So He is inviting us here to live with Him in that high and holy place. But here we not only have to have faith, we have to have the right attitude, a contrite and humble spirit. And in that case, if we are humble, He will revive our spirit.

What does revive mean? It means literally to bring to life again. If we keep our faith in Him throughout this time, we stay, remain, we abide in the vine, He is going to revive the hearts of those who are contrite, who are humble, and give us life again. Not just abide in Him now, but abide in Him forever.

Finally, Joel 3, verse 16.

Joel 3:16 The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Now we can apply this very well to us in the end. But you know what this really kind of is getting at? This is getting at the Second Exodus, and He still has not forgotten His people Israel and in the end there will be a remnant that He will begin the Millennium with and they will start to learn these things too. They will seek shelter in their God once again and be converted.

He has not totally given up on them. And He will never give up on them. He is just letting them learn their miserable lessons through this period when they have forsaken God.

So it has always been His desire that His people would dwell with Him. In the Old Testament, the people were kept at arm's length to teach the holiness of God. It was a picture, a metaphor where God was far away from them and they could not approach Him except through the system of sacrifices and the Levites and the high priests and all that. There were lots of steps between man and God because He really was not working with them at the time.

He had taken them as His people and He did certain things with and through them. But His mind was far forward in time, making those examples, giving us those metaphors, setting up those symbols and types for the elect that would come. Because He was thinking far ahead of that spiritual group that He would begin with, really begin with.

And so in the Old Testament, this idea of dwelling with God was more metaphorical and symbolic, and He made them construct physical booths. But that was a type to get those ones that He actually gave His Spirit to, to begin to think about how God is our dwelling place. God is our tabernacle.

In the New Testament, through the sacrifice of Christ, we have a far closer, personal access to Him to the point not just of coming before Him in the three pilgrimage festivals to kneel before Him and to give an offering, but of *indwelling*. We come before Him in the sense of He in us and us in Him. Far, far closer than just giving a tribute from a distance.

He actually—and His Father—come and dwell with us and we are supposed to dwell with Him. Or in Him. We can use that preposition far, far, far closer than just with. And we can have that relationship with Him because of His work.

At this point that work is, I want to say mostly done, but He did so much of that work for us in His physical life so that we can have this opportunity, and He is going to put His all into all the rest of the work He has to do to bring us into His Kingdom and become His Bride. So we can have that close relationship with Him because of His work and our faith in Him, our trust in Him.

Let us see this in a few places in the New Testament. In some ways, I could just flip open to any place in the apostle Paul's epistles and just go, okay, here it is. But we will not, we will just go to a few places.

I Corinthians 12. If you know your chapters, this is the body image. No, you have a nice body image, that is not what I am talking about. This is the symbol of Christ's Body.

I Corinthians 12:12-13 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

We are in the Body of Christ. We dwell in Him as members of His church. That is what Paul is getting at. He is getting at the idea that we are all bound into Christ.

I Corinthians 12:18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

I Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Let us move on to Ephesians 1. We will just pick out verses 22 and 23.

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He [that is, the Father] put all things under His [that is, Jesus Christ] feet, and gave Him [Jesus Christ] to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

And then Colossians 1, verse 18.

Colossians 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Now this kind of language is all over the New Testament. It is the image that springs from the idea that we abide in Him or we abide within Him. We are part of Him, members of His Body of which He is the Head. He is the directing influence and authority within the church. And so we all look to Him for guidance and help.

So, Paul and the other apostles write about our being in Christ a great deal because it is a vital concept to understand our place. We are no longer considered in the world, we are in Christ. We are set apart by being so closely associated with our Savior there is no distinction. We are one with Him. We are just part of His Body.

We are one entity in the metaphor. And when He zigs, we zig, because we are connected to Him and when He zags, we zag, because that is where He is

going and we are attached. We abide in Him like a branch to a vine. The branches cannot do anything except what the vine does.

Now we could rebel and do something else, but we saw in John 15 what happens to those branches that after they are pruned a bit, do not bear any fruit. They go on the fire. Not good.

But we trust in faith that we are in Christ and that we are doing what is right and God has given us teachers and those sorts of things to help us and then He intervenes directly to keep us in line with the Head.

Let us go back to Ephesians 1.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints [that is you and me, he is writing directly to those] who are in Ephesus [but this is now to you], and [the] faithful in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:3-12 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. [Who is the Beloved? And we are accepted in the Beloved.] In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

That is what He is working toward, making us all one in Christ and that we could all be glorified in Him, as part of Him.

It is not a surprise that this well-known passage is considered by some to be among the best in the Bible. It was Mr. Armstrong's favorite passage, I believe.

But in terms of Paul's use of *in Christ* and *in Him*, it is actually fairly typical. He is putting these phrases all over his epistles. In fact, such phrases are found in nearly every passage in Paul's epistles.

In his 14 letters (we are counting Hebrews here), "in Christ" appears 84 times. "In Him," referring to Christ, occurs another 20 times, "by Him" or "by Christ" occurs another 13 times, "through Him" or "through Christ" another 12 times, "with Him" or "with Christ" another 26 times. And these counts, if you added all those up, is 155 times, and do not consider instances of the name Jesus or God or any of His titles like our Lord or in phrases like in His goodness or in His presence.

He is trying throughout all his epistles to get us to understand our place. And our place is in Christ, in Him, with Him, to always be in His presence.

Let us go to Colossians 3. We will read the first four verses. You may be tired of coming to Colossians 3, verses 1 through 4 because it is very much one of my favorite passages, at least in the New Testament, maybe in the whole Bible. But there is so much packed in here and it is all on this subject of being in Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4 If then you were raised with Christ [those of you who were baptized], seek those things which are above [those are our marching orders, that we need to keep our minds in the same frequency as in heaven], where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died [that old life is done], and your life [now] is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

This is a wonderful summary passage of what I have said today. And verse 3 is especially intriguing, that our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

Remember, He is speaking of what happens after we have died in the waters of baptism. We died to sin and to Satan and have been raised in newness of life in Christ. He is our Savior and our sovereign at this point, and because we have gone through the same thing that He did. . . Remember, He died and He was raised again to newness of life.

The baptismal ceremony is the same sort of thing and so we go through that, we die symbolically in the waters of baptism, and then we are raised in newness of life. And this newness of life is all about abiding in the vine, being attached to Christ, and learning and growing to be more like Christ because He is going to give us the tools, starting with the Holy Spirit and other knowledge and wisdom and experiences and all those things, so that we can grow up into Him.

We could have gone there in Ephesians 4 and talked about all these things that we are growing into Christ, the measure and the stature of the fullness of Christ, who was our Head. That is what we do with this newness of life.

So our journey from the time we break out of those waters is in Christ. He is constantly with us from that point on. He is *in* us by His Spirit. But what does hidden with Christ in God mean?

Hidden is the Greek word *krypt*. Some of you may own some cryptocurrency. It is *Strong's* number 2928, and it means concealed in a safe place, secreted. We saw this in Psalm 27:5, "In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me." So we are safe.

That is one of the great blessings of baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit because at that point, whether we realize it or not, we are safe. We do not need to be insecure. We do not need to worry. We are in the safest place of all.

You get me? We are *in* Christ! *Nothing*, as my dad used to say, zero, nada, zilch, can get to us from outside because we are in the fortress of Christ Himself! He is the Rock. No one can overcome Him.

So we are secure with Christ in God. It is not just Christ. It is the Master of the universe. The great Sovereign of all backs Him up. Because He says in John that it is not only Christ in us, but the Father too through Their Spirit. Both the Father and the Son are with us, wrapped around us, protecting us, guiding us, helping us to grow to become like They are, all along the way of our training regimen till our death.

With Christ in God is the perfect environment for real, joyous, fruitful life as we walk toward God's Kingdom.

Let us conclude in Deuteronomy 30, verse 11. We come here a lot. That is okay.

Deuteronomy 30:11-16 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess."

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore [this is God's will] choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for

He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Like God says here, it is not hard to understand at all. The instruction, the very Word of God is near, right within us.

Of course, we must constantly choose life and good and blessing. But we must always remember that *He* is your life and the length of your days.

He is our faithful tabernacle. Our true home and companion, hopefully for all of us, for all eternity.