

# TABERNACLES

## Day 1 - God Commands Dwelling

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### Introduction (to be read aloud by the patriarch)

The Feast of Tabernacles begins with a command to leave the comfort of our permanent homes and to dwell in temporary shelters. This is not optional, it is God's explicit instruction for His people. At first glance, it may seem strange or even inconvenient. Why would the Creator of the universe require His people to live in booths, tents, or makeshift dwellings for seven days? The answer is layered with meaning.

First, this act forces us to remember that we are pilgrims. Our homes, our wealth, our comforts, these are not ultimate. They are temporary. Dwelling in booths is a living reminder that the earth is not our final home. Second, it trains our hearts to see God as our true covering and protection. The Israelites lived in tents while God's glory overshadowed them in the wilderness, teaching them dependence on His presence, not their structures. Third, it sets apart this feast as one of rejoicing and obedience. God delights in His people leaving behind their ordinary rhythm to live visibly, publicly, and joyfully under His rule.

Today, as you begin this feast, you are stepping into obedience with generations of God's people who have built temporary shelters in faith. Every branch laid on your sukkah, every night spent under its covering, is both remembrance and prophecy: remembrance of God's faithfulness in the wilderness, and prophecy of His eternal dwelling with us. The command to dwell is not merely ritual, it is discipleship, training us to see beyond the temporary and to anchor our joy in God Himself.

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### Scripture Reading (KJV)

#### **Leviticus 23:39–43**

*39. 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 day shall be a sabbath.*

*40. 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.*

**41.** *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.*

**42.** *Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:*

**43.** *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.*

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### **Deuteronomy 16:13–15**

**13.** *Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:*

**14.** *And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.*

**15.** *Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord shall choose: because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.*

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### **Nehemiah 8:14–18**

**14.** *And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month:*

**15.** *And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.*

**16.** *So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.*

**17.** *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 Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.*

**18.** *Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.*

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### **Exodus 13:20–22**

*20. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.*

*21. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

*22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.*

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### **Deuteronomy 8:2–5**

*2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

*3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.*

*4. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.*

*5. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.*

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### **Psalms 91:1–2**

*1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

*2. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*

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### **Psalms 27:4–5**

*4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; 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 enquire in his temple.*

*5. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

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**Isaiah 4:5–6**

*5. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.*

*6. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.*

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**Ezekiel 37:26–28**

*26. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.*

*27. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*28. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.*

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**John 1:14**

*14. And the Word was made 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.*

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**11. John 14:23**

*23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

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**2 Corinthians 5:1–4**

*1. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

*2. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:*

*3. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

*4. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

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### **Hebrews 11:8–10**

*8. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

*9. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*

*10. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

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### **Hebrews 13:14**

*14. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

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### **Revelation 21:3**

*3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

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## **Reflection**

The Feast begins with obedience: “*Ye shall dwell in booths seven days*” (Leviticus 23:42). Notice that God ties this command to memory: “*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*” (Leviticus 23:43). The command is not arbitrary. It is deliberate teaching. God is a Father training His children through living memory.

When we step out of our permanent homes into temporary shelters, we proclaim to ourselves, our children, and our neighbors that we are not anchored to drywall and shingles. Our anchor is the God who shelters. Just as Israel trusted the cloud by day and the fire by night, so we declare that our life is not upheld by our construction but by His covenant presence.

This first day sets the tone. The act of dwelling is not merely symbolic, it is a lived sermon. Every creak of the temporary walls, every gust of wind, every night under makeshift covering preaches: *this world is temporary, but our God is eternal.*

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## **Family Application / Activities**

- Build or enter your sukkah/tabernacle with the whole household, emphasizing that this act is obedience to God's command, not just tradition.
  - As you set branches, coverings, or decorations, read aloud *Leviticus 23:39–43* together.
  - Sleep in your sukkah tonight, if possible, even if uncomfortable, use the discomfort as a teaching tool about dependence on God.
  - Invite your children to list all the things that a booth cannot protect them from (rain, wind, thieves, etc.) and then compare it to God's perfect shelter in *Psalms 91*.
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## **Discussion / Family Questions (for all ages)**

### **For Young Children (Ages 5–8):**

1. Who told Israel to live in booths?
2. What did God give the people in the wilderness to show He was with them? (cloud by day, fire by night)
3. What does a booth remind us of?

### **For Older Children / Teens (Ages 9–15):**

1. Why do you think God wanted Israel to leave their comfortable homes to live in temporary shelters?
2. How does living in a sukkah help us understand that our homes today are not permanent?

3. What connection can you see between Israel's wilderness journey and our own lives as believers?

**For Adults:**

1. How does dwelling in booths point to the reality of Christ tabernacling among us (*John 1:14*)?
  2. What lessons do we learn about God's shelter and protection when we leave behind security for obedience?
  3. How does the Feast of Tabernacles point forward to the eternal dwelling of God with man in *Revelation 21:3*?
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 **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for commanding us to dwell in booths, that we may remember Your mighty works. As Israel lived under Your cloud and fire, so we confess that our true shelter is found only in You. Teach us to see beyond our houses and comforts, and to rejoice in the covering of Your presence. May this feast draw our hearts away from what is temporary and fix our eyes on what is eternal. Strengthen our families to obey joyfully, and may our children never forget that You are the God who dwells with His people. In the name of Jesus, who tabernacled among us, we pray. Amen.