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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1992 ~ Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, Chapter 23, the Lord God instructed Moses to teach the Israelite people about seven annual feasts or public holidays that they were to keep after they entered the Promised Land. The new Israelite nation was largely an agricultural one and the feasts were divided up into either northern hemisphere spring or autumn feasts. The spring feasts are the Passover, which these days is joined together with Unleavened Bread, and First Fruits and Weeks.

The autumn feasts are Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and Tabernacles, with the Tabernacles feast being celebrated for seven days. Today's Bible Adventure is concerned with the Tabernacle feast, held just five days after the Day of Atonement feast.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish people live in temporary shelters for that week. This was to remind them each year of the goodness and provision of God during the 40 years of Sinai wilderness wandering that their ancestors had done. While in the wilderness the Israelites saw the Presence of God dwelling in their midst; all their needs were taken care of, neither their shoes or clothes wearing out, and their righteous judges in Moses and supporting leaders.

The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated with great joy because the feast was observed soon after all the crops had been harvested and stored in barns for the rainy winter season. For farming people, the arrival of rain was very important and many prayers for rain were requested at the Feasts of Tabernacles.

In the Gregorian or Western calendar, the Feast of the Tabernacles is held between late September and mid-October. Tabernacles was one of three pilgrim feasts where all Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem. As soon as the men arrived, they built themselves a leafy booth or shelter within half a mile's distance of the Temple. They brought with them their tithes and offerings for presentation to the Lord. No work was to be done on the first and last days of this festival.

During the seven days of feasting, there were many animal sacrifices and every seventh year, the Law was read out publicly. There were many blessings to be recited and the choir of the Levites sang Psalms 113 to Psalms 118 at one point and Psalms 120 to Psalms 134 after the water ceremony held on the day after the seven days had ended.

This festival looks forward to the 1,000-year reign of the Messianic Kingdom, when Jesus will be dwelling in Jerusalem and ruling the world yet to come. It will be a time when all the nations will learn first-hand the great things that happen when people follow the God of Israel's ways. As a result, peace will spread out from the Great City of Jerusalem to cover the whole world.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

The Scripture readings covered today are from the beginning of John, Chapter 7, and Luke, Chapter 9.

Because Jesus knew that the Jewish Temple authorities were attempting to capture and kill Him, He stayed away from Judea to avoid them. Jesus knew that He was to die at an upcoming Passover as the Lamb of God. When it was time for Jesus' half-brothers to go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, they encouraged Jesus to go too and while there, make a public display of His miracles. In a way, they were mocking Him because they didn't fully believe in Him at that stage of His ministry.

But Jesus, who was godly, knew that He was hated by the world because He exposed the world's evilness. So Jesus declined to go with them. But after they had gone, Jesus too went secretly to the feast.

Although Jerusalem was crowded, the Jewish authorities searched for Him, as the people must have expected Him to be there. His name was on many people's lips but only when there were no Temple officials around. The authorities had threatened that anyone caught talking about Jesus would not be allowed to enter the Temple anymore, permanently. As most people weren't prepared to make such a big sacrifice as being cut off from worshipping God, they were very careful at the time about what they said.

It's recorded in that passage of Scripture that the people at the feast claimed a lot about Jesus. Some said He was good while others said He was a deceiver, just as the rulers had said. However, in the middle of the feast, Jesus went into the Temple and taught there. Those who heard Him wondered how He could have such learning, as He certainly hadn't been a student of the Temple teachers.

Jesus explained to all those who listened that what He taught wasn't His own teaching but God's, as God had sent Him. Those wanting to do God's will would know that Jesus' words came from God in Heaven.

Jesus said that those who speak on their own authority are trying to gain glory for themselves. Yet He said that the person who wants glory for the one who sent him is honest and there is nothing false in him, meaning Himself. He also said that no one present was obeying the Law given by Moses. Then He asked the people why they were trying to kill Him.

The crowd answered Him that He had a demon possessing Him. Jesus had healed a person on the Sabbath and they were angry that He did such a thing, as in their eyes, He had broken the Sabbath rules. Jesus told them to stop judging by appearances but to judge by God's true standards instead.

At dawn each day of the feast the high priest would take a gold jug to the Pool of Siloam and bring it back full of water. He would then ceremonially pour out the water in the Temple by the altar. Because there's normally no rain in Israel for 7 months after March each year, if God did not provide 'early rains to fall in October and November, there will be no spring crop and famine will be on the doorstep. This ceremony, then, was intended to invoke God's blessing on the nation by providing life-giving water.

Following the 7-day feast, the people gathered on the 8th day for a solemn assembly before heading home. This was the most important time of the feast. Jesus stood up in the Temple and cried out, "Whoever is thirsty should come to me, and whoever believes in me should drink. As the Scriptures say, 'Streams of life-giving water will pour out from within anyone who believes in me'."

Jesus said all this concerning the Holy Spirit, which those who believed in him were soon going to receive. At that time, the Holy Spirit hadn't been given because Jesus hadn't died and risen from earth to glory. The Son of God was saying in the clearest possible way that He alone was the source of life and blessing, and that He could meet every need of the corrupt human heart.

The Temple was destroyed in AD 70. There's no more animal sacrifice but the Feast of Tabernacles is still celebrated in synagogues around the world.

Spiritually speaking, the Feast of Tabernacles corresponded to the joy of knowing one's sins were forgiven during the Feast of the Day of Atonement, which was celebrated only a few days earlier. Atonement restored fellowship with the Lord, causing the people to rejoice. What irony it is that the chief priests were supposed to repent of their sins during the Day of Atonement but then, pursued their murderous hunt of Jesus at the Feast of the Tabernacles later in that same week! What an indication that the Temple system had become most skewed! When does a ceremony done to honour God become a ritual performed without any love for Him at all, and a front for killing God's own Son?

During the Millennium Kingdom when Christ will rule for a thousand years from a throne in Jerusalem, all nations will be commanded to come and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If they refuse to come, it will show they are not trusting in the Lord for their resources and means of living. The Lord will withhold rain from their nation as a punishment and the natural result of refusing God's provision.

The Bible also indicates that God will not pour out the Holy Spirit on those who refuse His offer of salvation, especially after being invited to come and freely receive His mercy and grace.

Christ's Millennial Kingdom will be a new beginning for the world without the ravages and the curse of sin. During that time to come, the earth will give her full bounty, all animals will be docile, armies will no longer march, every man will sit under his own fig tree and righteousness will become a reality in the earth. What a marvellous time this will be!

Have you dedicated yourself to God and received Christ's forgiveness and the Holy Spirit's filling in your life? Make God first in your life today and always!

Jesus said in John, Chapter 8, Verse 12: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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