

Family Worship Study Notes

Deuteronomy 16:13–17 (KJV)

The Feast of Tabernacles

These notes are designed to help a family prepare their hearts and minds before hearing the sermon on **Deuteronomy 16:13–17 (KJV)**. They are written to be used in a family worship setting, with parents leading the discussion and prayer.

Main Passage

Deuteronomy 16:13–17 (KJV)

Primary supporting passages:

Leviticus 23:33–43 (KJV)

Exodus 23:16; 34:22 (KJV)

Numbers 29:12–38 (KJV)

John 7:2, 37–39 (KJV)

Zechariah 14:16–19 (KJV)

Revelation 21:1–4 (KJV)

Aim for Family Worship

The goal is to help the family see that the Feast of Tabernacles was not only an Old Testament celebration for Israel, but also a rich picture of God's faithfulness, God's provision, God's presence with His people, and the final joy that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Big Truth

The Feast of Tabernacles taught Israel to rejoice in God's provision, remember His care in the wilderness, and look ahead to the greater harvest, presence, and joy that are fulfilled in Christ.

Simple Overview

The Feast of Tabernacles was the third great annual feast of Israel. It took place after the harvest had been gathered in. It was a week of rejoicing before the Lord. During this feast, the people lived in booths or temporary shelters to remember how God had cared for Israel after bringing them out of Egypt.

This feast taught Israel at least three major lessons. First, God had preserved them in their weakness. Second, God had provided for them in their need. Third, God would bring His saving purpose to completion. In the New Testament, all of this comes to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Key Themes to Notice

1. A feast of rejoicing before God

Deuteronomy 16 emphasizes joy. The people were commanded to rejoice because the Lord had blessed them. This was not a private celebration of personal success. It was a holy rejoicing before the Lord, rooted in gratitude for His mercy and provision.

This joy was also shared. Sons, daughters, servants, Levites, strangers, the fatherless, and widows were all to be included. The feast reminded Israel that covenant joy was not meant to be hoarded. God's goodness was to overflow into generosity and fellowship.

2. A feast of remembrance

Leviticus 23 explains that the booths were meant to remind Israel that God had made them dwell in temporary shelters after bringing them out of Egypt. Israel was to remember that they had once been a pilgrim people, weak and exposed, with no permanent dwelling place of their own.

Yet the point was not merely that they lived in fragile shelters. The deeper lesson was that God Himself kept them safe. He defeated their enemies, brought them through the sea, gave them water from the rock, fed them with manna, and preserved them in the wilderness.

3. A feast at the end of the harvest

This feast came at the close of the agricultural year, after the ingathering of grain, wine, and the produce of the land. It was a harvest feast. Israel was taught to see the harvest not as the result of human strength alone, but as the blessing of God.

This made the feast a kind of holy thanksgiving. The Lord had given increase, and therefore the people were to rejoice before Him with full hearts.

4. A feast pointing to Christ

The Feast of Tabernacles was a shadow. Christ is the substance. In **John 7:37–39 (KJV)**, during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood and cried, **“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”** He declared Himself to be the source of living water.

What Israel remembered in picture, Christ gives in reality. He is the true giver of living water. He is the bread from heaven. He is the One who came and tabernacled among us. He is the fulfillment of all that the feast anticipated.

5. A feast pointing to the final ingathering

The Feast of Tabernacles also points beyond the first coming of Christ to the completion of God's saving work. Scripture connects this feast to the final triumph of God's kingdom and the gathering of the nations. In **Zechariah 14:16–19 (KJV)**, the nations are pictured as coming up to worship the King in terms drawn from this feast.

The final hope of God's people is not life in a booth, but life in the presence of God forever. **Revelation 21:3 (KJV)** declares, "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.**" What was pictured in the feast will one day be seen in fullness.

Family Reading Plan

If you want to spread this over more than one evening, use the passages below over three days.

Day 1

Read **Deuteronomy 16:13–17 (KJV)** and **Leviticus 23:39–43 (KJV)**.

Focus on what the people were commanded to do and why they were told to dwell in booths.

Day 2

Read **John 7:2, 37–39 (KJV)** and **John 1:14 (KJV)**.

Focus on how Jesus fulfills the meaning of the feast.

Day 3

Read **Zechariah 14:16 (KJV)** and **Revelation 21:1–4 (KJV)**.

Focus on the final joy and the future dwelling of God with His people.

Teaching Notes for Parents

The Feast of Tabernacles helps children and adults alike understand that God's people are never secure because of earthly strength alone. Israel lived in booths, but they were safe because God was with them.

That lesson still matters. Our houses may be stronger than booths, and our lives may feel more settled than Israel's wilderness journey, but our true security is still not found in earthly stability. It is found in the Lord.

This feast also teaches gratitude. It came at harvest time, when barns, presses, and tables were full. God wanted His people to connect blessing with worship. He did not want them to enjoy the gifts and forget the Giver.

Most importantly, this feast teaches the family to look to Christ. He is not one part of the story. He is the center of it. The water from the rock, the manna from heaven, the dwelling of God among His people, and the joy of the final harvest all find their fulfillment in Him.

Discussion Questions

For younger children

1. What was the Feast of Tabernacles meant to help Israel remember?
2. Why did the people live in booths during the feast?
3. Who took care of Israel in the wilderness?
4. What did God give Israel when they were hungry and thirsty?
5. Who gives living water to sinners now?

For older children and adults

1. Why do you think God commanded His people to rejoice at this feast rather than merely observe it?
2. What does this feast teach us about the difference between visible weakness and true security?
3. How does the wilderness history of Israel help us understand the Christian life in this world?
4. Why is it important that Jesus made His declaration in **John 7:37–39 (KJV)** during the Feast of Tabernacles?
5. In what ways does modern life tempt us to enjoy God's gifts while forgetting God Himself?
6. How does the Feast of Tabernacles strengthen our hope in the final resurrection and the new creation?

Practical Application

The family should come away from this study with several practical responses.

First, give thanks to God for daily provision. Food, shelter, work, health, and family are not self-generated blessings. They are mercies from the hand of God.

Second, remember that this present life is temporary. We are not yet home. Like Israel in booths, we live as pilgrims who are dependent on the Lord.

Third, rest in Christ. He is the true source of life, satisfaction, and spiritual refreshment. The soul that comes to Him will not remain empty.

Fourth, live with hope. The final harvest is coming. God will gather all His people, and the day will come when He will dwell with them in fullness forever.

Prayer Prompts

Use one or more of these in family prayer.

Pray and thank God for His daily provision.

Pray that your family would not trust in earthly comforts more than in the Lord.

Pray that each member of the family would come to Christ as the giver of living water.

Pray for joy, gratitude, and faithfulness while living as pilgrims in this world.

Pray for hope in the resurrection and the final gathering of all God's people.

Memory Verse

John 7:37 (KJV)

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

Closing Exhortation

As you prepare to hear the sermon, remember that the Feast of Tabernacles is not merely an old Israelite custom. It is part of God's unfolding revelation of His salvation in Christ. It teaches us to remember His faithfulness, rejoice in His goodness, trust His provision, and look ahead to the day when the harvest will be complete and the tabernacle of God will be with men forever.