

The Feast of Tabernacles John 7

Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God ... Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty.

Deuteronomy 16:15-16

The Feast of Tabernacles was also known as the Feast of Booths or *Sukkot* (Hebrew for booths). It is the seventh and last feast the Lord commanded Israel to observe and one of the three feasts that Jews were to observe each year. As a pilgrim feast, all native born male Jews were required to participate in this feast (Exodus 23:16). It is observed during the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar (Tishri), late September to mid-October and lasted eight days. It began five days after the Day of Atonement at the completion of the fall harvest. It was a time of celebration remembering God's deliverance from Egypt and His provision and protection during the 40 year wandering in the wilderness. It was also the time when they brought their tithes and offerings to the Temple. Josephus called this feast, *the holiest and greatest feast of the Jews*.

Thousands would gather and set up temporary shelters (booths) as part of the requirements of the feast. It required twenty-four divisions of priests to assist with all of the sacrifices that were made. After seven days of feasting, the eighth day was to be a holy convocation at which time they were to cease from work and offer another sacrifice to God (Leviticus 23).

John 7:43 sets the stage for the chapter recognizing the differences of opinion as to the identity of Jesus Christ.

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee... (John 7:1).

These words cover six months space of time following John 6. The verb walking is in the continuous action tense indicating an itinerate place to place ministry in Galilee.

...for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

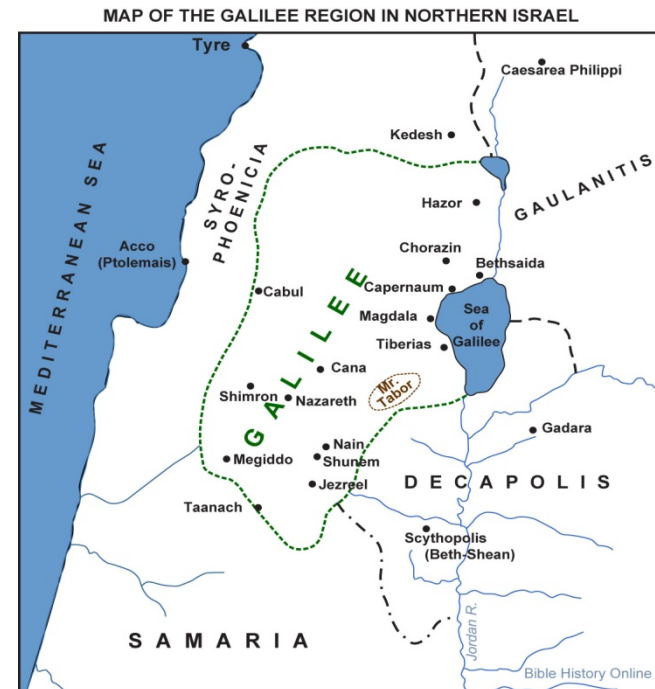
The common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37). It was the Jewish leaders and rulers that sought to kill Him.

Of course, the feasts are also significant in that they foreshadow the work and actions of the coming Messiah. Much of Jesus' public ministry took place in conjunction with the Holy Feasts set forth by God.

Many scholars see the feasts symbolically picturing the following:

- Passover - Christ crucified.
- Pentecost - Christ sending forth the Holy Ghost.
- Tabernacles - Christ's coming again to establish His kingdom and gather His people, proclaiming a jubilee to all the earth.

John's Gospel was written to demonstrate that Jesus was the Christ (John 20:31) - Purpose of the signs (20:30). Most of His signs (miracles) were performed in the area of Galilee.



of Tabernacles that Jesus was born. While we celebrate Christ's birth on [December 25](#), most scholars acknowledge that this tradition was begun in the fourth century AD by the Roman Catholic Church

and that the exact day of Jesus' birth is unknown. Some of the evidence that Jesus might have been born earlier in the year during the Feast of the Tabernacles includes the fact that it would be unlikely for shepherds to still be in the field with their sheep in December, which is in the middle of the winter, but it would have been likely they were in the fields tending sheep at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The strong possibility that Jesus was born at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles is also seen in the words John wrote in [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." The word John chose to speak of Jesus "dwelling" among us is the word *tabernacle*, which simply means to "dwell in a tent."

Some believe it is very likely that John intentionally used this word to associate the first coming of Christ with the Feast of Tabernacles. Christ came in the flesh to dwell among us for a temporary time when He was born in the manger, and He is coming again to dwell among us as Lord of Lords. While it cannot be established with certainty that Jesus was born during the Feast of Tabernacles, some believe there is a strong possibility the Feast of Tabernacles not only looks forward to His second coming but also reflects back on His first coming.

The Feast of Tabernacles begins and ends with a special Sabbath day of rest. During the days of the feast all native Israelites were "to dwell in booths" to remind them that God delivered them out of the "land of Egypt" and to look forward to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would deliver His people from the bondage of sin. This

feast, like all of the feasts of Israel, consistently reminded the Jews and should remind Christians as well that God has promised to deliver His people from the bondage of sin and deliver them from their enemies. Part of God's deliverance for the Israelites was His provision and protection of them for the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness, cut off from the Promised Land. The same holds true for Christians today. God protects us and provides for us as we go through life in the wilderness of this world. While our hearts long for the Promised Land (heaven) and to be in the presence of God, He preserves us in this world as we await the world to come and the redemption that will come when Jesus Christ returns again to "tabernacle" or dwell among us in bodily form.

The Feast of Tabernacles this year takes place Wednesday Evening, October 8 thru Thursday Evening, October 16.