

FEAST OF TABERNACLES: FEAST OF FRUIT

Both in Lev 23:39 and Deut 16:15 we see that fruit makes out an important part of the feast of Tabernacles. The Hebrew word for fruit is "Tevu'ah" and the word basically means: "fruit, income, increase, that which came my (our) way". The Feast of Tabernacles is "per excellence" the feast on which to give thanks to the Almighty for all his blessings - the income and increase that He has provided; the abundance of favour and the gifts that have come our way. For this reason the Feast of Tabernacles is singled out as one of the (three) annual feasts on which no-one who fears Yahweh should appear empty-handed before Him (Deut 16:16).

In Deut 33:13-16, which forms part of Ya'acov's blessing upon Yoseph, one of the specific blessings is that Yoseph would receive the "choice fruits of the sun". The meaning of Yoseph's name is "and He shall add" and prophetically this is an indication that Yoseph was destined to have a multitude of descendants added to his tribe, who would eventually all share in the blessings originally bestowed upon the patriarch, Yoseph. In Scriptures the tribe and descendants of Yoseph are sometimes also referred to as "Ephrayim" - a designation which means "double fruit" and was later used as a broad, collective name for the ten Northern tribes who were taken into exile to Assyria and, in reality, never returned back to the land of Yisrael. Ephrayim literally became assimilated (and in a sense "hidden") within the people of Assyria, and from there (over the past 2700 years), within the nations of the world. The only perceivable way in which the many Scriptural promises to the descendants of Yoseph and Ephrayim may still be fulfilled, is to understand that (many of) the subsequent non-Jewish believers and callers on Yahweh's Name, in fact, may have been part of Ephrayim - which would qualify them to become recipients of the promises and blessings, originally given exclusively to Ephrayim.

In the majority of cases, it will be impossible to know for certain whether a modern day believer in Y'shua and follower of Yahweh's Torah, is in fact a descendant of the tribe of Ephrayim / Yoseph, or not. Scriptures clearly teach, however, that a blood-related connection with Ephrayim, or any part of Yisrael for that matter, becomes irrelevant in the light of the fact that Yahweh has made it quite clear and quite possible that "strangers" and "dry trees" (Isa 56:3); "foreigners" like Ruth and those previously "excluded" from the citizenship of Yisrael (Eph 2:12), may join the Elohim and the people of Yisrael and become full and privileged recipients of their inheritance, provided that they subject themselves uncompromisingly to Yahweh and his Word. This is exactly what is suggested by Zecharyah (Zeceriah) 8:23 "Thus said Yahweh of hosts, In those days ten men from all languages of the nations take hold, yea, they shall take hold of the edge of the garment of a man, a Yehudite, saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that Elohim is with you."

This understanding of Scriptures should by no means be mistaken for Replacement theology. Contrary to what is taught throughout Scriptures, Replacement theology (RT) claims that Israel had been "replaced" by Christians who believe in the Messiah. Replaced, that is, not in a political or ethnical sense (although there are certain very extreme, unscriptural views in this regard, too) but replaced with regards to covenant relationship. Previously, (RT claims) Yahweh's covenant was exclusively with Israel, but because of their disobedience they have forfeited this privilege. As a result another group of people took their place and became the "people of Yahweh". Another (a "new") covenant came into existence in which the "old" laws are no longer valid. The emphasis is no longer on "laws" but on "fruit". So far, the claims of RT.

Although there may be some elements of truth in these claims, it must be said that RT is effectively ignoring the majority of the prophetic utterances in Scriptures. When Yahweh says "Yisrael" He means Yisrael. When He says Tsion (Zion) or Yerushalayim, He means exactly that. When He says we should show fruit in our lives He is addressing the very people who came to know Him because of His promise of fruit and "double fruit" to Yoseph. When He says people outside of Yisrael may become part of Yisrael, He does not through away Yisrael, the apple of his eye. When He becomes angry with Yisrael and announces his wrath and his judgement, He does

not reject them altogether, because He is El, and not a man (Hoshea 11:9). If He had rejected them, how long will it take before He rejects the people who claim to have taken their place?

So we see that the concept of "fruit" which is part and parcel of the symbolism of the Feast of Tabernacles, acquires a new and exciting significance - even for people who may previously have thought that this feast is "only for the Jews". The "fruit" or the blessings ascribed to Yoseph have become "double fruit" - blessings of which you and I may also become recipients. Blessings, according to Deut 33, from the heaven (like rain and sunshine), blessings from the earth (like food and material increase), blessings from the ancient mountains and everlasting hills (from the "Ancient of Days" whose mercy and kindness and righteousness is from everlasting to everlasting), blessings consisting of the finest (verse 15) and the fullness (verse 16) and the favour (or the goodwill - verse 16) of Yahweh. The Feast of Tabernacles is the time of year set aside for those who have tasted of this fruit and who want to rejoice in Him who granted them such unmerited favour.

The word "fruit" ("tevu'ah") comes from the root word "boh" which basically means "to come or to bring". The fruit that I present before Yahweh during the Feast of Tabernacles is something that I "bring" (to Him) because of that which have "come" my way (from Him), in the time leading up to this feast. There are a number of verses in Scriptures which clearly indicate that "boh", and its related form "tevu'ah" or "tebu'ah", have a future significance and are telling us something about the things yet to come. The following are just a few examples: In Yahushua (Joshua) 15:18 "boh" is used for the "coming" of the bride into her husband's house (think of the future "coming" of the bride into the "house" that the Bridegroom will have prepared). In Wwayyikra (Leviticus) 25:22 "boh" is used for the "bringing" in of the harvest (think of the end-time harvest that will coincide with the coming of the Messiah). In 1 Chronicles 4:38 "boh" is used for the "presenting" (or calling out) of people's names (think of the future calling out of the names that have been written in the Book of Life). In Bemidbar (Numbers) 32:19 "boh" is used for the "coming" (or realisation) of an inheritance that had been promised before (think of that day when we shall finally become recipients of our kingdom inheritance).

Do we now have enough proof that the Feast of Tabernacles is indeed a feast of joy? Perhaps one should rephrase the question. Is there any reason why we should not rejoice on this feast? Both in Lev 23:39-40 and Deut 16:15, where the Feast of Tabernacles is said to be a feast of fruit, the people are called to rejoice greatly ("samach") before Yahweh. The eighth day of the feast is traditionally called "Simchat Torah", a designation derived from the same word "samach" and which means: "Rejoicing because of the Torah". It is said that there is no greater rejoicing known on earth than the rejoicing that traditionally takes place among the people of Yisrael on the day of Simchat Torah. It is a rejoicing, not only commanded by Torah, but following spontaneously once reading and understanding Torah! No one who takes seriously the eternal truths taught in Torah, can remain untouched or unmoved. Rejoicing in an audible and visible manner is due to take place!