

An Expectation of Glory

Good evening to everyone, and welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles for 2014.

Although we are prevented by being scattered abroad from meeting in person, we as Yah's children have a commitment to unity, to fellowship, and to the assembling of ourselves together as we see the Great Day approaching. As such, for the past few feasts we have met online daily, to fellowship, to share our testimonies, and more recently to give the less vocal members of the congregation an opportunity to lead a session.

Historically, we have begun these feasts by testifying to the Church what our expectations are for the coming days of refreshing, and at the end we testify how these have been fulfilled. I think this is a good and healthy practice, and so in a sense this presentation is my "expectation" for the feast, after which I will invite others to share their thoughts on this subject. As the title reads, it is an "Expectation of Glory," but I mean this in two different ways.

First, I expect each member of the CSDA Church, and each visitor who is serious about salvation – and not just the social element – to receive a gift that will prepare them for glorification. This may be something different for each person, or it may be a collective lesson for the Church as a whole, or it may be both. And as we reflect on the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, we are invited by our Father to evaluate ourselves in terms of what we are doing on earth, and what it is we are looking forward to experiencing.

Yah gave His people instructions regarding the Feast of Tabernacles, as follows: "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 Yahweh seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath.

"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 Yahweh your Elohim seven days.

"And ye shall keep it a feast unto Yahweh seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, 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 Yahweh your Almighty One." (Lev 23:39 – 43)

The repetition of the time and manner of keeping the feast is significant. And as Paul says in his letter to the Colossians, this ordinance is a shadow of things yet to come. Yah specifically gave the Israelites these particulars of keeping the feast "that your [future] generations may know" that He had done a specific thing with His people, that they might remember how He has led them in the past, so that they will know what to expect of the future.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the fall harvest feast, as it is written that it takes place after the fruit of the land had been gathered in. Evidence that this is not merely some “dead form,” or Israelite ritual that passed away at the cross is found in the Book of Revelation, where it is written of the “harvest” of souls from the earth, “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.” (Rev 14:15-18)

When a Seventh-day Adventist quotes from Revelation 14, the vast majority of the time it is about the Three Angels’ Message. We do not get the “full picture” of this everlasting Gospel, however, if we do not keep reading to see the results of that message. When these angels’ words are received into the heart, a member of the 144,000 is produced – a mature Christian, one ripe for the fall fruit harvest, one prepared to follow perfectly behind the Son, and to stand perfectly before the Father.

In other words, a true Christian, one who receives the Everlasting Gospel, begins to keep the antitypical Feast of Tabernacles. This is not language often found among mainstream Adventism, or really any of the groups that I’ve been researching for our websites; but here, among the Remnant, we talk about such things. We speak to one another about the harvest, about preparations for the end, about our expectation of glory.

The Three Angels’ Message cannot – cannot – be understood without an understanding of the Feast of Tabernacles. It does not matter how many times one recites the words, about a coming judgment, about the fall of Babylon, about the Mark of The Beast... none of these things prepare a soul for glory, unless it is within the context of understanding the Feasts.

When we look at ancient Israel, we are shown what salvation is like. We see the Israelites dwelling in booths, constructed in haste, because they were not settling in the wilderness, but they were passing through on the way to their true inheritance. According to tradition, these booths were constructed without rooftops, so that at night the Israelites could see the sky and give praise to the Creator. In this generation, the “booths” of our lives should be the same way, constructed with a mind to pilgrimage rather than settling; with an open spiritual rooftop above us to look for the sign of the return of the Savior.

Unless we live within spiritual tabernacles, we cannot apply the Gospel to our lives, and so I expect that, in this feast, and through the studies that our brethren will share with us, we will be reminded of our Heavenly home, of our journey to get there through true conversion and then

sanctification, and of our ministry and responsibility to bring others along with us. We will receive at least this blessing, and certainly others as well.

That is the first way I mean that I have an expectation of glory, that each of us will receive a blessing to prepare us for glory.

The second way I mean those words is that I expect a revival that lasts. That is, in fact, the major theme of our feast, and I am reminded of a previous theme from a few years ago, which involved a “vision of excellence.” In a very real sense, a vision of excellence and an expectation of glory are the same thing.

Not only are we receiving blessings that prepare us for glory, but we are actively anticipating, actively working toward, that very thing. Our words, our actions, even our thoughts, are shaped by our faith, by the things that we expect, and as we have examined before, the only way to truly receive victory over sin is to expect (with all of our expectation) to experience it.

In obtaining true conversion, true victory over sin, a necessary step is to take upon ourselves the “arrogance,” as the world calls it, of claiming to have something that most of the world thinks is impossible to attain. And they are not without reason for that opinion – victory over sin IS impossible to “attain.” It is impossible to earn, or to achieve – but this does not mean we cannot and do not have it. We receive our victory only as a gift of the One who was able to attain it, who maintained perfection of character and purity of life from beginning to end, and poured out His Spirit upon us so that we might share in His triumph.

In looking to Christ Yahshua, we see glory. In overcoming as He overcame, we must expect that glory to be ours. We must see, with our spiritual eyes, the moment we stand with Him in the clouds of Heaven, and the moment we sit with Him on His Father’s Throne. The bright and awe-inspiring scenes shown to our prophets, from the Old Testament until today, were provided for this very purpose – to give us an expectation of this glory. It is one thing to be reminded of our commitments, and our blessings; it is another to have a clear vision, a clear expectation, of what the end of these things shall be.

And I am not saying, of course, that we will “see” these things so that we can then sit down and draw them, or even fully describe them in words. Eye has not seen these glories, nor could visions possibly reveal to us the extent of what awaits the Redeemed. Nevertheless by faith we “know” what these things will be like, because we have seen the Father. None may see the Father and live, as it is written; and so we have counted the sight of our Father’s face worth the price of our lives. We have decided to live in the Father’s sight, to live before His face, to live in His purity and light... and in such light all that is “self,” all that is sinful and earthly, must surely die.

But we cannot shrink from this high calling, simply because “self” dies in our Father’s face. Because we love Him, we give ourselves for Him, sacrifices, but living sacrifices, because like

Isaiah, like Daniel, He raises us up after our old lives have expired. He gives us a new life, one in which glory is possible, and the expected end.

But how will one, who knows only this earthly life, decide to see the Father and die? How will one who has never understood the joy of salvation trust that there is life after conversion? Well, we who have seen these things, we who have experienced the first draw of the Harvest, must share our vision with them. We must pass on to them our expectation of glory, so that they will come to look forward to the presence of our Father as we do.

All discussion of conversion is a discussion of matters of life and death. Because of the somberness, because of the pain of it, most human beings flee the conversation entirely. They will either actually avoid talking about the state of their souls, or they will hide behind traditional beliefs, well-worn deceptions, and comforting falsehoods. But, if they will dare to receive it, we bring something far better than these.

We bring good news, that a harvest is coming, of all who are pure of heart, of all who love the reality of Love, of all who sincerely desire what is best for their fellow human beings. We have an expectation of glory to experience, and to share, and my expectation for this feast is that this vision of excellence, this expectation of the unknowable things to come, will be kindled in the hearts of those who have never truly felt it before, and renewed in those for whom the heat of the day has proven to be an enduring challenge.

So then, brethren, my expectations for this feast are twofold. First, and again, I anticipate a blessing for each of us that will prepare us for the glories to come. Second, I anticipate a renewal of the fervor, of the eagerness, of the expectation, that regardless of the trials to come, our message and our destiny is Good News, and Good News worth sharing with all who have an ear to listen.

With that, then, I open the floor and invite all who are here to share their thoughts, and their testimonies, and their expectations, for the meetings we are privileged to attend in the days ahead.

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