

## **Lord of the Sabbath**

Program #37

In the Wilderness with God

Kenny Kitzke

LawstSheep Ministries

Have you remembered this Sabbath day and kept it holy unto the LORD? This is Brother Kenny. The Sabbath day is a delight made just for us by Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and the self-proclaimed Lord of the Sabbath. Let us sing praises in worship to Him and God, our Father, for the day that He sanctified:

Verse 1:

In six days God made earth and seas and heavens;  
He sanctified and blessed the seventh day.  
God hallowed it and rested from His labor,  
So we can worship Him and follow His way.

Chorus:

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;  
A rest for the people of God, a true delight.  
The Son of Man, He reigns as Lord of the Sabbath,  
And shows His brethren how to do what's right.

If you find peace and honor in that song and would like an audio cassette with the entire three verse rendition, with both a piano and an organ accompaniment, please contact me.

Israel was commanded to keep the weekly Sabbaths as feasts of, and unto, the LORD in Leviticus 23: 1, and to proclaim them to be holy convocations. As we read in Lev. 23: 33, they were commanded to also keep the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles.

Now, why did the LORD command this of His native, born-in-the-land, chosen people Israel? According to Lev. 23: 43, He wanted them, and all their generations, to know that He made the children of Israel dwell in booths when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. He is to be remembered and worshipped as their LORD, their God.

Israel's God, is also my God. There is no other god. I have no other God before me. And, this God has commanded worship that is pleasing to Him at His appointed and set times. Fortunately, this appointed feast bears a most amazing command: that His people rejoice for an entire week before Him!

Now, what were the people of Israel to learn from this annual remembrance of their being forced by God to dwell in booths? To gain an understanding, we must review what happened to Israel after they were delivered from captivity in Egypt. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the first of the three Feasts of the LORD, helps us recount what God did to deliver His people from bondage in Egypt.

God personally led His chosen people out of Egypt through the wilderness and to His Promised Land for the nation Israel. While camping at Mt. Sinai, He had given them the law and the Ten Commandments to use in that Promised Land. This happened after seven weeks on the 50th day after the exodus from Egypt.

This giving of the written word of God, and the making of the Old Covenant, is memorialized in what we call the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, the second annual Feast of the LORD. It was on Pentecost when the Spirit of God was also given to men who believed in His Son as the Messiah of Israel.

Unfortunately, Israel committed the terrible sin of worshipping the golden calf while waiting for Moses to return from His meeting with God on the top of Mt. Sinai. It is at this time that the extended dwelling in booths in the wilderness of the Sinai desert began for the children of Israel. And, this remembered time in the wilderness will teach us much about God's plan for Israel and for us, His church in the wilderness, before we can enter the prophesied promised land with the King of kings.

Much of the rejoicing typically associated with the Feast of Tabernacles is in the knowledge of, and the rehearsal for, the coming of the 1,000 year Kingdom of God on earth. I will cover that physical Kingdom in more detail in the next program.

However, to only focus on that wonderful and joyful "thousand-year day" during the Feast of Tabernacles, the third Feast of the LORD, would be to miss an important lesson about our need to also dwell in our temporary, physical and mortal bodies for an entire generation, for our natural lifetime.

If I were to attempt to cover all the things that transpired during the journey of Israel with God through the wilderness, before entering His Promised Land, I could spend the rest of the year on those subjects. So, I can only cover a few key points from the Old Testament accounts and pray that they wet your whistle enough, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to read for yourself the Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua which deal with this wilderness adventure of Israel when they are forced by God to dwell in temporary tabernacles, or tents, for forty years!

So, let's pick up the story of how Israel's wandering in the wilderness begins in Exodus 33: 1:

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Depart and go from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'"*

This is after Moses pleads with the LORD to not destroy the children of Israel for worshipping the golden calf. Yet when Moses comes down from Sinai and sees them dancing before the calf in worship he cannot quell the anger that he asked the LORD to quench. Moses casts down and breaks the tablets with the Ten Commandments written in stone by God's own finger. He melts the golden calf, grinds the gold into powder and

poured it into the water and made the children of Israel drink it. Talk about a cocktail from God, that must have produced a hangover and nausea that one would not forget!

But, that is not all that Moses does concerning the golden calf. He stands at the entrance of the camp and draws a line in the sand demanding whoever is on the LORD'S side to come to him. Only the tribe of Levi comes. And they are commanded by Moses to take up swords and go kill their brothers and companions who would not come to Moses. And, about three thousand fell that day, never to see or enter into the Promised Land.

Lastly, the LORD tells Moses that His Angel will lead the rest of Israel to the Promised Land. However, Moses implores the LORD to come and lead them Himself. The LORD agrees but this necessitates the renewal of their marriage covenant and Israel building a temporary tabernacle for God to dwell in as He accompanies Israel to His Promised Land.

We see in Ex. 40: 1, the day that the LORD commands His tabernacle be set up:

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "On the first day of the first month, you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of the meeting."*

If you have been a regular listener, you will realize that the LORD later commanded that this is the new moon day in the month of the Abib, the first month of each year. Abib refers to the state of barley growing in the land. It was in the first month of the second year after leaving Egypt that the tabernacle was raised up, just as the LORD had commanded. God, and His calendar, are indeed fascinating subjects.

But, as the Book of Exodus ends, we see in Ex. 40: 34-38 how the tent of the meeting and its tabernacle helped the LORD guide the children of Israel toward the Promised Land:

*Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

I repeated that so it is absolutely clear to you that God Himself dwelt with His people and personally led them on their journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land. He was like a modern traffic stop light, giving them a green to go and a red to stop. Our God is an awesome God, and one amazing traffic cop!

You would think that with the God of the universe dwelling among them, Israel would trust and obey His every command given through Moses. But, if you are a Bible student, you already know these stiff-necked people practically spit in God's eye. Yet, He keeps

saving them over and over again. Eventually even God's patience with their disobedience and unfaithfulness runs out. It is a valuable lesson we must learn if we ever hope to see and enter the Kingdom of God that He is trying to lead us toward.

Following the Book of Exodus is the Book of Leviticus. It gives Israel the laws it needs to obey in the Promised Land. The law was given to prepare them to enter the Promised Land. But the story of their disobedience is so abhorrent, the children of Israel, delivered from Egypt by the right hand of God, do not actually enter that land. Even their leader, Moses, could not enter it even though he was close enough to see it. The message and lesson to us in the wilderness is life changing. Are you listening and learning what God has for you to learn in keeping the Feasts of the LORD?

The events of the movement of Israel toward the promised land as they dwelled in tents in the wilderness is picked back up in the Book of Numbers. What in the world is the Book of Numbers about? You get a reasonable notion about what a book titled Genesis is about. You get a fair sense about what Exodus is about. Well, you just can't tell much from the title of the Book of Numbers. Why?

Well, if you ever play Bible Trivial Pursuit, you might benefit from knowing that this is a very poor title, and not consistent with the Hebrew scriptures. When the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek, it was given the title "arithmetic" translated as "numbers" in English. The right Hebrew word for this Book would translate into "In the Desert." This is truly much more indicative of God's message for us concerning Israel's forty years wandering in the desert wilderness with Him. While there are a few chapters that deal with important numbers, it is hardly the main message.

In this fifty-two week Lord of the Sabbath Program, I have repeatedly shown how some poor translations of the Hebrew and Aramaic texts into Greek, followed by even worse translations into English, have misled many "Christians" and Church leaders into ideas about our Lord of the Sabbath that simply miss the point and can lead us away from the Kingdom of God.

I am convinced this is one reason for the vast number of Christian "Church" denominations, and the numerous divisions and splits still going on today, in what should be the ONE and ONLY true church of God headed by Christ. Confusing scriptures, combined with the pride of men, is all it takes to wrongly divide the word of God, and have an ever growing falling away from the truth once delivered to the Prophets and to the Apostles.

God is not the author of confusion: but Satan and men are. We know that a house divided against itself cannot stand. And, if you need proof that the house of God today is crumbling into tinier and tinier factions, just look into an internet Christian church directory to find some 20,000 denominations listed. And the list is still growing.

Back to the Book of Numbers, though inaptly named, we find the first ten chapters deal with the preparations needed for Israel to journey through the desert. In fact, the first

instruction to Moses from the LORD is to take a census of and number the males of Israel over the age of 20 who can go to war for Israel in the Promised Land. Now you can see from what the name “Numbers” originated.

We see Israel organized into armies according to the tribes of Israel; according to the sons of Jacob. However, the tribe of Levi is not included in the armies but is to instead serve the LORD and the priesthood of Aaron. We also find that the sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, are now included to make up the prophetic twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation. This, as we will discover later, is extremely important in understanding the prophecy revealed by the Feast of Tabernacles.

The LORD teaches Israel to camp or travel according to the cloud over His tabernacle. He teaches them about His priests blowing two silver trumpets to know when the congregation and the leaders are to assemble and when to advance in their journey. This adds to the symbolic meaning of the Feasts of the LORD, especially blowing the trumpet of warning of judgment on Yom Teruah. In Num. 10: 11-13 we see how Israel’s journey in the wilderness as His chosen covenant people begins at Mt. Sinai:

*Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.*

Just one chapter later, in Numbers 11, we see a phenomena of the people of God in the wilderness already starting. They would complain to God, He would become angry and punish or chasten them, then they would ask Moses to seek forgiveness and mercy and this loving God would finally make things right. Here you will see the people complaining about the manna, the food from heaven, sent by God to feed them in the desert. Soon, they want meat, like they remember having in Egypt. And, the story of God sending them quail, enough for a month of feasting, is well worth your reading.

In Numbers 12, we find Aaron and Miriam accusing Moses of marrying an Ethiopian woman. And the LORD chastises them for speaking against His humble servant. The LORD places leprosy on Miriam but graciously relents at the repentive prayer of Aaron and Moses and allows her to return into the camp after seven days.

One of the main incidents that I must cover about what the people of God did while in the wilderness with God Himself is the account of God having Moses send spies from the twelve tribes into the land of Canaan to assess what the land and the people living there were like. After forty days, the spies returned and confirmed that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD had promised them as shown in Numbers 13.

Yet, later in Numbers Chapter 13 and 14, we see the leaders of the tribes of Israel (except for Caleb) give the people a discouraging report on the size and fierceness of the inhabitants of the Promised Land. The people of God wept knowing they would not be

able to enter this Promised Land successfully. They even sought to a new leader who would take them back to Egypt to be slaves rather than to be slain in Canaan.

When Joshua and Caleb propose promptly taking possession of the Promised Land, the people decide to stone them! God intervenes, but as we see in Num.14: 29-34, God passes a death sentence on the people of God who rebelled against Him:

*The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in the wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb, son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But, your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land you have despised.*

*But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely for forty years, and you shall know My rejection.*

This is a fearful story for anyone who will not TRUST and OBEY the LORD. When I celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, I am reminded that everyone who was initially called or chosen by God WILL NOT automatically enter the Kingdom of God, even our very own Promised Land of the millennial Kingdom of God.

As a follower of our leader, our Savior, and our Lord of the Sabbath, a type of Moses to us as the children of God and not just of Israel, we are in no way guaranteed to even see or much less enter into the Kingdom of God just because He called us or we decided to trust Him at some point in our lives.

Anyone studying to see how the Feasts of the LORD teach God's will, must come to a conclusion that it is not enough to be called into a covenant relationship with Jesus and then be saved from mortal death and enter the Kingdom of God as a resurrected eternal spirit being REGARDLESS of whether or not we obey God, our LORD after our call.

Are you getting the essential picture of how God will deal with His called children, the people in the church of God, based upon how He dealt with the children of Israel? He may call you to a baptism in water for justification from PAST sin by Christ Jesus as shown in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You surely are delivered from all PAST sin forever. But, is nothing more required of you after that for entering the promised Kingdom of God? Is the often preached "cheap grace gospel" of an intellectual and momentary belief in Christ as the Messiah, or a short prayer of repentance, going to save you from dying in the wilderness of this generation and never seeing or entering the Kingdom of God?

No, my friends, hearing the call to the word of God is only a start in your march through

this short wilderness period of mortal life in a temporary earthy tabernacle; a corruptible house of human carnal flesh. “Once saved, always saved” and “Jesus did it all” for us is perhaps the greatest gospel deception by Satan around today. It will lead to destruction for all who started on the journey to the Kingdom of God but who rebelled and did not finish it obediently and enter successfully, even being so close they could see it.

While God was physically present with the Israelites in the wilderness, they still refused to trust Him and do as He commanded despite all His miracles. Included were several commands to keep the Sabbaths of the LORD. And, the penalty for their lack of faith and obedience to the laws and Commandments of God led to their sure death and destruction just as it had for the first man, Adam. It is like that for us in the church of God today.

Believe it or not, we have the benefit of God being with us too. We have the written word of His Testimony, the Bible. This is where understanding the Feasts of the LORD comes into our doctrine and our prophecy. At the Feast of Weeks, known as Pentecost, those who believe in Christ as their Savior and Lord also receive the Holy Spirit of God to dwell in them in this life sometimes referred to as the “church in the wilderness.”

Can we, as baptized Christians, who have been given the Holy Spirit of God to tabernacle in our hearts, also fail to do as God commands in this life? Absolutely! We continue to sin. We can see both in the Feast of Tabernacles and in many other New Testament scriptures, that we can still fall in the wilderness by not trusting by faith in God. Acknowledging Christ as the Lord of our life, but NOT keeping His commandments, including the Sabbath commands, may keep us from entering the Kingdom of God. Dare we ignore what God commanded of His people, and what Jesus Himself, as Lord of the Sabbath, said and did?

Do we not believe that it is more than hearing of the law that is necessary for salvation and glorification in Christ? Have we not studied the parable of the sower where one can get off to a good start with the seed of the word of God and then have that word choked off by Satan and the cares of our flesh and the weedy desires of things of this world that are not the things of God? Do we not understand that we must endure to the end and live a humble and righteous life, continually repenting of any sins we still commit at least annually on the Day of Atonement?

I pray my friends that you are getting the true picture of God’s plan for mankind from His Feasts, especially this Feast of Tabernacles, as we rehearse what will surely come to pass as found in the word of God. Habitual and unrepentive sinners will not enter the Kingdom of God any more than the defiant and untrusting children of Israel entered the Promised Land. Be warned and be aware that even if we at one time believed in God and Jesus, made a confession and promise to obey, got baptized and even had the precious gift of the Holy Spirit living in our heart, we can still fail to receive our crown of eternal life.

Must not the church of God walk obediently with Him in this brief and temporary mortal

body or tabernacle and endure to the end in love before we can be worthy in Christ to enter the Kingdom of God with Him as our King forever?

Now one other point needs to be made about this LORD'S feast of Tabernacles. As we go on in the Book of Numbers, we see a terrible story of even Moses, a man of great faith and a great humble man and servant of God, who disobeys God in a rather minor way but is not allowed to enter into the Kingdom of God. We find that He is allowed to see the Promised Land from a hilltop but not to lead the chosen people of God into it.

This shocking story is found in Numbers Chapter 20. The children of Israel are in the Wilderness of Zin and there was no water for the congregation. Once again, the people of God complained. Moses and Aaron again fall on their faces before the door of the tabernacle of God and seek Him for mercy. As usual, the LORD appears to them and tells them to gather the people and for Moses to speak to a certain rock and miraculously water will come out of the rock so that the people and their animals could drink and live.

In apparent anger at the rebellious, untrusting and continually complaining children of Israel, Moses strikes the rock twice with his rod rather than just speaking to the rock as the LORD commanded. For taking authority into his own hand angrily before the people of God and not doing exactly as the LORD has commanded in front of His people to hallow the LORD, we see a terrible pronouncement and punishment of Moses recorded in Num. 20: 12:

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."*

Further study in the Book of Numbers and Deuteronomy will detail how indeed Aaron died at Mt. Hor and Moses died at Mt. Nebo and did not lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land or enter into it.

This seems quite sad. Not only do the rebellious children of Israel whom God personally delivered from Egypt die in the wilderness, so do the leaders that God had originally chosen and blessed. And, why? Because they subsequently rebelled against God and what He had commanded and promised to them if only they would believe in Him and trust in Him by faith.

We, brethren, are way more fortunate. Our leader in the wilderness is Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. He did all that His Father commanded Him, including keeping of the LORD'S appointed Sabbaths perfectly. And, if we believe in Him, and keep His commandments, we will be able, as the people and son's of God, to follow our worthy leader, our Passover Lamb, and King into the Kingdom of God, into the very land promised to the seed of Abraham through Christ, our Lord of the Sabbath.

So, who did enter the Promised Land of Israel and why? What happened? Did they rejoice? Next Sabbath we will explore exactly why the people of God are commanded to

rejoice before the LORD and what it will be like to enter the Kingdom of God: our very own Promised Land.