**Passover**

In chapter 16, Moses repeats instructions to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread which celebrated the Passover when God brought them out of Egypt (see Ex. Chapt.12). This was observed in the Hebrew month of Abib which is the first month of the Hebrew calendar, late March to late April corresponding with the Christian Easter observance. Next Moses tells them to observe the Feast of Weeks which was to be observed 7 weeks from the first grain harvest (celebrated by the Feast of Firstfruits) in the spring which would be in the Hebrew month of Sivan, mid May to mid June. This festival was first commanded by God in Ex. 23:16. Then Moses told them to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles after they had gathered the fall harvest of their crops. It was observed in Tishri, the 7th month of the Hebrew calendar which is late September to early October. Moses told them to bring an offering to God in proportion to the blessings they received.

In each of the three feasts , Moses told the people they were to celebrate the feasts at a place God would choose as His dwelling. That place would be the tabernacle was built under the direction of Moses with specific instructions from God (see Ex. Chapters 25-31). After is was completed God’s presence filled it (see Ex. 40:34). After that it travelled with the Israelites through the desert then it was at Gilgal when they crossed the Jordan. Its first permanent location was in Shiloh where it stayed for 369 years. God confirmed that His dwelling was first established there in Jer. 7:12. It was placed there at the direction of Joshua after the Israelites had conquered most of Canaan (see Josh. 18:1). It remained at Shiloh until the ark was brought into a battle with the Philistines during the time that Eli served as judge of Israel. The ark was captured by the Philistines and later returned tom the Israelites when it became a curse to the Philistines (see 1st Sam. Chapters 4-5). Shiloh was located in Samaria about 20 miles north of Jerusalem in what is now called the West Bank, named for its location of the Western Bank of the Jordan River.

When he was king, Saul relocated the tabernacle to Nob which was near his hometown of Gibeah, then it was moved again to Gibeon. When David became king, he brought the ark to Jerusalem where he placed it in a tent but it does not seem that this tent was the tabernacle built under the direction of Moses (see 1st Chron. 16:1). The tabernacle was no longer used after the temple was built by Solomon and filled by God with His presence (see 2nd Chron. 7:1).

Each of the three feasts mentioned in this chapter has some New Testament significance. The Feast of Unleavened bread was observed immediately after Passover. Jesus entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with His disciples and it was during this time that he was crucified. Just as the Israelites escaped physical death by the blood on their doorways in Egypt, we escape spiritual death by the blood of Jesus.

The Feast of Weeks is also known as Pentecost because it was 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits. On the Day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to fulfill the promise of Jesus to send the Comforter (Advocate in NIV, see John 14:16).

The 7th chapter of John is dedicated solely to the appearance of Jesus at the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. He taught in the temple courts and had a confrontation with the Pharisees and Chief priest.

God is sovereign and just as He chose to dwell in the tabernacle and the temple, He also chose to abandon them because of the disobedience of the Israelites. Psalm 78:60-61 confirms that God left the tabernacle at Shiloh, primarily because of idol worship. Ezekiel chapter 10 records that God’s glory left the temple, again because of idol worship.

I read an interesting article online about God’s dwelling places. It is on the website “Straightway” managed by Christian Purities Fellowship. I have no knowledge of this organization and have no recommendation for or against it. The author noted that both Yale and Harvard were founded on biblical principles from which they have strayed. He also wrote that DL Moody founded a school for young men in Massachusetts known as Mount Hermon which became a location for many sermons preached by some of the great preachers of the late 19th century. The school is now a private school and a visitor to their website will not find the slightest reference tom DL Moody, let alone Jesus. It seems that before God leaves a dwelling, the people there leave him.