

# SUKKOT

## The Feast of Tabernacles

### SUKKOT---ITS BIBLICAL BASIS

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the **fifteenth** of this **seventh month** is the **Feast of Booths** for seven days to the LORD. On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.

On the eighth day you shall have a **holy convocation** and present an **offering by fire** to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work...

On exactly the **fifteenth day** of the **seventh month**, when you have gathered in the **crops** of the land, you shall **celebrate** the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a **rest** on the first day and a **rest** on the eighth day.

Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the **foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches** and **boughs of leafy trees** and **willows** of the brook, and you shall **rejoice** before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall thus **celebrate** it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a **perpetual** statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the **seventh month**.

You shall live in **booths** for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in **booths** when I brought them out from the land of Egypt.

I am the LORD your God.”

So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the **appointed times** of the LORD.  
(Leviticus 23:33-36, 39-44)

“You shall celebrate the **Feast of Booths** seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat;...

Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, **because** the LORD your God **will bless you** in all your **produce** and all the **work of your hands**, so that you shall be altogether **joyful**.

(Deuteronomy 16:13, 15)

### SUKKOT TODAY---ITS KEY ELEMENTS

#### The Sukkah

One of the basic traditions of the **Feast of Tabernacles** involves building a “**sukkah**” or **booth**. When God instituted the feast, He instructed the Israelites to “...live in booths for **seven days**” (Lev. 23:42). This was to be a continual reminder of their **wilderness** wandering and His provision for them during those times. “Sukkahs” are traditionally made from the branches of leafy trees like palm trees or willows. Fruits from edible plants and trees are used to decorate the inside of the sukka.

## The Waving of the Lulav

The **waving of the lulav** is another key ceremony associated with the **Feast of Tabernacles**. This involved taking a **lulav** (combined branches of willow, myrtle, and palm fronds) in one hand and an **Etrog** (the fruit of a citron tree) in the other, and **waving** it before the Lord. This ritual, also known as the presentation of the **four species**, is an offering of **praise and thanksgiving** to the Lord for His **provision** through the harvest.

## Prayers for Rain

Traditionally, on the **last** day of the **Feast of Tabernacles**, many **prayers** are offered for harvest rains. During biblical times, water was often scarce and the people were well aware of their **dependence upon God** for **rain**. During Sukkot, temple worship included a **ritual pouring** of water from the Pool of Siloam, symbolic of the **prayers** for winter rain. This festive ceremony was accompanied by a parade of worshippers, **joyously** playing music and singing Psalms to the Lord.

## SUKKOT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels record that our **Messiah** not only celebrated **the Feast of Tabernacles**, but He took traditional **elements** of the celebration and **applied** them to His own **life and mission**. In the gospel of John, chapters 7 and 8, Jesus used two traditional symbols from the celebration of the feast, **water and light**, to help the people understand His **Messianic** person and ministry.

(John 7:37-39; 8:12)

## SUKKOT – ITS FUTURE SIGNIFICANCE

The **Feast of Tabernacles** is the **seventh** and **last** of the feast appointed by God in Leviticus 23. It represents the “**final ingathering**” at the **end** of the age and the **joyous celebration** of the setting up of God’s kingdom on earth.

After Israel’s final **Day of Atonement** (Zech 12 & 13),

the **Feast of Booths** will be celebrated in Jerusalem and all nations will be required to attend.

Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against **Jerusalem** will go up from year to year to worship the **King, the LORD of hosts**, and to **celebrate the Feast of Booths**. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will **no rain** on them. If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to **celebrate the Feast of Booths**. This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the **Feast of Booths**.

(Zech 14:16-19)