

# **Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles & Eighth Great Day**

By Constance Smith

Continuing the fall feasts, the *Moedim* or Appointed Times of God (YHVH), also called biblical feasts. Sukkot is the third of the fall feasts, following the Yom Teruah – the Day of Trumpets, and Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonements.

The Day of Trumpets is a day of surprise. It is the day that no man knows the day or the hour. But it is greeted with the blowing of shofars and shouts. The days following that are referred to as the Days of Awe. Yom Kippur (Kippurim) is a day of somber fasting, reflection, repentance and prayer. Those are now followed by Sukkot. Sukkot is also called the Feast of Tabernacles or “Booths.” It is a weeklong celebration. The day after the completion of the week is the eighth day. It is commonly called the Eighth Great Day.

*All scripture quotes below are from the [CJB bible](#).*

## **Leviticus 23:33-43**

*“Adonai said to Moshe, “Tell the people of Isra’el, ‘On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of Sukkot for seven days to Adonai. On the first day there is to be a holy convocation; do not do any kind of ordinary work. For seven days you are to bring an offering made by fire to Adonai; on the eighth day you are to have a holy convocation and bring an offering made by fire to Adonai; it is a day of public assembly; do not do any kind of ordinary work.*”

*“These are the designated times of Adonai that you are to proclaim as holy convocations and bring an offering made by fire to Adonai — a burnt offering, a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, each on its own day — besides the Shabbats of Adonai, your gifts, all your vows and all your voluntary offerings that you give to Adonai.*

*“But on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered the produce of the land, you are to observe the festival of Adonai seven days; the first day is to be a complete rest and the eighth day is to be a complete rest. On the first day you are to take choice fruit, palm fronds, thick branches and river-willows, and celebrate in the presence of Adonai your God for seven days. You are to observe it as a feast to Adonai seven days in the year; it is a permanent regulation, generation after generation; keep it in the seventh month. You are to live in sukkot for seven days; every citizen of Isra’el is to live in a sukkah, so that generation after generation of you will know that I made the people of Isra’el live in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Adonai your God.”*

### **Deuteronomy 16:13-15**

*“You are to keep the festival of Sukkot for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing-floor and winepress. Rejoice at your festival — you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, the L’vi’im, and the foreigners, orphans and widows living among you. Seven days you are to keep the festival for Adonai your God in the place Adonai your God will choose, because Adonai your God*

*will bless you in all your crops and in all your work, so you are to be full of joy!”*

### **Deuteronomy 14:22-29**

*“Every year you must take one tenth of everything your seed produces in the field, and eat it in the presence of Adonai your God. In the place where he chooses to have his name live you will eat the tenth of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your cattle and sheep, so that you will learn to fear Adonai your God always. But if the distance is too great for you, so that you are unable to transport it, because the place where Adonai chooses to put his name is too far away from you; then, when Adonai your God prospers you, you are to convert it into money, take the money with you, go to the place which Adonai your God will choose, and exchange the money for anything you want — cattle, sheep, wine, other intoxicating liquor, or anything you please — and you are to eat there in the presence of Adonai your God, and enjoy yourselves, you and your household.*

*“But don’t neglect the Levi staying with you, because he has no share or inheritance like yours. At the end of every three years you are to take all the tenths of your produce from that year and store it in your towns. Then the Levi, because he has no share or inheritance like yours, along with the foreigner, the orphan and the widow living in your towns, will come, eat and be satisfied — so that Adonai your God will bless you in everything your hands produce.”*

The people of Israel were to begin keeping the festival or feast of Sukkot on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the biblical month. (***See my article about the Feast of Trumpets, where I talk about calendars.***)

- They were to meet at the Tabernacle/temple (Where God made His name dwell)
- They were to bring choice fruits, palms and leafy branches to celebrate the whole week.
- They were to rest on the first day and on the day after – the Eighth day.
- They were to remember the time they spent in the wilderness, and how YHVH took care of them, fed them and even their clothes and shoes didn't wear out. He provided all they needed.
- They were to celebrate the harvest, the abundance they had received that year.
- They were to bring an offering to the Tabernacle/Temple.
- And they were to give in support of the Levites, the orphans and the widows.
- They were to dwell in sukkot.

### **What is Sukkot?**

The word "sukkot" is the plural form of the word "sukkah."

A sukkah is a *temporary dwelling*. A dwelling of course is a structure or shelter that you would live in. This is something that is temporary. It is not a shed or a cabin or anything with permanent, solid structure. The sukkot were built with reeds, palms and other materials that sheltered them, but were only temporary. The people

of Israel were commanded to dwell in sukkot for a week, and to spend that week in celebration and feasting.

Just like all of the other moedim - biblical feasts, Sukkot is filled with prophetic symbolism.

### **The Spring Feasts – The First Coming of Messiah (Jesus/Yeshua)**

Passover/Unleavened Bread → The Death & Burial of Yeshua/Jesus

First fruits → The Resurrection

Shavuot/Pentecost → The giving of the Holy Spirit

### **The Fall Feasts – The Second Coming of Messiah**

Yom Teruah/Trumpets → The Return of the Messiah

Yom Kippur → Judgement Day

Sukkot → The Marriage Supper of Messiah and His People

In **John 1:14** it says that Jesus/Yeshua put on flesh so that he could tabernacle, or dwell among us.

*“The Word became a human being **and lived with us,**  
and we saw his Sh’khinah,  
the Sh’khinah of the Father’s only Son,  
full of grace and truth.”*

**2 Peter 1:12-19** Describes our bodies as our tents, our temporary dwellings.

*“For this reason, I will always remind you about these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you already have. And I consider it right to keep stirring*

*you up with reminders, as long as I am in **the tent of this body**. I know that I will soon lay aside this tent of mine, as our Lord Yeshua the Messiah has made clear to me. And I will do my best to see that after my exodus, you will be able to remember these things at all times.*

*For when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, we did not rely on cunningly contrived myths. On the contrary, we saw his majesty with our own eyes. For we were there when he received honor and glory from God the Father; and the voice came to him from the grandeur of the Sh'khinah, saying, "This is my son, whom I love; I am well pleased with him!" We heard this voice come out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.*

*Yes, we have the prophetic Word made very certain. You will do well to pay attention to it as to a light shining in a dark, murky place, until the Day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts."*

We also see references to Yeshua – Jesus keeping Sukkot. And of course he took the opportunity to teach the countless Israelites who had come there from all over.

### **John 7:1-17**

*After this, Yeshua traveled around in the Galil, intentionally avoiding Y'hudah because the Judeans were out to kill him. But the festival of Sukkot in Y'hudah was near; so his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go into Y'hudah, so that your talmidim can see the miracles you do; for no one who wants to become known acts in secret. If you're doing these things, show yourself to the world!" (His brothers spoke this*

way because they had not put their trust in him.) Yeshua said to them, “My time has not yet come; but for you, any time is right. The world can’t hate you, but it does hate me, because I keep telling it how wicked its ways are. You, go on up to the festival; as for me, I am not going up to this festival now, because the right time for me has not yet come.” Having said this, he stayed on in the Galil.

But after his brothers had gone up to the festival, he too went up, not publicly but in secret. At the festival, the Judeans were looking for him. “Where is he?” they asked. And among the crowds there was much whispering about him. Some said, “He’s a good man”; but others said, “No, he is deceiving the masses.” However, no one spoke about him openly, for fear of the Judeans.

Not until the festival was half over did Yeshua go up to the Temple courts and begin to teach. The Judeans were surprised: “How does this man know so much without having studied?” they asked. So Yeshua gave them an answer: “My teaching is not my own, it comes from the One who sent me. If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether my teaching is from God or I speak on my own.” ...

**37-39...** “Now on the last day of the festival, Hoshana Rabbah (The Eighth Great Day), Yeshua stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking! Whoever puts his trust in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!” (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who trusted in him were to receive later —

*the Spirit had not yet been given, because Yeshua had not yet been glorified.)”*

Interestingly, on the Eighth Great Day, there is a ceremony that is performed by the priests called the water libation ceremony. At this time the Jesus was saying *“If anyone is thirsty, let him keep coming to me and drinking! Whoever puts his trust in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his inmost being!”* The priests would have likely been performing this very ceremony. God has perfect timing, and nothing is ever done by coincidence.

Another thing that takes place on every 7<sup>th</sup> year on Hoshana Rabbah, the Eighth Day, is that the entire Torah was read to the people. Everyone who had gathered there at the Tabernacle or Temple, coming from all over to participate in this holy, appointed time of God, would stand and hear the Torah, beginning to end.

### **Deuteronomy 31: 10-13**

*Moshe gave them these orders: “At the end of every seven years, during the festival of Sukkot in the year of sh’mittah, when all Isra’el have come to appear in the presence of Adonai at the place he will choose, you are to read this Torah before all Isra’el, so that they can hear it. Assemble the people — the men, the women, the little ones and the foreigners you have in your towns — so that they can hear, learn, fear Adonai your God and take care to obey all the words of this Torah; and so that their children, who have not known, can hear and learn to fear Adonai your God, for as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Yarden to possess.”*



Prophetically, we also know that Sukkot will hold significance, and be kept in the millennial kingdom. We read in Zechariah about this after it discusses the great war where all the nations are gathered against Jerusalem, and God Himself intervenes, the day of the Lord takes place and He reigns as KING.

### **Zechariah 14:16-17**

*Finally, everyone remaining from all the nations that came to attack Yerushalayim will go up every year to worship the king, Adonai-Tzva'ot, and to keep the festival of Sukkot. If any of the families of the earth does not go up to Yerushalayim to worship the king, Adonai-Tzva'ot, no rain will fall on them.*

Just like every other moedim, every appointed time of God, Sukkot has layers of meaning and prophetic significance.

### **Isaiah 62:1-5**

*For Tziyon's sake I will not be silent,  
for Yerushalayim's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out brightly  
and her salvation like a blazing torch.*

*The nations will see your vindication  
and all kings your glory.*

*Then you will be called by a new name  
which Adonai himself will pronounce.*

*You will be a glorious crown in the hand of Adonai,  
a royal diadem held by your God.*

*You will no longer be spoken of as 'Azuvah [Abandoned]  
or your land be spoken of as 'Sh'mamah [Desolate];  
rather, you will be called Heftzi-Vah [My-Delight-Is-In-Her]*

*and your land Be‘ulah [Married].  
For Adonai delights in you,  
and your land will be married —  
as a young man marries a young woman,  
your sons will marry you;  
as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
your God will rejoice over you.*

Several years ago I did a bible chat about the Hebrew wedding tradition. Studying that was absolutely mind-blowing to me. As a matter of fact, I think I even named that video “*This Blew My Mind About the Bible!*” You see, every stage of the wedding tradition, from the payment of the bride price to the wedding feast, paints the picture of the gospel. Every single step. It is all through the bible, and it is represented by each of the biblical feasts/moedim.

I highly recommend going and watching that video if you haven’t seen it before.

### **Ephesians 5:25-32**

*“As for husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah loved the Messianic Community, indeed, gave himself up on its behalf, in order to set it apart for God, making it clean through immersion in the mikveh, so to speak, in order to present the Messianic Community to himself as a bride to be proud of, without a spot, wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without defect. This is how husbands ought to love their wives — like their own bodies; for the man who loves his wife is loving himself. Why, no one ever hated his own flesh! On the contrary, he feeds it well and takes care of it, just as the Messiah does*

*the Messianic Community, because we are parts of his Body. “Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and remain with his wife, and the two will become one.” There is profound truth hidden here, which I say concerns the Messiah and the Messianic Community.”*

### **Revelation 19:6-10**

*“Then I heard what sounded like the roar of a huge crowd, like the sound of rushing waters, like loud peals of thunder, saying,*

*“Halleluyah!*

*Adonai, God of heaven’s armies,  
has begun his reign!*

*“Let us rejoice and be glad!  
Let us give him the glory!  
For the time has come for the  
wedding of the Lamb,  
and his **Bride** has prepared herself*

*fine linen, bright and clean  
has been given her to wear.”*

*(“Fine linen” means the righteous deeds of God’s people.) The angel said to me, “Write: ‘How blessed are those who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb!’” Then he added, “These are God’s very words.” I fell at his feet to worship him; but he said, “Don’t do that! I’m only a fellow-servant with you and your brothers who have the testimony of Yeshua. Worship God! For the testimony of Yeshua is the Spirit of prophecy.”*

## **Revelation 21:1-10, 22-27**

*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer there. Also I saw the holy city, New Yerushalayim, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne say, “See! God’s Sh’khinah is with mankind, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and he himself, God-with-them, will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will no longer be any death; and there will no longer be any mourning, crying or pain; because the old order has passed away.”*

*Then the One sitting on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new!” Also he said, “Write, ‘These words are true and trustworthy!’” And he said to me, “It is done! I am the ‘A’ and the ‘Z,’ (Aleph and Tav, Alpha and Omega) the Beginning and the End. To anyone who is thirsty I myself will give water free of charge from the Fountain of Life. He who wins the victory will receive these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the untrustworthy, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those involved with the occult and with drugs, idol-worshippers, and all liars — their destiny is the lake burning with fire and sulfur, the second death.”*

*One of the seven angels having the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues approached me and said, “Come! I will show you the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb.” He carried me off in the Spirit to the top of a great, high mountain and showed me*

*the holy city, Yerushalayim, coming down out of heaven from God.”...*

*“I saw no Temple in the city, for Adonai, God of heaven’s armies, is its Temple, as is the Lamb. The city has no need for the sun or the moon to shine on it, because God’s Sh’khinah gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. Its gates will never close, they stay open all day because night will not exist there, and the honor and splendor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure may enter it, nor anyone who does shameful things or lies; the only ones who may enter are those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”*

Something of note – how often do you see an outdoor wedding, where the bride and groom are standing under an arbor of some sort? And arch or canopy, decorated with greenery? It is the image of a Sukkah.

## **Keeping Sukkot**

Today we can remember and honor this holy feast by doing the parts we can, and looking to the day where we can do it all. Just because you can’t do something perfectly, doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try.

We don’t have a Tabernacle, Temple or priesthood, so we of course can’t bring offerings. But we can save our tithe throughout the year for the celebration of this feast. Many will give charitable donations

to organizations that help those who desperately need it, in keeping with the spirit of caring for the orphans and widows.

We can bring our choice fruits and leafy branches and palms to wave in celebration. We may not have the same species here where we live, but we can use what we have.

We can meet with other believers and have a holy convocation, and celebrate our God with others, resting on the first and eighth day.

We can live in a sukkah, a temporary dwelling for the seven days. Most often people will camp in a tent or camper for a week.

And we can take that time of “roughing it” to remember how God took care of his people in the wilderness, and be grateful for the homes we do have to go back to later.

We can use what we have to help others be able to celebrate the feast, and use what God has blessed us with, to bless others.

And read the entire Torah every seven years.

This mandate of reading the Torah every seven years, yet meeting together for Sukkot annually is, I believe, reading the bible every year has originated from.

Today modern rabbinical Judaism teaches that to keep this commandment of Sukkot, that to “dwell” in a sukkah, all you have to do is eat dinner under a temporary shelter. I would disagree. The word “dwell” is *yāšab* (*yaw-shav'*) and it means to inhabit, to abide, to remain, to stay.

## How Do I Keep Sukkot?

In years past, I have built a “Sukkah” over a table in my garden. I’ve used a cattle panel, arched over and laid bamboo over the top like reeds.



Then I decorated it with white fabric, natural materials and greenery, like seasonal goldenrod and other wild plants. I decorated the table with seasonal fruits and flowers, and strung garden lights. And each day I ate my meals there.

At night, I slept in a tent nearby.

One year, I put up a canopy over our large stone table and decorated it as well.

It is a joyful time. I would usually head out and meet with other believers for the first and last days. There we had campfires, potlucks, did Hebraic dances, worshiped and blew our shofars! If you have the opportunity to join in on a Sukkot celebration, I highly encourage you to do so, or organize one yourself!

There're many ways you can go about honoring Sukkot and teaching your friends, family and little ones all about the beautiful appointed times of God.