

RUSSELL SANDERS

9-20-2021

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

SUKKOT – PART 1

Today at sundown (or 6 p.m.) is Tishri 15 on the Hebrew Calendar, the last High Holy Feast Day of the Lord of their religious calendar. We call it The Feast of Tabernacles. Jews call it Sukkot. It is also referred to as Feast of Booths and Feast of Rejoicing. It concludes at sundown tomorrow, however the celebration continues for another seven days.

This is the third and final feast of the year where the Mosaic Law required all males to go to the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and later to the Temple in observance. (The other two feasts were the Feast of Unleavened Bread associated with Passover, and at the conclusion of the Feast of Weeks known to us as Pentecost.) It was for them to *“appear before the LORD thy God”* in the chosen place (Shiloh from the Judges to King Saul, then Jerusalem beginning with King David onward. (Deuteronomy 16:16.)

The 15th of Tishri (Sukkot) is a high holy sabbath. No work can be done. It is a holy convocation. The shofar is blown to gather the people for the convocation. It is a time of rejoicing to the LORD for the ingathering of the harvest.

Animals are sacrificed as burnt offerings. Offerings of meals (meat offering) are also burnt on the altar, and drink offerings are poured out.

What was the true purpose for celebrating “Tabernacles”? It was to celebrate the very presence of their God, the LORD, among them. After leaving Egypt where they had lived under pagan rule for 430 years, Moses led them into the Sinai wilderness. God visited Moses on Mount Sinai, gave him all the commandments, and gave him instructions to build a tabernacle. God would then have His presence dwell with His people in that tabernacle. An “ark of the covenant” would be in a sacred most holy place within that tabernacle. His presence would be in the form of a cloud (mist) over the ark.

The tabernacle was designed to be portable so they could “pack it up” and move it with them wherever God led them. Once they entered the promised land it would be placed in a location to be designated. The men were to travel to it once a year.

During the 40 years in the wilderness, it was constantly in the “dead center” of their encampment, so God was always with them. This was a holy presence that they had never known before.

God kept a fire by night and a cloud by day over this tabernacle while in the wilderness to affirm His presence. When it was time to move, the tabernacle would be taken up and the day cloud and night fire would lead them to their next point along their wilderness journey.

We today, also have God’s holy presence among us. It is His Holy Spirit within us. We, the people are His tabernacle.