

RUSSELL SANDERS

9-23-2021

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

THE SUKKOT – PART 4

Today is the third day of sukkot, the “Feast of Booths” (tabernacles). It is the second of the seven days where they live in their sukkot (hut or booth) in remembrance of their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

These are days of merriment, feasting, and rejoicing. The first day of the eight days featured a holy convocation while they remained in their homes. The next seven days (of which today is the second) they live in their “sukkot” made from limbs and branches of various trees.

It is also a time for a special set of prayers specifically for this festive season. The prayers are centered around four certain types of trees from which they take branches to build their booths. These tree branches are called the “four spices,” from the citron, palm, myrtle, and willow trees.

The citron is a fruit tree called the “etrog.” No, it is not the “citron” I knew growing up which resembled a watermelon and generally was considered inedible. This citron was a tree that grew in the Mediterranean areas and West Indies. It was both sweet and fragrant. It is used especially during sukkot in religious rites. Its’ rind can be candied as a confection.

The sweetness of the citron represents the knowledge of the word of God within us (whether the Bible or the Torah). The delightful aroma represents the good works and good deeds which are produced in the life of one who has true faith upon God and His word. In essence, it represents the true mature believer who manifests both faith and works.

The palm branch is called the “lulav” and is the date palm. Its’ fruit, the date, has a sweet taste but no fragrance. The sweet taste represents those who have knowledge of the word of God within them. The lack of fragrance means they lack the good works that come from a true faith upon the word. The lulav (date) brings to mind the scripture in James 2:20 where it says, “**faith without works is dead.**” Dead faith is no faith. This date palm branch represents those who have a head knowledge (or mental assent of Christ) but lack real faith. They fool themselves if they think they belong to Christ who is found only through faith. (Romans 10:9-10.)

We have covered the “citron” and the “date” today. Tomorrow we will cover the other two “spices” of the four and the reason for their importance.