

10-19-24 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene - Succot

Torah Portion: No official parasha for this day. Consider Leviticus 23:33-44

Haftarah: Ecclesiastes

Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Rev 3:20-21

Rejoice, anyhow.

Central question of this message: Are you rejoicing in the midst of troubles?

We are in the festival of Succot, on the Shabbes that falls within that 8-day period.

The first day, as well as the last day, of this season are both a holy day, a Shabbes.

Lev 23:33-36

33 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "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. 35 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. 36 '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.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־ מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
saying, Moses, unto the Lord And spake
559 4872 413 3068 1696

הַזֶּה הַשְּׁבִיעִי לַחֹדֶשׁ יוֹם בַּחֲמִישֶׁה עֶשֶׂר לֵאמֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
this seventh of month day The fifteenth saying, Israel, the children of unto Speak
2088 7637 2320 3117 6240 2568 559 3478 1121 413 1696

חַג הַמִּסְכּוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לִיהוָה:
feast of the tabernacles seven days unto the Lord.
3068 3117 7651 9999 5521 9999 2282

בֵּינָם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא־ קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־ מְלָאכָה עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:
On day the first an convocation: shall be the first On day
3117 7223 9999 6944 3605 4399 9999 5656 6213

שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּקְרִיבוּ אֲשֶׁה לִיהוָה בֵּינָם הַשְּׁמִינִי מִקְרָא־
Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: on day the eighth an convocation
7651 3117 7126 801 3068 3117 8066 4744

קֹדֶשׁ יְהִיָּה לָכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֲשֶׁה לִיהוָה עֲצֵרָת
holy shall be unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: a solemn assembly;
6944 1961 3807a 7126 801 3068 6116

חֹוֹא כָּל־ מְלָאכָה עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:
it no work therein. no ye shall do
1931 3605 4399 9999 5656 6213

33

34

35

36

After some general concluding remarks found in verses 37-38, It seems that G-d revisits the idea of Succot, and gives us even more detailed instructions.

Lev 23:39-44

39 '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. 40

'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. 41

'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. 42 'You shall live in booths for
seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in
booths, 43 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.'"

44 So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the
appointed times of the Lord.

בִּסְכַּת:	יִשְׁבּוּ	בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל	הָאֲזֻרָּה	כָּל־	יָמִים	שִׁבְעָה	תִּשְׁבּוּ	בִּסְכַּת	42
in booths:	shall dwell	Israelites	that are born	all	days;	seven	Ye shall dwell	in booths	
<u>5521</u>	<u>3427</u>	<u>3478</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>3605</u>	<u>3117</u>	<u>7651</u>	<u>3427</u>	<u>5521</u>	
יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	אֶת־	הוֹשִׁבְתִּי	בִּסְכּוֹת	כִּי	דִרְתִּיכֶם	יָדְעוּ	לִמְעַן	43
Israel	the children of		I made to dwell	in booths,	that	your generations	may know	That	
<u>3478</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>3427</u>	<u>5521</u>	<u>3588</u>	<u>1755</u>	<u>3045</u>	<u>4616</u>	
	אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:	יְהוָה	אֲנִי	מִצְרַיִם	מֵאֶרֶץ	אֹתָם	בְּהוֹצִיאִי		
	your God.	the Lord	am	I	Egypt:	out of the land of	them	when I brought	
	<u>430</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>589</u>	<u>4714</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>3318</u>	
פ	יִשְׂרָאֵל:	בְּנֵי	אֶל־	יְהוָה	מִזְבְּחֵי	אֶת־	מֹשֶׁה	וַיְדַבֵּר	44
	Israel	the children of	unto	the Lord.	the feasts of		Moses	And declared	
	<u>3478</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>4150</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>4872</u>	<u>1696</u>	

The Hebrew word which is translated “booths”, is *succah*. In plural, it is *succot*.

OT:5521 סֹכָה **cukkah** (sook-kaw'); fem of OT:5520; a hut or lair:

The translators of the Bible into English really didn't have any current equivalent in their world to what they thought the word *succah* meant. They were trying to get English speakers to envision some sort of small structure, so they just wound up calling it a “booth”.

There are many traditions surrounding the succah and what goes on within it.

According to Chabad.org,

The sukkah is a hut built to provide shade. That's why it must sit beneath the open sky—not under a patio deck or even the branches of a tree. The walls can be made of any material, as long as they are secure and don't flap about in the wind. The roof, however, (we call it *s'chach*), must be of unprocessed materials which have

grown from the ground. Bamboo poles, thin wooden slats, and evergreen branches are popular choices. Just make sure to use enough *s'chach* so that the inside of your sukkah will have more shade than sunlight.

It is a mitzvah to eat all meals in the *sukkah* (a "meal" is defined as more than two ounces of grains — e.g. bread, cake, pasta). Some people have the custom of eating snacks in the *sukkah* as well. Before eating in the *sukkah*, the following blessing is recited:

בְּרוּךְ	אַתָּה	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	מֶלֶךְ	הָעוֹלָם,	אֲשֶׁר	קִדְּשָׁנוּ
kid-de- sha -nu	'a-sheir	ha-'o- lam	me-lekh	e-lo- hei -nu	Adonai	at- tah	ba- ruk h
sanctifies us	who	King of the universe		our God	LORD	You	Blessed



בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,	וְצִוָּנוּ	לֵישֵׁב	בַּסֻּכָּה.
bas-suk- kah	le-sheiv	ve-tsi-va-nu	be-mits-vo-tav
in the sukkah	to dwell	and	with his mitzvot
		commanded	
		us	

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the sukkah.

[Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-he-nu Me-lech ha-olam a-sheir ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-tav ve-tzi-va-nu le-shev ba-sukkah.]



In our home back in Colorado, we have had small succot, just big enough for our own family and

maybe a couple of

guests, but on occasion we also constructed much larger ones, which were suitable for twenty or more to come join us.

In later years, we would take our trailer out to a local campground, and set up there.

We set up canopies, and put lights in them, and

set up many tables. We invited many worshippers to join us.



There is a special term for those guests. They are called “ushpizin.” That is an Aramaic word for “guests.” It has been the

hope of our people that certain supernatural guests might join us as a person we have never yet met, and dine with us. Those guests would include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and King David.

But we do know that the boundary between this world and the World to Come is a bit permeable to our holy ones and Yeshua came to this world from that world on a number of occasions. He even spoke of coming to our door. Might He have been referencing succot?

Rev 3:20-21

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears
My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and
will dine with him, and he with Me.

The construction of the succah, and having a meal within it among friends, is only part of what we do on this day. We wave the lulav and etrog. This practice comes from the tradition which developed from the commandment back at Lev 23:40:

40 '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.

וְלַקְחְתֶּם	לָכֶם	בַּיּוֹם	הָרִאשׁוֹן	פְּרִי	עֵץ	הָדָר	כַּפֹּת	הַתְּמָרִים	40
And ye shall take	you	on day	the first	the boughs of	trees,	goodly	branches of	palm	
3947	3807a	3117	7223	6529	6086	1926	3709	8558	
וְעֵנָף	עֵץ	עָבֹת	וְעֶרְבֵי	נָחַל	וְשִׂמְחֶתֶם	לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה		
and the boughs of	trees,	thick	and willows of	the brook;	and ye shall rejoice	before	the Lord		
6057	6086	5687	9999	6155	8055	6440	3068		
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	שִׁבְעָה	יָמִים:							
your God	seven	days.							
430	7651	3117							

The Hebrew phrase in this passage which is translated in this English Bible as “foliage of beautiful trees” is a bit disappointing to me. A far better Hebrew translation, in my view, would be to read “fruit of beautiful trees.”

The Hebrew word translated as “foliage” is *periy*. It literally means “fruit” and not branches.

OT:6529 פְּרִי **periy** (per-ee'); from OT:6509; fruit
(literally or figuratively):

It is for this reason that the citron is added and held tightly at the base of the branches of the willow (signifying the lips), the myrtle

(signifying the eyes) and the palm (the erect spine). The citron is called an etrog, and represents the heart.

There is a blessing which is proper to recite before waving the lulav and etrog;

בְּרוּךְ	אַתָּה	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	מֶלֶךְ	הָעוֹלָם,	אֲשֶׁר	קִדְּשָׁנוּ	
kid-de	sha-nu	'a-sheer	ha-'o-lam	me-lekh	e-lo-hei-nu	Adonai	at-tah	ba-ruk
sanctifies us	who	King of the universe	our God	LORD	You	Blessed		



בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,	וְצִוָּנוּ	עַל	נְטִילַת	לוּלָב.
lu-lav	ne-tilat	'al	ve-tsi-va-nu	be-mits-vo-tav
lulav	raising up the	regarding	and	with his mitzvot
			commanded	
			us	

These are held together and waved in the four cardinal directions, and then upward and downward. This signifies that G-d is the ruler over



everything, that exists, no matter where it might be.

As we wave these four species, we are reminded that we are to use our lips to declare praise and to pray. Our eyes are to seek

enlightenment from Scripture. Our lives are to be upright and honorable as our spine. And our heart should constantly seek understanding and wisdom.

One of the greatest celebrations of this festival is recorded in the book of Nehemiah. It began on the first day of this seventh month, when Ezra began to read the Torah to the people in Jerusalem.

Neh 7:73-8:3

And when the seventh month came, the sons of Israel were in their cities.

8 And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel. 2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence

of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

Neh 8:5-6

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.



This practice – of raising and holding the scroll of the Torah opened, holding it high so that the people can see it (called *hagbah*), as well as all the people

standing as that is done – is a practice we follow today in our congregation following the reading of the Torah. We indicate with a pointed small finger toward the scroll and chant, “This is the Torah...”

Neh 8:13-18

13 Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law. 14 And they found written in the law how the Lord had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month. 15 So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches, and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." 16 So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate, and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. 17 And the entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing. 18 And he read from the book of the law of

God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.

It is during this festival season that the High Priest would pray for the latter rain. It is said that at this time he would begin his prayers with a preliminary prayer – that the prayers of the travelers *not be granted*. That might seem a bit harsh, but consider that the prayers of travelers are universally for good weather – in other words – no rain.

And since there are travelers at all times and in all seasons throughout the land, if G-d granted all their prayers, the land would soon become a desert.

This festival is also a pilgrimage festival. It is one of three.

Deut 16:16-17

16 Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the

Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.

Some of our sweet brothers and sisters have concluded that the Torah, together with all the festivals and new moons found as G-d's appointments with mankind, were abolished at the cross.

I can assure you with the greatest level of confidence possible, that such is not the case. And one of the best examples of how I can prove such a statement is found in the final verses of the book of Zechariah, and the festival of Booths is specifically mentioned there as a world-wide celebration for mandatory attendance.

Zech 14:9-21

9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. 10 All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to

the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. 11 And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

12 Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. 13 And it will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. 14 And Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. 15 So also like this plague, will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and all the cattle that will be in those camps.

16 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. 17 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 be no rain on them. 18 And 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. 19 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. 20 In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar. 21 And every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.

How will it be that there is no Canaanite in the house of the L-rd of hosts on that day? There will be only two groups of people on the face of the Earth at that time - G-d's people, and dead people.

Isa 66:22-24

22 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I make will endure before Me," declares the
Lord,

"So your offspring and your name will endure.

23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon
And from sabbath to sabbath,
All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says
the Lord.

24 "Then they shall go forth and look
On the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm shall not die,
And their fire shall not be quenched;
And they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind."

As I stand before you today, our people are at war against Hamas, Hezbollah, and their terrorist sponsor, Iran. Our soldiers have just killed Yahya Sinwar, who was the leader of Hamas, and the mastermind of the horrific invasion of Israel last year on October 7. But the war continues, and there is not yet peace for our people.

As my sweet spiritual father Eliezer Urbach said during this season, when our people were beset by great difficulties, “Let’s rejoice... anyhow.”



Today, there are still some hostages being held in Gaza. I pray that some have survived to this day. I pray that they will soon be liberated. I pray that we will recover the bodies of the slain and return them to Israel for a proper burial.

I also pray that somehow, all of Israel – including those soldiers involved in operations in Gaza as well as Lebanon today – will be able to rejoice at least to some degree during this festival.

But regardless of our current situation, we can still rejoice regarding the future that our G-d has planned for those who love Him and are joined to Him.