

## Feast of Tabernacles 5781 - Feast of Tabernacle 2020

The Feast of Tabernacles is the 15th day of Tishri. Five days after the Day of Atonement at the time of the full moon during the fall harvest.

The Feast of Tabernacles begins and ends with a Sabbath day of rest.

A time to gather in your crops from the field and to Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering by presenting your first fruits to the Lord.

*Celebrate the Festival of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. "Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field."  
Exodus 23:16*

It was a time for giving thanks for your harvest, a time the Lord will bless you and the work of your hands, a time your joy will be complete.

*Celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress.  
Be joyful at your festival—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns.  
Deuteronomy 16:13*

Thousands gathered to celebrate the Feast in Jerusalem as God had instructed all native male Jews to appear before Him at the Temple.

*Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles.  
No one should appear before the LORD empty-handed:  
Deuteronomy 16:16*

But for this Feast, they constructed temporary shelters called sukkah to live in during this eight-day festival. A sukkah is a makeshift shelter from the sun that is made of readily available materials, palm branches, leaves, and other things from the harvest.

Living in the temporary shelters was not only to remind them of the time spent wandering in the desert but of their present temporary existence and their traveling to a more permanent home where they would live with God.

It is a process – a restorative process of remembering, gathering, giving thanks and rejoicing.

It is a time to stop work and worship the Lord. Each feast day, an offering by fire was made to the Lord.

*God promises rain in exchange for the nations offering their worship to Him in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles  
Zechariah 14:17*

This resulted in so many sacrifices that it required all twenty-four divisions of priests to keep up with the sacrificial duties.

### **Illumination Festival of Harvest**

Sukkoth is also known as the Illumination Festival of Harvest. As so many people came to Jerusalem to celebrate Sukkoth other traditions developed over the years to give illustration to the meaning.

This involved massive golden candlesticks.

Three seventy-five-foot-high candlesticks were erected in the Temple in the Court of Women on the first day. The Treasury that Jesus tells about the poor widow who gave her sacrificial gift of two small coins (Mark 12:41-42) is located here in the Court of Woman.

It is here men and women alike could enter and experience the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles in the light of the great candlesticks, for the Lord is their Light.

*“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the Light of Life.  
John 8:12*

*The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it.  
The Lamb is its light.  
Revelation 21:23*

### **The Water Libation of Shemini Atzeret**

The Water Libation is prayer acted out in a dramatic ceremony recognizing God’s gift of rain while petitioning God to send rain.

During the Festival of Sukkot, water was poured on the altar as a libation accompanying the morning sacrifice during the times of the Holy Temple.

The water for the ceremony was carried up 15 steps in gold vessels to the Holy Temple seven times. It was drawn from the stream that ran under the Temple, which King David had dug.

The Levite Priests would stand on these steps accompanying the Temple service with song and instrumental music, singing the 15 Songs of Ascents. (Psalm 120- 134)

The water libation is not clearly mentioned in the Torah. However, it has been accepted by Jewish Sages as a "halachah l'Moshe mi-Sinai," which means Moses received it at Sinai when the Torah was given.

### **SHEMINI ATZERET**

Shemini means eight and Atzeret comes from atzar meaning to collect or store. An intimate time to recollect and reflect on the last two months.

In Jewish tradition it is considered a time of intimacy between God and mankind. The King has met with His people with kindness and tenderness in Elul. The Bride (mankind) has awakened and desires to connect with the Divine. The Days of Preparation are complete, and the wedding day arrives. The Talmud teaches our sins are forgiven upon marriage, which took place on Yom Kippur. And at sunset, the gates of heaven are closed with us inside.

The Bride and Groom enter their secluded room together, here the Bride and Groom are melded into one in this Divine time of intimacy. Upon the Bride and Groom’s return from their seclusion, the celebration begins. Seven days of Sukkoth, and on the eighth is Shemini Atzeret.

The eighth day of Succoth in ancient Israel was the day of prayer for timely rain to assure a plentiful fall harvest.  
Rain – water descending from heaven – a symbol of life – God’s Holy Spirit.

This is the water Isaiah foretold in chapter 12.

*Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid;  
‘For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song;  
He also has become my salvation.’”  
Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.  
And in that day you will say:  
“Praise the Lord, call upon His name;  
Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted.  
Sing to the Lord, For He has done excellent things;  
This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,  
For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”*

In the New Testament, the last “great day” of the Feast of Tabernacles is found in John 7.

We do not know exactly where Jesus stood, but the backdrop would have been the Water Libation Celebration. Water poured out on the altar running down from the Temple– Living Waters of Salvation.

*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying,  
“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said,  
‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”  
But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive;  
for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.  
John 7:36-38*

*but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him  
a well of water springing up to eternal life.  
John 4:14*

## **SIMCHATH TORAH**

Shemini Atzeret is Tishri 22, 23 (because of the diaspora), while Simchat Torah is Tishri 23.

The last Day of Succoth is a day for Rejoicing in the Torah.

It marks the end of the annual public reading cycle of the Torah and begins a new cycle.

It is a time of great rejoicing, dancing, and singing. God’s Word is paraded around the streets and synagogue.

God’s Word is life.

*...understand that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD  
Deuteronomy 8:3*

**Read it, reflect on it, meditate on it, declare it, pray it, own it.**

## **Jesus’s Birthday**

“There are also some who believe that it was likely during the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus was born. While we celebrate Christ’s birth on December 25, most scholars acknowledge that this tradition was begun in the fourth century AD by the Roman Catholic Church and that the exact day of Jesus’ birth is unknown. Some of the evidence that Jesus might have been born earlier in the year during the Feast of the Tabernacles includes the fact that it would be unlikely for shepherds to still be in the field with their sheep in December, which is in the middle of the winter, but it would have been likely they were in the fields tending sheep at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The strong possibility that Jesus was born at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles is also seen in the words John wrote in John 1:14. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The word John chose to speak of Jesus “dwelling” among us is the word *tabernacle*, which simply means to “dwell in a tent.” Lee Strobel

## **Second Coming**

While the Spring Feasts have been fulfilled by Jesus’s first advent.

Sukkot also points prophetically towards the second coming of Jesus.

The ultimate end of all things, when God will dwell among us, and we will live with him forever.

That gives us reason to rejoice!

Looking forward-

Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan October 19

Rosh Chodesh Kislev November 17

Chanukah December 10 – 18th