

# Feast of Tabernacles 2019—Keep Watch!

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OCTOBER 13 marks the beginning of the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot (Lev. 23:33-44). Commentators agree that Sukkot ultimately points to the Millennial Kingdom, when the Lord will literally dwell, or “tabernacle,” among men. However, similar to the other biblical festivals, various themes and rituals of Sukkot point to the physical redemption of believers at the Rapture.

For instance—

- Sukkot is called the Feast of Ingathering (Ex. 34:22). The Rapture is a gathering of believers to the Lord (2 Thess. 2:1)
- Sukkot is the final festival of the harvest season. Thus, the shofar blast announcing Sukkot is the “last trump” (1 Cor. 15:52).
- Sukkot is the name of the place the Israelites first camped after departing Egypt (Ex. 12:37). The departure from Egypt is a type of the Rapture.
- Sukkot is one of two harvest festivals that occur on the full moon (the other is Passover). Since the moon is said to symbolize the Church, the full moon may point to its “fullness” (Rom. 11:25). Additionally, Scripture links the full moon to the return of the goodman of the house, a typological picture of Jesus returning to settle accounts at the end of the age (Prov. 7:19, 20).
- Solomon, a type of Christ, dedicated the Temple, a type of the body of Christ, to the Lord on Sukkot. When the 120 priests sounded their trumpets, the glory of the Lord filled the house (2 Chron. 5).
- Grapes and apples are harvested in the autumn, around Sukkot. In Song 2 the passages depicting the Shulamite maid, a type of the Church, in the presence of her beloved shepherd, a type of Christ, mention apples and grapes (vv. 3-5, 13).
- The Gentile Ruth, a type of the Church, married the Jewish redeemer Boaz, a type of Christ, after “all” the grain was harvested (Ruth 2:21, 23). Thus the typological wedding of Ruth and Boaz may have occurred around Sukkot (Ruth 2:21, 23; Deut. 16:13).
- Sukkot is when the last grain is brought into the barns, grapes are crushed, and figs and olives are harvested (Deut 16:13). In Scripture, grain represents the Church, grapes represent

nonbelievers, and figs and olives are symbolic of Israel (Matt. 3:12; 13:24-30; Rev. 14:18-20; 19:15; Matt. 24:32-34; Jer. 24:1, 2; Rom. 11:17-25; Jer. 11:16).

- The Bible pictures judgment coming upon the world at a time when people are “planting” (Luke 17:28) Autumn, the season of Sukkot, is a popular time for planting as the weather is cool but the soil is still warm enough to stimulate root development.
- In John chapter 7 Jesus attends Sukkot in partial secrecy, not openly manifesting Himself to everyone, because His time had not yet fully come, and not even his brothers believed in Him (vv. 5, 6). Similarly, the Rapture is a limited appearance of the Lord at a time when many don’t believe.
- A popular theory is that the wave offering at Pentecost, consisting of two loaves of leavened bread, pictures the raptured Church being presented before the Lord (Lev. 23:17). However, because leaven represents “sin” in Scripture, one can argue that the loaves cannot represent the transformed saints who, at this time, will inhabit bodies not defiled by sin (Rev. 7:14). Thus, the Pentecost wave offering may represent the beginning of a spiritual harvest that culminates in a physical transformation around Sukkot.
- In Revelation 7, immediately following the Rapture, a vast multitude of saints are seen in heaven, celebrating Sukkot with palm branches (Rev. 7:9-17; Lev. 23:40). The next festival alluded to is the Day of Atonement as an angel is seen acting as the high priest, standing before the altar with a gold censer and offering up much incense (Rev. 8:3, 4; Lev. 16). Next, a series of trumpets begin to sound, each announcing a separate round of judgment (Rev. 8, 9). It’s interesting that these allusions to the fall feasts occur in the reverse order of their respective positions on the calendar.

Having highlighted how various Sukkot-themes point to the Rapture, understand we are not predicting that the catching away will occur during Sukkot.

The point is that it could.

The Rapture could also occur on another biblically significant date, or even a day not specially marked on our calendars (Matt. 24:42-44). Scripture says we see only “in part” and that “God’s thoughts are not our thoughts” (1 Cor. 13:12; Isa. 55: 8, 9). Is it possible, though we’ve been given a basic blueprint for the finishing of God’s plan of redemption via the fall festivals, that the Lord may have a surprise or two in store when it comes to fulfillments?

In view of Jesus’ warnings to the Church that He is coming like a thief, on a day and at an hour no one can predict, it’s best to keep an open mind and to keep watch always.

## NOTES:

1. Scripture designates three annual harvest festivals during which every Israelite male is to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to appear before the Lord: Passover/Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles (Ex. 23:17; Deut. 16: 11-12; 16, 17).

2. The moon as a symbol of the Church: In Song of Solomon the Gentile/Shulamite maid, symbolic of the Church, is compared to the moon: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon .... Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee" (Song 6:10, 13). The spiritual parallel between the Church and the moon is that the full moon, as bright and beautiful as it is, has no brilliance of its own. It relies entirely upon the sun, which is a picture of Christ (Ps. 84:11; 19:4, 5), for its light. Without the sun, the moon has no light. Likewise, man has no light of his own. We were created in the image of God to reflect His brilliance and glory (Gen. 1:27). When we turn to face the majesty of God, when we surrender to Him and seek Him with all our hearts, we reflect His glory (Matt. 5:14).

3. Jesus comes like a thief: In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul explains to the Church how they will be caught up into the clouds at Jesus' return (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Addressing the timing of this event, the Apostle says there is no need to discuss "times and dates" because it's understood Jesus is coming "like a thief in the night"—on a day and at an hour no one can predict (1 Thess. 5: 1, 2).