



## EACH YEAR IN JERUSALEM

In Leviticus 23 God commands Israel to observe seven holidays throughout the year. Three of these seven—Passover, Shavuot (Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks), and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)—required a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem and are thus known as the Pilgrim Festivals, based on Exodus 23:14,17:

*Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.*



Six of the Psalms (Psalm 113-118) were traditionally sung by large

groups of Jewish pilgrims as they made their way "up to Jerusalem" for these festivals, resulting in the designation, "The Pilgrim Psalms," and also, "The Egyptian Hallel" ("Egyptian" referring to the Exodus from Egypt of which two of the three holidays are commemorative; "Hallel" being the Hebrew word "praise" as it appears frequently in the six psalms).

Rabbi Alfred J. Kolatch in *The Jewish Book of Why* refers to contemporary Jewish usage of this portion of Scripture in connection with Sukkot:

The procession is a carry-over of a tradition that began in Temple times. Upon completion of the sacrificial offerings, the *etrog and lulav* (see below, ed.) were carried joyously around the altar, while the people sang words from the Book of Psalms (118:25) with loud, firm voices:

We beseech Thee, O Lord,  
save now!

We beseech Thee, O Lord,  
make us now to prosper.

Today a similar procession is held after the *Musaf* service in Ashkenazic synagogues and after *Hallel* in Sephardic synagogues. All congregants who have an *etrog* and *lulav*

join the cantor and rabbi in circling the synagogue and singing the words of Psalm 118. (Page 254)

What is most fascinating to ponder is that this psalm sung in the synagogue, from which the above words ("save now" or *Hosanna* in Hebrew) are taken, includes these words:

*The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. (Psalm 118:22-23)*

The apostle Peter, an observant Jew, was familiar with the Pilgrim Psalms and their use in connection with the holidays. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he applies these very words to Jesus, *Unto you, therefore, who believe he is precious, but unto them who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. (1 Peter 2:7)*

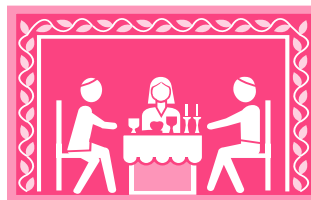
### THE FOUR SPECIES

The Pilgrim Festival observed in the autumn of the year is Sukkot during which Jewish families eat their meals in a temporary "hut" constructed outside of their homes on each of the seven days of the holiday (October 14-20 in 2000), reminding them of their ancestors who had to dwell in tents, or "tabernacles," in the wilderness. (See Volume 2, Number 1 of *Heart's Desire*).

Another ancient practice connected with the Feast of Tabernacles which continues today is the carrying of

the *lulav* and *etrog* in the synagogue service. The *lulav* consists of branches of the date palm, myrtle, and willow trees bound together and carried in the right hand, while the *etrog* is a piece of citron fruit, native to Israel, carried in the left hand. Together these are known as "the four species" and their usage at Sukkot is based on Leviticus 23:40:

*And ye shall take on the first day the boughs of goodly trees (citron/etrog), branches of palm trees (lulav), and the boughs of thick trees (myrtle), and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.*



### GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS

With the exception of the ten day period concluding with Yom Kippur, the holidays of Leviticus 23 are times of joy and celebration during which Jewish people greet one another with the traditional phrase, "*Chag Sa-meach,*" (pronounced **ckog sah-máy-ock**) meaning "joyful festival" or "happy holiday."

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