

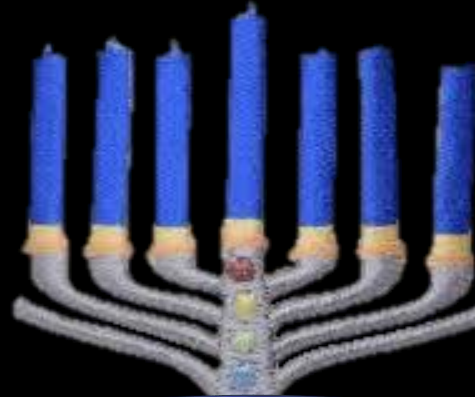


CHRIST
Baptist Church
THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF
BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY

THE FALL FEASTS OF ISRAEL

- ❖ Rosh Hashanah
- ❖ Yom Kippur
- ❖ Sukkot
- ❖ Hanukkah

Mitch and Zhava Glaser



Clabon Bogan Jr – Interim Pastor

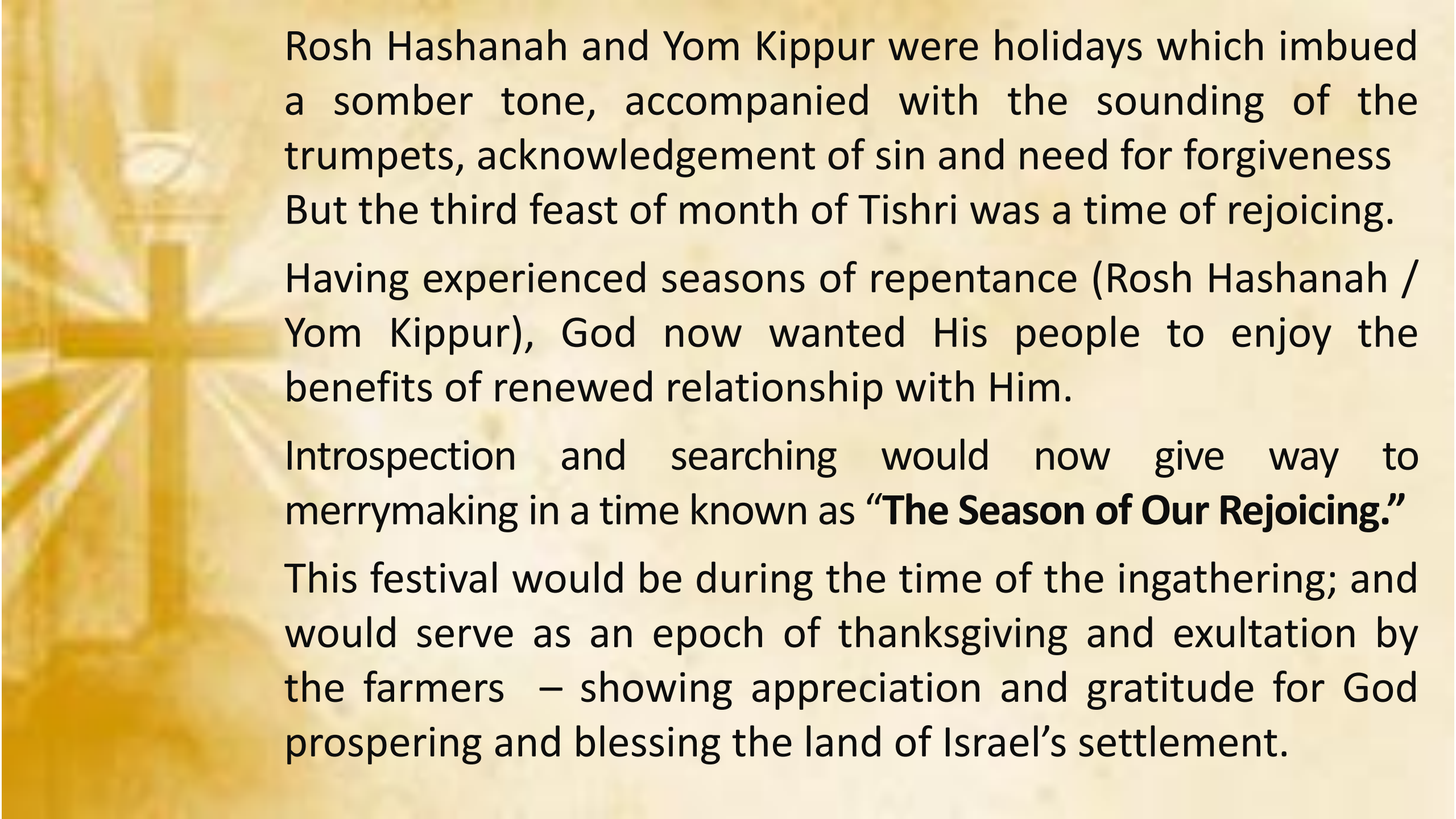
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Feast Of

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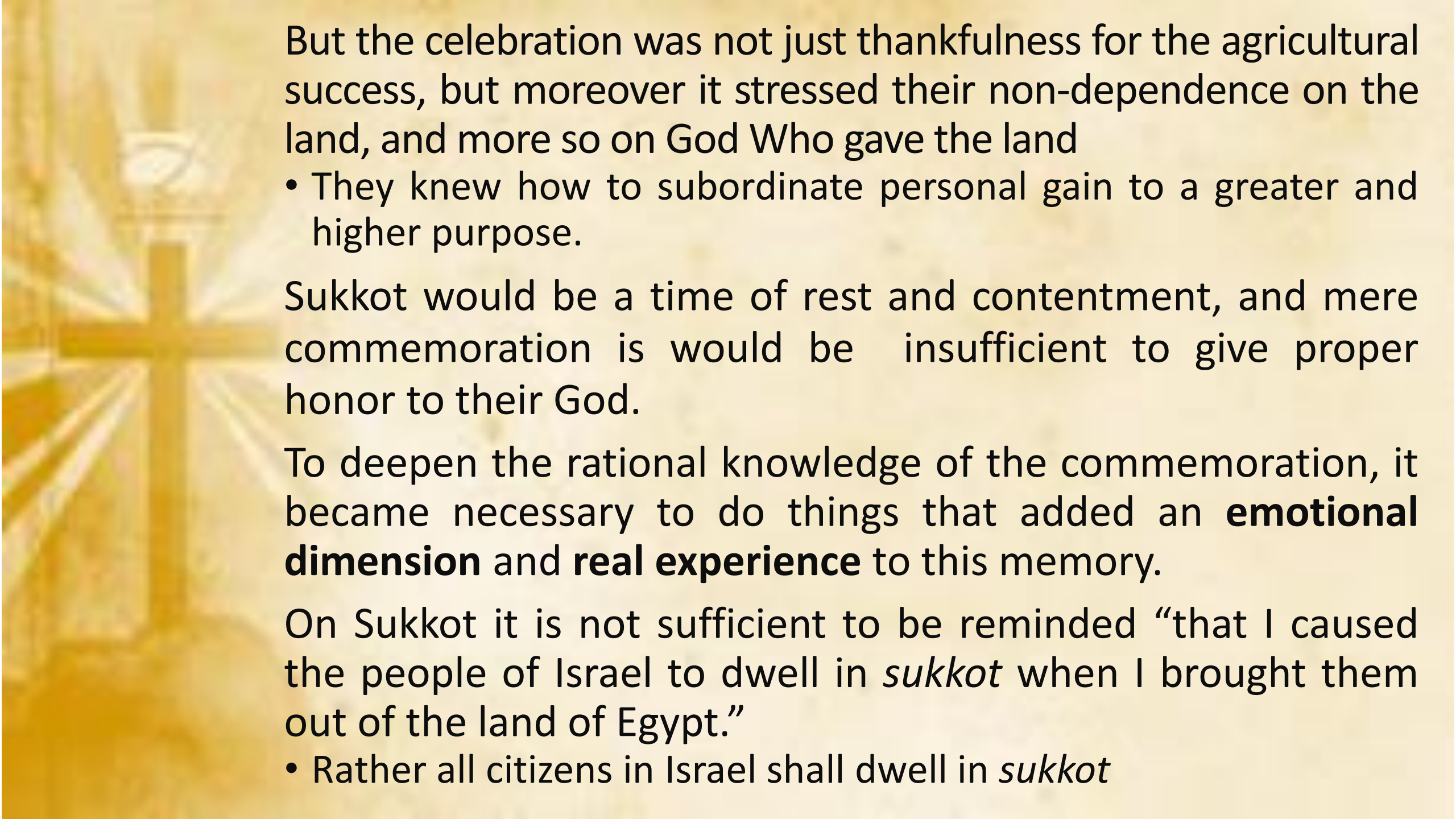


Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were holidays which imbued a somber tone, accompanied with the sounding of the trumpets, acknowledgement of sin and need for forgiveness. But the third feast of month of Tishri was a time of rejoicing.

Having experienced seasons of repentance (Rosh Hashanah / Yom Kippur), God now wanted His people to enjoy the benefits of renewed relationship with Him.

Introspection and searching would now give way to merrymaking in a time known as **“The Season of Our Rejoicing.”**

This festival would be during the time of the ingathering; and would serve as an epoch of thanksgiving and exultation by the farmers – showing appreciation and gratitude for God prospering and blessing the land of Israel’s settlement.



But the celebration was not just thankfulness for the agricultural success, but moreover it stressed their non-dependence on the land, and more so on God Who gave the land

- They knew how to subordinate personal gain to a greater and higher purpose.

Sukkot would be a time of rest and contentment, and mere commemoration is would be insufficient to give proper honor to their God.


To deepen the rational knowledge of the commemoration, it became necessary to do things that added an **emotional dimension** and **real experience** to this memory.

On Sukkot it is not sufficient to be reminded “that I caused the people of Israel to dwell in *sukkot* when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

- Rather all citizens in Israel shall dwell in *sukkot*

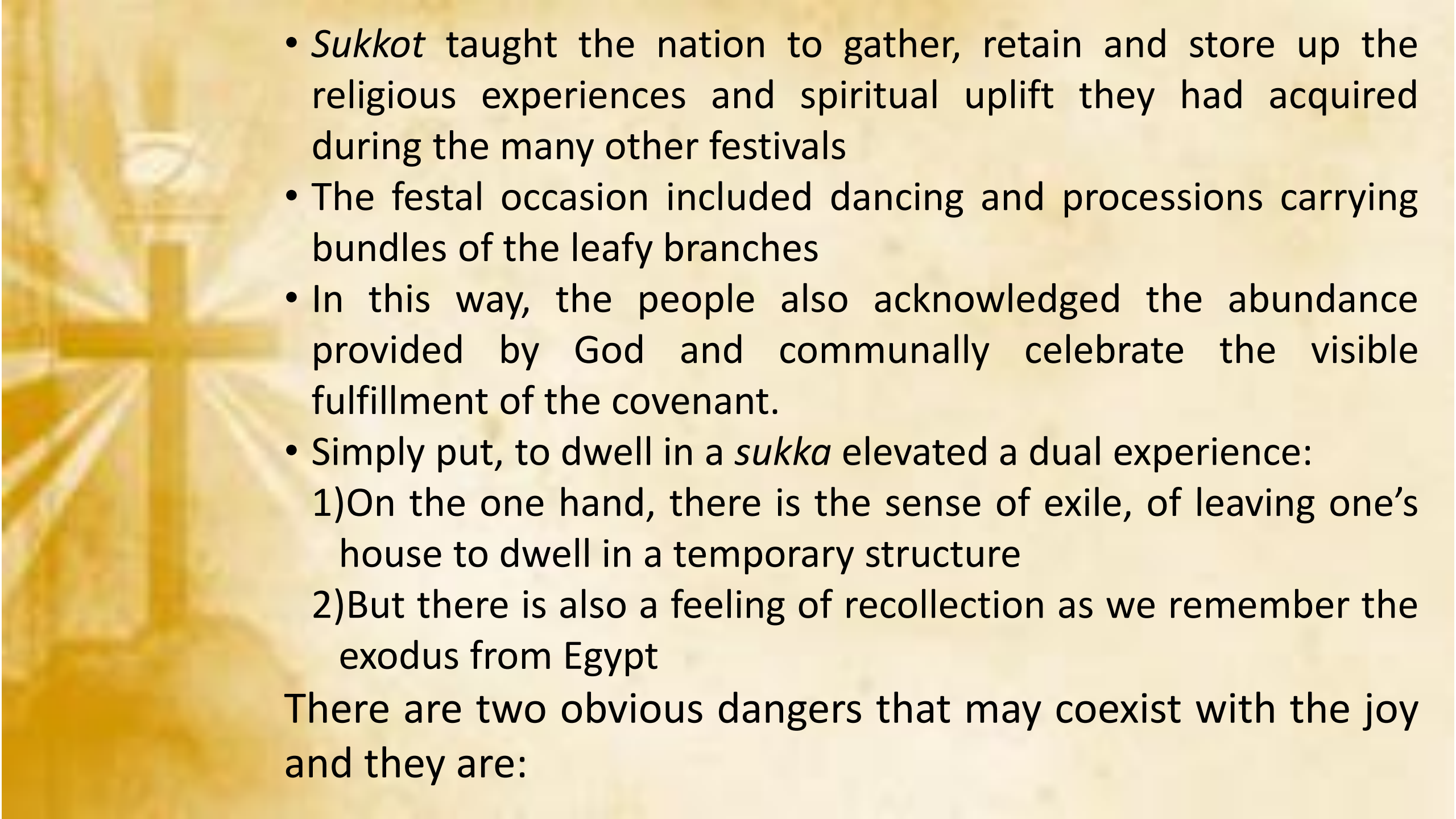
□ **Leviticus 23:39-43** 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD *for* seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are **native Israelites** shall **dwell** in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.'

➤ As a way of commemorating life in the wilderness, the Israelites are told to construct booths (sukkot) and live in them during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

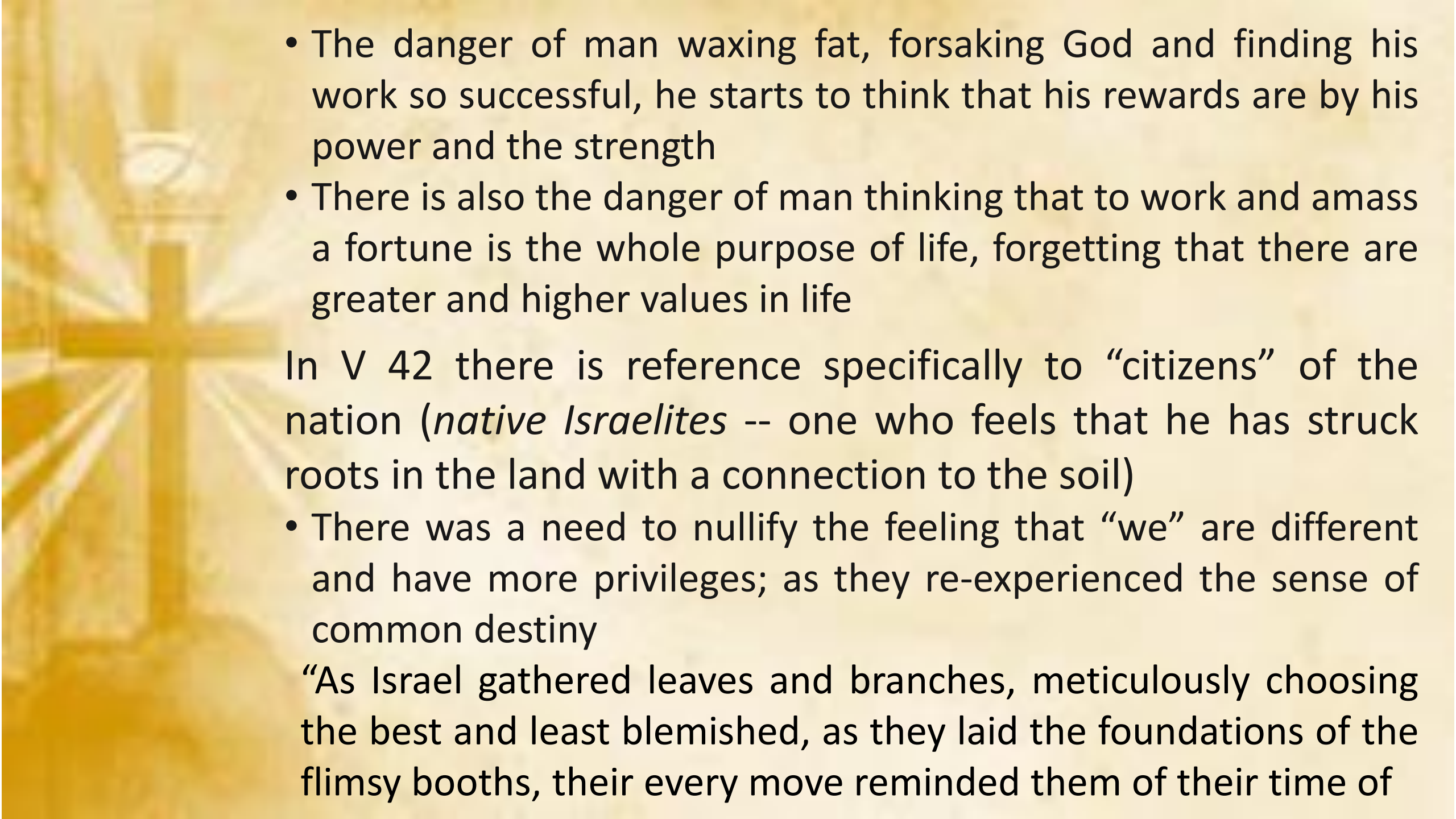
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- To represent the abundance and lushness of the land, Israelites were instructed to celebrate, decorating their booths with fruit (citron) as well as leaves and branches from willow and palm trees.
 - Performing double duty, practically these temporary shelters would be to serve as housing for workers who protected the harvest until its distribution after the festival.
 - As Israel gathered leaves and branches, meticulously choosing the best and least blemished, they laid the foundations of the flimsy booths

This festival of double thanksgiving is also called The *Festival of Ingathering*, because it is the time when the produce of the field is gathered in.

- Weeks and months of toil and sweat put into the soil have finally been amply rewarded

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- *Sukkot* taught the nation to gather, retain and store up the religious experiences and spiritual uplift they had acquired during the many other festivals
 - The festal occasion included dancing and processions carrying bundles of the leafy branches
 - In this way, the people also acknowledged the abundance provided by God and communally celebrate the visible fulfillment of the covenant.
 - Simply put, to dwell in a *sukka* elevated a dual experience:
 - 1) On the one hand, there is the sense of exile, of leaving one's house to dwell in a temporary structure
 - 2) But there is also a feeling of recollection as we remember the exodus from Egypt


There are two obvious dangers that may coexist with the joy and they are:

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- The danger of man waxing fat, forsaking God and finding his work so successful, he starts to think that his rewards are by his power and the strength
 - There is also the danger of man thinking that to work and amass a fortune is the whole purpose of life, forgetting that there are greater and higher values in life

In V 42 there is reference specifically to “citizens” of the nation (*native Israelites* -- one who feels that he has struck roots in the land with a connection to the soil)

- There was a need to nullify the feeling that “we” are different and have more privileges; as they re-experienced the sense of common destiny

“As Israel gathered leaves and branches, meticulously choosing the best and least blemished, as they laid the foundations of the flimsy booths, their every move reminded them of their time of



wandering in the wilderness. It was only by the grace of God that they were granted the security of their present and permanent homes. As their nostrils filled with the pungent smell of myrtle and freshly cut palm, they remembered their days of uncertainty in the wilderness of Sinai. According to all natural laws, they should have perished, were it not for the Lord who guided their path, quenched their thirst, and satisfied their hunger above and beyond their needs. The delicate willow branches, a welcome sight growing along the banks of flowing brooks, filled their minds with thoughts of water springing from desert rocks.”

[Glaser, Mitch; Glaser, Zhava. The Fall Feasts Of Israel. P. 155 (Moody Publishers)]

The *sukka* (booths) of the historical past showed God’s providential care for His people:

a) Protection – They should have perished

b) Presence – Were it not for the Lord

c) Preservation – Were it not for the Lord Who guided their path

d) Provision – God quenched their thirst and satisfied their hunger

e) Power – God did things beyond their needs

For seven days and nights the Israelites were to dwell in booths, sensitizing their hearts to the passion that emanates out of repentance and redemption.

The *sukkah* would serve to remind Israel, that they had to rely on God for protection, since because of its construction, it was not a fortress.


- It also served to remind them that life on this earth is but a temporary dwelling
- The seven days of *Sukkot*, each represent a decade of life, the human life span on this earth (Psl 90:10)
- This short life-span should be considered only a period of preparation for the everlasting life that comes after life on this earth, a life where material wealth does not count, where only spiritual wealth counts.

- The stores of grain, wine and oil must be left behind, while only the stores of obedience to Gods mitzvah and Good Deeds matter.

Moses gave Israel the choice between obedience and disobedience, a life of joy and plenty or curses and desolation

- **Deut. 28:1-4** "Now it shall come to pass, if you **diligently obey the voice** of the LORD your God, to **observe carefully all His commandments** which I command you today, that the LORD **your God will set you high** above all nations of the earth. ² And all these **blessings shall come upon you** and **overtake you**, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: ³ **Blessed shall you be in the city**, and **blessed shall you be in the country**. ⁴ **Blessed shall be the fruit of your body**, the **produce of your ground** and the **increase of your herds**, the **increase of your cattle** and the **offspring of your flocks**.

So the many names for the Sukkot attest to its prominent role in the Hebrew calendar; as each facet in a diamond yields a new prism of colors, the names of the feast serve as windows into the world of the festival:




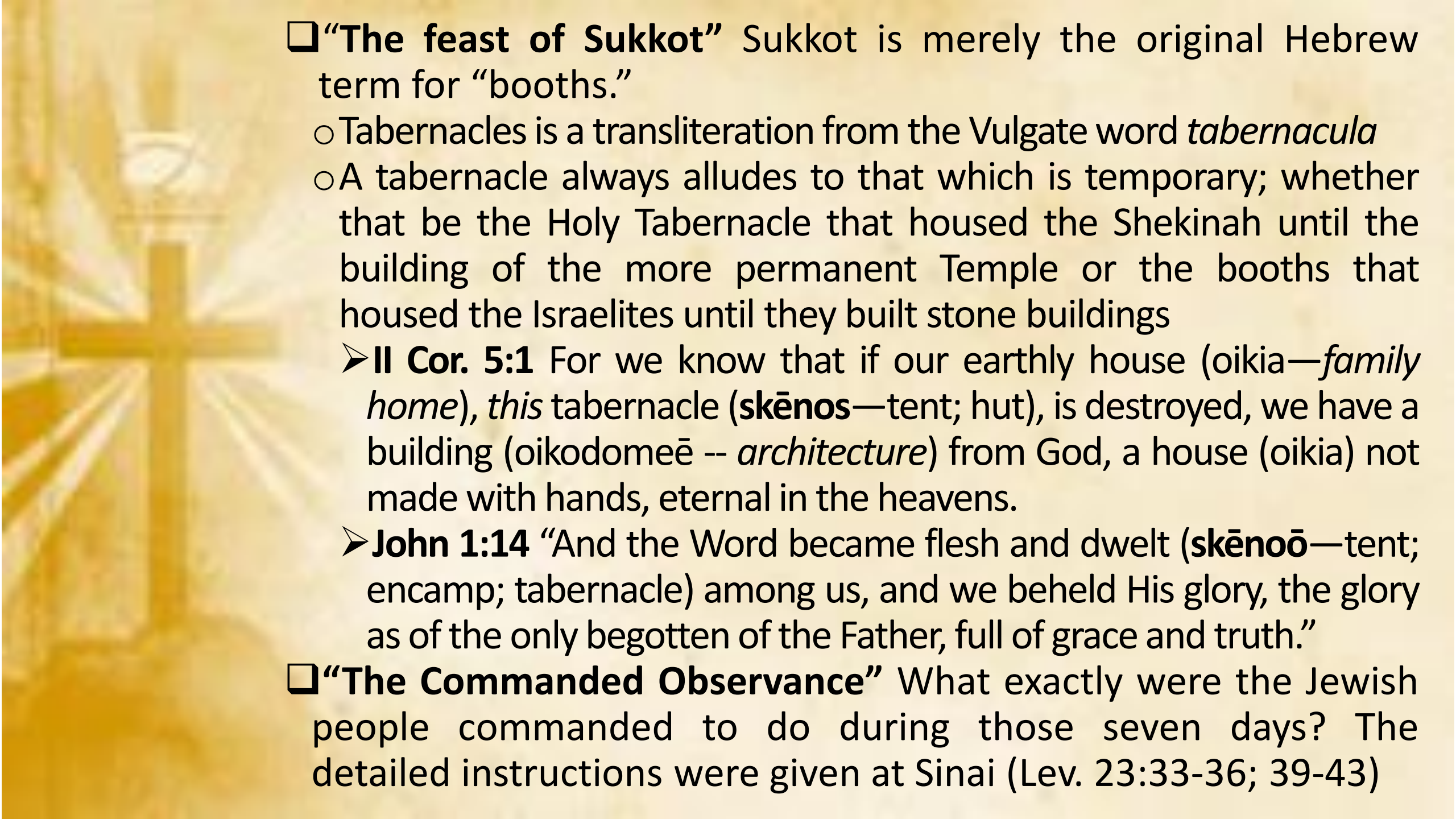
□ **“The Feast of Booths”** (Sukkot) recalls Lev. 23:42-43 reminding them of God’s faithfulness during their journey to the Land of Promise


“The Hebrew word sukkah originally meant “woven.” Temporary shelters were woven together from branches and leaves to protect livestock (Gen. 33:17), to provide resting places for warriors during battle (II Sam. 11:11), to shelter watchers in the vineyard (Isaiah 1:8), and to protect the people from the incessant heat of the merciless Middle-Eastern sun. During harvest time, Israelite fields were dotted with such booths, woven hastily together as temporary homes for the harvesters.

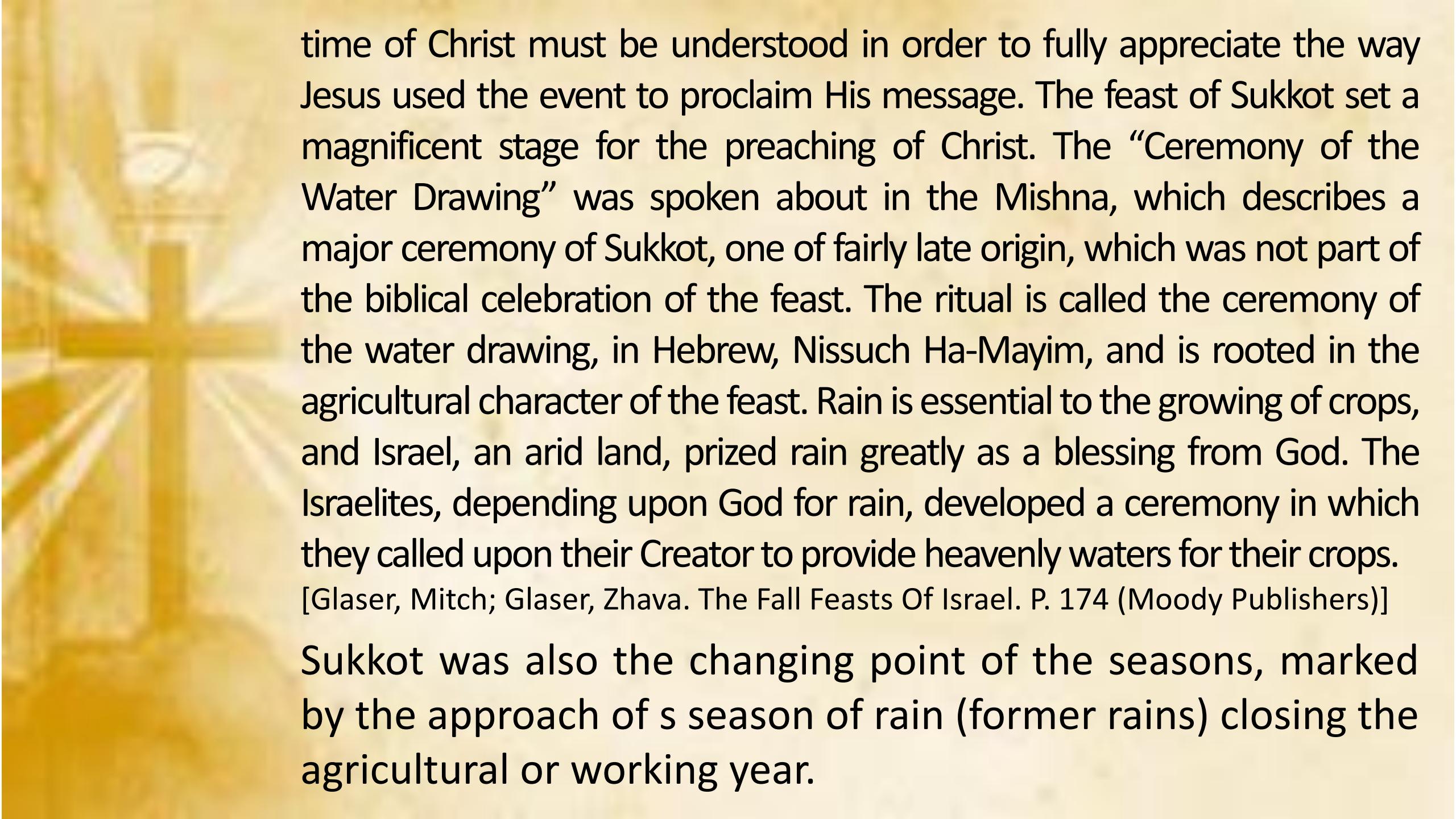
[Glaser, Mitch; Glaser, Zhava. The Fall Feasts Of Israel. P. 157 (Moody Publishers)]

□ **“The Feast of Ingathering”** The command to build booths and dwell in them coincided annually with Israel’s final annual harvest (Lev. 23:34) – providing shelter for livestock (Gen. 33:17). Protecting warriors during battles (II Sam 11:11), to shelter watchers in the vineyard (Isa. 1:8), and to protect people from the heat of the Middle Eastern sun

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- **“The Season of Joy”** as it related to the agricultural success of the season as the harvesting was over and the crops were gathered into the storehouses.
 - The work was done, the harvest was over; and the joy that was unleashed at the end of a long, hard labor found the perfect outlet for expression.
 - God gave Israel seven festival days to set aside all worldly cares and thank and praise Him Who had provided in abundance.
 - **The Feast”** speaks to the impact of the holiday upon the Israelites who identified it as the ‘feast of the Lord’
 - The Hebrew word hag comes from the root meaning “to dance or to be joyous” and applies exclusively to the three festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Sukkot
 - These festivals required all males were to appear before the Lord in the sanctuary

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- **“The feast of Sukkot”** Sukkot is merely the original Hebrew term for “booths.”
 - Tabernacles is a transliteration from the Vulgate word *tabernacula*
 - A tabernacle always alludes to that which is temporary; whether that be the Holy Tabernacle that housed the Shekinah until the building of the more permanent Temple or the booths that housed the Israelites until they built stone buildings
 - **II Cor. 5:1** For we know that if our earthly house (*oikia—family home*), *this* tabernacle (**skēnos**—tent; hut), is destroyed, we have a building (*oikodomeē -- architecture*) from God, a house (*oikia*) not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
 - **John 1:14** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt (**skēnoō**—tent; encamp; tabernacle) among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”
 - **“The Commanded Observance”** What exactly were the Jewish people commanded to do during those seven days? The detailed instructions were given at Sinai (Lev. 23:33-36; 39-43)


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- On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the Lord.
 - On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind.
 - 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
 - On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, you will celebrate after gathering in crops
 - On the first day you shall take the foliage of beautiful trees and you shall rejoice before God
 - You shall perpetually celebrate it as a feast for seven days to the Lord
 - All the native born shall live in booths to teach your generations
- “Most of the information we have about the celebration of Tabernacles in the time of Christ comes from the Mishna and the New Testament. The Jewish customs of Tabernacles in the

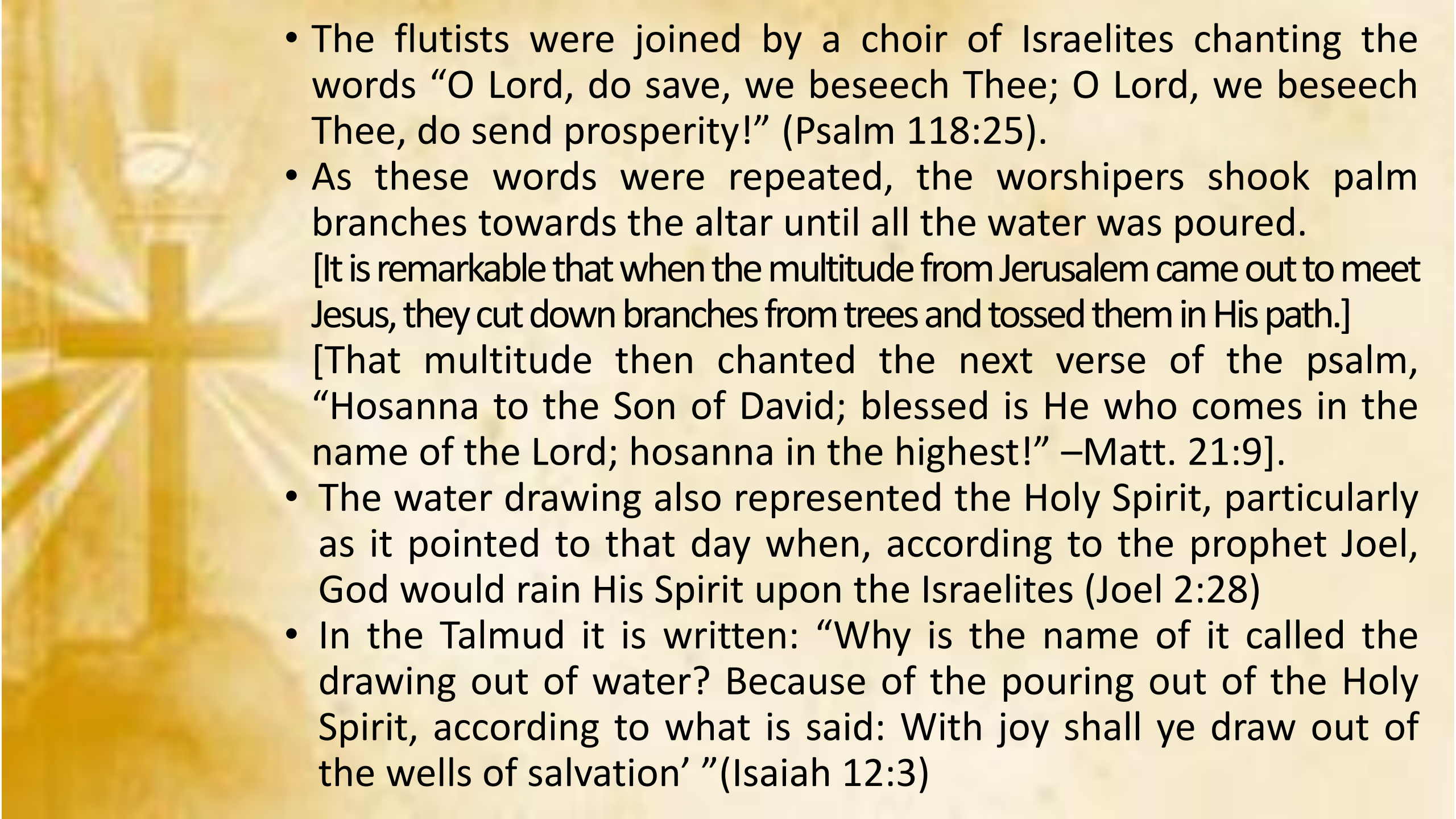


time of Christ must be understood in order to fully appreciate the way Jesus used the event to proclaim His message. The feast of Sukkot set a magnificent stage for the preaching of Christ. The “Ceremony of the Water Drawing” was spoken about in the Mishna, which describes a major ceremony of Sukkot, one of fairly late origin, which was not part of the biblical celebration of the feast. The ritual is called the ceremony of the water drawing, in Hebrew, Nissuch Ha-Mayim, and is rooted in the agricultural character of the feast. Rain is essential to the growing of crops, and Israel, an arid land, prized rain greatly as a blessing from God. The Israelites, depending upon God for rain, developed a ceremony in which they called upon their Creator to provide heavenly waters for their crops.

[Glaser, Mitch; Glaser, Zhava. The Fall Feasts Of Israel. P. 174 (Moody Publishers)]

Sukkot was also the changing point of the seasons, marked by the approach of a season of rain (former rains) closing the agricultural or working year.

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- Rain was a prominent feature in the celebration of the feast of Sukkot.
 - The water-drawing ceremony began with an especially assigned Levitical priest descending to the pool of Siloam, where he filled a special golden pitcher with water
 - He was accompanied by a throng of faithful worshipers and a band of liturgical flutists
 - The entourage then returned to the Temple through the Water Gate, which obtained its name from the ceremony.
 - As the priest arrived, the trumpets—rams' horns similar to the ones used on Rosh Hashanah—were sounded.
 - Near the southern side of the great altar, the priest placed two silver basins, slightly different from the other, on the southwest corner of the altar.
 - As the priest poured the water into the basin, the people surrounding the altar would shout, “Raise thy hand. Raise thy hand!”—carrying out Maccabean tradition from 95 BC

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- The flutists were joined by a choir of Israelites chanting the words “O Lord, do save, we beseech Thee; O Lord, we beseech Thee, do send prosperity!” (Psalm 118:25).
 - As these words were repeated, the worshipers shook palm branches towards the altar until all the water was poured.
[It is remarkable that when the multitude from Jerusalem came out to meet Jesus, they cut down branches from trees and tossed them in His path.]
[That multitude then chanted the next verse of the psalm, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest!” –Matt. 21:9].
 - The water drawing also represented the Holy Spirit, particularly as it pointed to that day when, according to the prophet Joel, God would rain His Spirit upon the Israelites (Joel 2:28)
 - In the Talmud it is written: “Why is the name of it called the drawing out of water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: With joy shall ye draw out of the wells of salvation’ ”(Isaiah 12:3)

❑ Thus joy is a sign of the presence of God's Spirit (Gal 5:22) and Joy is a common theme of the feast of Tabernacles.

❑ The Mishna says, "Anyone who has not witnessed the rejoicing of the libation water-well has never seen rejoicing in his life" (Sukkah 5:1).

The drama of the water drawing is evidenced by Jesus:

- **John 7:37-39** " Then on the most important day of the feast, the last day, Jesus stood and shouted out to the crowds—"All you thirsty ones, come to me! Come to me and drink! ³⁸Believe in me so that rivers of living water will burst out from within you, flowing from your innermost being, just like the Scripture says!"³⁹Jesus was prophesying about the Holy Spirit that believers were being prepared to receive. But the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out upon them, because Jesus had not yet been unveiled in his full splendor (TPT)

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