

1. I will talk briefly today, concentrating globally on the holiday of Sukkot and finishing with an explanation and reading of the beginning of Kohellet.
2. As your Drash coordinator for this year, I have elected to give this drash but I look forward to members of our Kahal to do the rest. See me after the service if you wish to volunteer.
3. Sukkot is an abrupt transition between the sober mood of the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe), from the themes of repentance and judgement to the holiday of rejoicing and celebration. Clearly Sukkot has an agricultural basis, a harvest festival, and the third pilgrimage festival.
4. The rabbis endeavored to connect the agricultural festivals- Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot- with the Exodus story. That is, an agricultural event such as springtime planting with a historical event such as the actual Exodus. While we accept Pesach as the Exodus time and Shevuot as Z'man Matan Torotenu, this connection breaks down with Sukkot since we celebrate no specific moment in time. The connection is via the Sukkah, the temporary hut that our ancestors lived in in the desert. Some scholars feel that the sukkah is really a temporary hut that harvesters used so they could stay close to their fields at harvest time.
5. A key element in the celebration of Sukkot is joy. It is called Z'man Simchatenu, the time of our rejoicing. I'm sure that this has to do with the universal joy of all peoples who successfully bring in a harvest. Here in New England, as distanced as we are from agricultural life, we still see harvest festivals in our communities. There is something wonderful about apple picking or setting out pumpkins this time of year.
6. In ancient times, Sukkot was the most important of the pilgrimage festivals. It was called simply Ha-chag ...the festival. Temple rites were elaborate as reflected in the multiple sacrifices enumerated in Musaf. Imagine all the pilgrims bringing animals for sacrifice, and shaking their lulavim in a public ceremony. It was during this season that King Solomon consecrated the Temple. Every seven years, the Torah was read publicly. This was the ceremony of Hak-heil, the gathering.
7. Sukkot is also the festival of the messianic future. Today's haftarah, Ezekiel's vision, talks about a great battle between the forces of good and evil (Og and Magog) which would take place at this time. In contrast, the haftarah for the first day of Sukkot, Zecharia's vision, foretells a messianic future when all nations will come on pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate Sukkot.
8. An interpretation of the Sukka.
 - A. When we live in the Sukka for a week, we leave the shelter of our permanent homes and are resting in the flimsy open-roofed Sukka. Here we are resting only under the wings of the Shechinah, open to the heavens, open to God's sheltering presence. The lesson here is that it is only under the wings of the Shechinah that we can find real security.
 - B. Recall that while wandering in the desert, living in Sukkot, we were fed and cared for like Adam and Eve in Gan Eden. With some notable

exceptions, the B'nai Yisroel trusted God to care for them. It was a loving relationship, like a mother and child. It is reminiscent of the Loving God pouring his rain and providing (given the farmers' efforts) an abundant harvest.

- C. On Sukkot, we celebrate God and Israel discovering each other, and learning to love and trust the other.

9. Reading of Kohellet:

A. Why do we read it?

- i. Each of the 5 megillot correspond to a holiday.
 - 1. Esther: Purim
 - 2. Song of Songs: Passover: springtime, love, mating
 - 3. Ruth: Shavuot: 1st harvest
 - 4. Lamentations: Tisha B'Av.
 - 5. Kohellet (Ecclesiastes): all is vanity so keep eating and drinking.
- ii. It's the only one left.
- iii. My proposal: Sukkot is a harvest holiday which is replete with images and issues having to do with the cycle of nature. The cyclical theme will be evident when we commence our reading.

10. Now let's turn to the text.