

## Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles

<sup>3</sup>“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>34</sup> ‘Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the **fifteenth** day of this **seventh** month and for **seven** days is the **Feast of Booths** to the LORD. <sup>35</sup> On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. <sup>36</sup> For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the **eighth** day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.’”

**Leviticus 23:23-25**

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## Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles

(also known as the Feast of Booths)

**Through The Millennial Kingdom**

### **The Millennial Kingdom**

REV 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. **And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** REV 20:5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. REV 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

### **Zechariah 14**

#### *The Coming Day of the Lord*

Behold, a day is coming for the Lord, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. <sup>2</sup>For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup>Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. <sup>4</sup>On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. <sup>5</sup>And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

<sup>6</sup>On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. <sup>7</sup>And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.

<sup>8</sup>On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.

<sup>9</sup>And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.

<sup>10</sup>The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. <sup>11</sup>And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.

<sup>12</sup> And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

<sup>13</sup> And on that day a great panic from the Lord shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. <sup>14</sup> Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. <sup>15</sup> And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

<sup>16</sup> Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the **FEAST OF BOOTHS**. <sup>17</sup> And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup> And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the Lord afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the **FEAST OF BOOTHS**. <sup>19</sup> This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the **FEAST OF BOOTHS**.

<sup>20</sup> And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “Holy to the Lord.” And the pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the bowls before the altar. <sup>21</sup> And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.

### The Betrothal of Eternity *(also known as the Feast of Sukkot)*

Mary waited the prescribed 40 days for her purification (read Leviticus 12:1-4) from the blood of childbirth<sup>1</sup> before presenting her son, Jesus at the Temple. It was Thursday, Ethanim 21<sup>st</sup> (Ethanim is the seventh month of God’s calendar. It

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<sup>1</sup> The **Forty weeks** after His conception Jesus is born. It is Friday night, Elul 7, in the Jewish year 3756. This corresponds to our Gregorian calendar date of September 9, 5 BCE. It is the beginning of the weekly Sabbath. The Jewish people have a particular name for every Sabbath and they read specific passages of Scripture on those Sabbaths. The one on which Jesus is born is called KiTeitzei, “**WHEN YOU GO OUT to battle against your enemies**”. On that Sabbath night Jesus goes forth from the womb. And the next morning in the Temple and in every synagogue Isaiah 54:1-10 is read. It begins this way:

*“Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman,” says the LORD.”* Isaiah 54:1

*(Footnote continued on page 2)*

**Forty weeks** – is the period of human gestation.

**enemies** – 1 John 3:7-9 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

*Timeline of John the Baptist and Jesus’ Conceptions and Births (6-months apart):*

**Pentecost – June/Feast of Weeks/Pentecost** (*Conception of John the Baptist*) **Luke 1:1-23**

**Luke 1:5-8** – *Birth of John the Baptist Foretold*

<sup>5</sup> In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty\*, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

\* Zacharias was of the division of Abijah. A thousand years earlier, King David had reorganized the priests by families and had created 24 “courses” of priests to minister for a week at a time in the temple (*David’s reorganization program is recorded in 1 Chron. 24:3, 4*). Each “course” or “division” ministered twice during the year, accounting for 48 weeks. The other four weeks in the year were at the time of the feasts when they all served as needed in the temple . . . The eighth in the list was Abijah (**1 Chron. 24:10**) . . . Hence, **the eighth division of priests arrived early on the day of Pentecost Sunday, seven weeks later, to minister in the temple** . . . Luke does not tell us which day of the week he was the one honored to burn incense in the temple, but it is likely that he did so on that first morning, Pentecost Sunday. It was the year 3 B.C., for John would be born around the following Passover. (<https://godskingdom.org/studies/books/dr-luke-healing-the-breaches-book-1/chapter-2-zacharias>)

**Sixth Month of Elizabeth’s Pregnancy – December/The Feast of Hanukkah** (*Conception of Jesus*) **Luke 1:26-45**

**Ninth Month of Elizabeth’s Pregnancy, she Gives Birth – March/Passover** (*Birth of John the Baptist*) **Luke 1:57-80**

**Ninth Month of Mary’s Pregnancy, she Gives Birth** (*6-months after John the Baptist’s Birth*) – September/the season of “*When the King is in the Field*” and near the time of the Feast of Trumpets (*Birth of Jesus*)\* **Luke 2:1-38**

\* Elul 7/September 9th 5BC, the Sabbath Reading of “**WHEN YOU GO OUT to battle against your enemies,**” Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19; 23-days later was the beginning of the “Feast of Blowing/Trumpets” (Tishri 1/October 2nd 5BC), when all Israeli King’s births began their counting and when all Israeli King’s coronation were commenced; and 44-days later was the 8th Day of the “Feast of Tabernacles”, also known as “Hossana Rabba/The Great Day of Salvation”, fulfilling Mary’s 40-days of Purification (Leviticus 12:1-4 & Luke 2:22), the future fulfillment of our Entering into Eternity with God, and the fulfillment of the consolation of Israel, prophesied to Simeon (Luke 2:22-35).

falls within our September/October time frame. The Jewish people currently call this month Tishri, of the Jewish year 3756 or our October 23, 5 BCE. The Jewish people call the day **Hossana Rabba** or “*The Great Day of Salvation*”. It is the last day of the **Feast of Tabernacles** (Sukkoth – tent, hut, tabernacle, or booth and indicates a temporary dwelling).

**The Feast of Tabernacles** (from the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Tishri to the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of Tishri of the Biblical Calendar) is the most joyous feast of the year for Israel and it has **four major themes** associated with it. Let’s see how these four themes are linked to Jesus’ first appearance at the Temple.

**The first theme** is the **ingathering of various tree branches**. Jesus, “*the Branch*” spoken of by Isaiah the prophet (**Isaiah 11:1-10**) concerning the messiah is brought into Jerusalem during the feast. It was written of Him: “*Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.*”

Jesse was King David’s father. Therefore the messiah had to be a descendent of King David, which Jesus was according to the genealogies. The shoot or branch in the prophecy can also be rendered from the root Hebrew word Nazir meaning “unpruned vine” from whence we get the word Nazarene. This is why the Bible references Jesus as the Nazarene or Jesus from Nazareth.

**The second theme** of the feast is **God comes to tabernacle or dwell with His people**. For the (*next couple of weeks/past week*), all the Jewish people (*will be living/had been living*) in temporary dwellings or booths made out of tree branches. It was meant to remind them of the Exodus, when God’s presence was manifest among His people, leading and protecting them day and night. Jesus arrives among the people as **Immanuel** ... “**God With Us**” to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. “*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*”

**The third theme** of the feast is **the salvation of God’s people**. The angel commanded Joseph to name the child, Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. In Hebrew, Jesus’ name is Yashua or Joshua, which means, “**I AM salvation**”. *God told Moses to tell the Israelites that “I AM”* (Exodus 3:14) had sent him to deliver them from the Egyptians. In today’s world we just hear a person’s formal name and it has no particular meaning to us. But in Jesus’ day peoples name were actual statements. So every time Jesus introduced Himself, the people heard the statement, “**I AM salvation**”.

**The fourth theme** of the feast is **great joy**. While the people were rejoicing in God outside the Temple, Jesus was presented before God, in the Temple, as was the custom. At that time old Simeon and Anna were filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and began prophesying because they had seen the consolation of Israel.

Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com

## Contextual Message Tying the Final Feast together:

Since **Jesus used the model of the ancient Jewish marriage ceremony to refer to His future second coming**, to recognize exactly what He was talking about, it’s helpful to understand the nature of marriage during His earthly ministry in Israel.

There are three distinct parts to the ancient Jewish wedding:

- **shiddukhin** (mutual commitment),
- **erusin** (engagement), and

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### Luke 2:22-35 – Jesus Presented at the Temple

“<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord . . . <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the **consolation** of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s **Christ**. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child **Jesus**, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, <sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation <sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

**consolation** – paraklés (3874) Messianic salvation.

**Christ** – Christos (5547) the Messiah – the Salvation of Israel.

**Jesus** – Iésous (2424) “I am Salvation” – the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, Joshua, the name of the Messiah – Yahweh (tetragram name): “Behold the man with raised nail pierced hands”.

- **nissuin** (marriage).

### **Shiddukhin: A Time of Mutual Commitment**

*“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”*  
Genesis 2:18

**The Time of Mutual Commitment refers to the preliminary arrangements prior to the legal betrothal.**

Signing the ketubah (marriage contract): in ancient times, the ketubah protected the rights of the wife by specifying the groom’s responsibilities in caring for her, and the amount of support that would be due her in the event of a divorce.

In ancient times, the father of the groom often selected a bride (**kallah**) for his son, as did Abraham for his son Isaac (*Genesis 24:1-4*).

Marriage was looked upon as more of an alliance for reasons of survival or practicality, and the concept of romantic love remained a secondary issue, if considered at all. Romantic love grew over time.

Of course, the consent of the bride-to-be is an important consideration. Rebecca, for example, was asked if she agreed to go back with Abraham’s servant to marry Abraham’s son, Isaac. She went willingly (*Genesis 24:57–59*).

Likewise, we cannot be forced into a relationship with the Son, Jesus.

In the same way that Rebecca was asked if she would go with Abraham’s servant, **the Holy Spirit asks us if we are willing to follow Him to be joined in a covenant of love with Jesus.**

Traditionally, in preparation for the betrothal ceremony, the bride (**kallah**) and groom (**chatan**) **are separately immersed in water in a ritual called the mikvah, which is symbolic of spiritual cleansing.**

In Matthew 3:13–17, we read that Jesus has already been immersed (baptized) by John in the waters of mikvah at the Jordan River.

**As the Bride-to-be, we are also asked to be immersed.**

*“Whoever believes and is baptized [ritually immersed] will be saved,  
but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

Mark 16:16

### **Erusin: The Betrothal**

*“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.”*  
Proverbs 18:22

After the immersion, the couple entered the **huppah** (marriage canopy), symbolic of a new household being planned, to establish a binding contract.

Here, the groom would give the bride **money or a valuable object such as a ring**, and a **cup of wine** was customarily shared to seal their covenant vows.

**In this public ceremony under the huppah, the couple entered into the betrothal period, which typically lasted for about a year.** Although they were considered married, they did not live together or engage in sexual relations.

To annul this contract, **the couple would need a religious divorce (get)**, which had to be initiated by the husband.

Matthew 1:18–25 provides an excellent example of this.

During the *betrothal* of Joseph and Mary, Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant, and he considered divorcing her, **although he had not yet brought her home as his wife.**

“. . . he had in mind to **divorce her quietly**. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to **take Mary home as your wife**, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’” Matthew 1:19–20

**During the betrothal period, the groom was to prepare a place for his bride**, while the bride focused on her personal preparations – wedding garments, lamps, etc.

Although the bride knew to expect her groom after about a year, she did not know the exact day or hour. He could come earlier, and it was **the father of the groom who gave final approval for him to return** to collect his bride.

For that reason, the bride kept her oil lamps ready at all times, just in case the groom came in the night, **sounding the shofar** (ram’s horn) to lead the bridal procession to the home he had prepared for her.

In the Parable of the Ten Virgins (*Matthew 25:1–13*), **Jesus likened the Kingdom of Heaven to this special period of betrothal**, when the groom comes for his bride:

*“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.”* Matthew 25:6–7

**So too today, in the season of Jesus’ end-time return, we should be careful to remain alert and prepared for His coming**, since Jesus was speaking to His disciples prophetically about the condition of the Church in the last days.

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* Matthew 7:21

In Jewish weddings today, **there are two cups of wine during the wedding ceremony**. After the rabbi recites the betrothal blessings accompanying the **first cup**, the couple drinks from it. Since wine is associated with **Kiddish** (which means holiness, is the prayer over wine (or grape juice) that **sanctifies Shabbat and holidays**), **the prayer of sanctification recited on Shabbat, and since marriage is the sanctification of the bride and groom to each other**, marriage is also called **kiddushin** (betrothal, but actually renders the bride and groom full-fledged husband and wife).

**Note:** the **First** and **Seventh** day of the **Feast of Tabernacles** are **Sabbath days**, our **Betrothal** and **Marriage** ceremony with our Bridegroom, our Messiah, Jesus.

### **Nissuin: The Marriage**

*(at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ on Earth, at the arrival of a New Heaven and a New Earth, our Eternal Home with our Bridegroom.)*

*“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”* John 14:3

The final step in the Jewish wedding tradition is called **nissuin** (to take), a word that comes from **naso**, which means to lift up.

**At this time, the groom, with much noise, fanfare and romance, carried the bride home.**

Once again, the bride and groom would enter the huppah, recite a blessing over the wine (a symbol of joy), and finalize their vows.

Now, finally, **they would consummate their marriage and live together as husband and wife, fully partaking of all the duties and privileges of the covenant of marriage.**

It is traditional in some Jewish communities for the bride to circle the groom seven times and then stand to the groom’s right side under the huppah. Since the number seven biblically symbolizes completion and perfection, this represents the wholeness and completeness that they cannot attain separately.

**Likewise, the Messiah, as the Bridegroom, has gone to prepare a place for us.**

The day of the return of the Messiah for His Bride is soon approaching.

The Bride (Believers in *Jesus*) should be living consecrated lives, **keeping themselves pure and holy in preparation for the Marriage and the Wedding Feast of the Lamb**, when the Groom comes with the blast of the shofar (*1 Thessalonians 4:16*) to bring His Bride home.

MessianicBible.com

## Sukkot – The Feast of Tabernacles

(also known as the Feast of Booths)

### Through The Millennial Kingdom

(continued)

#### Introduction

Immediately after the somber mood of repentance and judgment that accompanies the High Holy Days<sup>2</sup> there is a transition to a holiday of rejoicing and celebration. Jews begin to build their individual sukkot (booths - tents - tabernacles - huts) in which they will live for a week in the **presence** of the Lord. This feast is the greatest one of the year and the only one to be celebrated by all the nations during the millennial reign of Christ on earth (Zechariah 14:16). The three major themes of the festival period are:

1. Living in a temporary dwelling (sukkah).
2. Ingathering of the **final** harvest . . . symbolized by the gathering of the four species.
3. Rejoicing in the presence of God.

This seven day feast (appointed time) occurs in autumn during the seventh month of the sacred year. The Bible refers to this month as "Ethanim" meaning "permanent" but today's Jewish people call it Tishrei. The month falls during our September to early October time frame. Sukkot (The Feast of Tabernacles) begins five days after Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement) on the 15th of Ethanim.

#### Scriptural Injunction

*"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast (appointed time) 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 to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD--burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each day's matter on its own day--besides those of the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD. On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast (appointed time) of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees,<sup>3</sup> palm branches and boughs of leafy (myrtle) trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it as a feast (appointed time) to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.'" So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the LORD. (Leviticus 23:34-44)*

#### More Facts about The Feast Of Tabernacles

The origin of Sukkot is agricultural as it relates to the final harvest of the year and is referred to as the Festival of Ingathering in Exodus 23:16 and 34:22. The gathering of the **four species serves as a representation of the final harvest and carries with it spiritual significance**. King Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem on Sukkot (1st Kings 8 and 2nd Chronicles 5:1-7:10). And Sukkot was the first sacred occasion observed after the resumption of sacrifices in Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 3:2-4).

#### Some Requirements

The emphasis of the feast must be complete joy:

*"You shall celebrate the **Feast of Booths** seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat; and you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns. Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the*

<sup>2</sup> The High Holy Days are the ten-day period of repentance and judgment that commences with Yom Teruah (Day of Warning/Trumpets), followed by the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe) and ending with Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The High Holy Days begin on the new moon of the seventh month and end on the tenth day of the month. The seventh month is called "Ethanim" which means "permanent."

<sup>3</sup> The passage should be read as follows, "the product (fruit) of hadar trees" in other words an "etrog" or "yellow citron".

*LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.* Deuteronomy 16:13-15

The sages teach that there is no requirement to rejoice during the festival of Unleavened Bread (Passover – death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) and that the requirement to rejoice at the festival of the Harvest (Weeks/Pentecost – the giving of the Holy Spirit) is given only once. Yet the requirement to rejoice at the festival of Ingathering (Tabernacles – when we dwell with God) is given many times.

Moses instructed the children of Israel to gather for a reading of the Law (Torah) during Sukkot every **seven** years, in the year following the Shmita (Sabbatical) year (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). **Seventy** additional bulls and **twice** the number of lambs are sacrificed as burnt offerings during the feast. These offerings represent the seventy nations and the two groups of God's people. The first and eighth days of the feast are Sabbath (rest) days.

### **The Sukkah (Tabernacle)**

The sukkah (tabernacle) is a reminder of the fragile dwellings the Israelites lived in during their forty-year sojourn in the wilderness after being delivered by God from Egypt. Throughout the feast, meals are eaten inside the sukkah and men sleep there as well. Every day during the feast, members of the household recite a blessing over the lulav (the four species).

### **Lessons For Christians Concerning the Tabernacle (*Sukkah*)**

#### **Lesson 1 – We Are All Sojourners:**

From the days of our father Abraham, we have been strangers and pilgrims in the earth. God seems to desire it that way.

It has also spelled disaster when God's people grew too comfortable. This was undoubtedly one of the reasons God issued the command for the Israelites to dwell in booths for one week each year, and why the custom is to be continued as a "statute forever."

As sojourners we must all learn to hold things loosely. This is especially difficult in our materialistic age. We are constantly held by the tyranny of "things." Things control and manipulate us; they become gods, or idols, over us. As the people of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land, God impressed upon them the message of Tabernacles, lest they be drawn away by the very affluence of the Promised Land. The message is still a good one today.

Christians also must learn that this life is only temporary. We, too, are on a pilgrimage to the Promised Land in eternity. We need to seek God's kingdom, not earthly comfort. As we seek first the Kingdom of God, the Lord provides for our material needs.

Finally, sojourning is a great equalizer. When the Israelites were wanderers in the desert they all lived in tents - rich and poor alike. The book of Deuteronomy speaks of all the people going to their *tents*. After the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, the book of Judges mentions *tents and houses*. By the time of the book of Kings, the author speaks of *tents, houses and palaces*. During Tabernacles, all men are equal before God and one another. Each one sits in his flimsy sukkah and considers God, not his own special status.

#### **Lesson 2 – Our Faith Requires Flexibility:**

We must be able to move when God moves. Christian history is filled with those who had vested interests that prevented them from moving when God moved. The tabernacle is a flimsy structure. It is almost a tent and can be put up or taken down in a few minutes. It is sensitive to the wind of the Holy Spirit. It is open to the heavens; it is indefensible and cannot be closed off.

Throughout the Bible, it seems that the struggle has gone on between the concept of tabernacle and the concept of house. The whole episode of Stephen's stoning seemed to revolve around this issue. Stephen told his hearers that David "*desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob, but Solomon built Him a house*".

Certainly, the house is more attractive, more comfortable, a more durable and appealing human habitation. Yet in the house, we lose flexibility to follow the cloud, we lose sensitivity to the wind and we lose the intimate contact with the creation and the Creator.

The Bible looks forward to a time of purer and simpler faith. The prophet Amos speaks of the end of days as a time when the Tabernacle of David will be restored. That flimsy tent with its glorious worship and fellowship with God has probably touched both Judaism and Christianity more than any of us realize. David's worship, his Psalms and his ecstasy before

God have surely influenced many outbreaks of revival, in both Jewish and Christian history. It is noteworthy that some of the great revivals actually were held in tents and brush arbors, closely resembling the ancient tabernacle.

With this in mind we can better understand the movement of the last days spoken of by John in Revelation: “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

The tabernacle may have been a fragile and unsightly structure, but it enabled the Israelites to look out of the tent door and see the glory of God hovering over them in the pillar of cloud and fire. Throughout subsequent history, both Israel and the Church have traded away spiritual reality for human security.

### Lesson 3 – We Must Remember The Frailty Of Our Own Lives:

As you sit in the sukkah and watch the wind rustle the leaves overhead, some will fall on you. Early in the week of Sukkot, the leaves are fresh and green, but soon they are dry and dead. The verse of Isaiah 64:6 becomes especially clear, “We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away.”

With the “house” concept it is easy for us to feel permanent and self-sufficient and to lose sight of our very brief sojourn on the earth. As the flight attendant announces on a short stopover, “Our ground time here will be brief.” The tabernacle also speaks of our frailty that we are but flesh. Yet in our frailty, we are reminded that God provides, for which we should be thankful. However, the very consistency of God’s provision and blessing sometimes dulls our gratitude. The greatest thing about God’s blessings is that they are fresh each day ... they are new every morning - great is His faithfulness. We didn’t do it ourselves.

The New Testament writers often refer to our bodies as a tabernacle. Paul reminds us that “... if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven.”

Like the Tabernacle, we too are flimsy and frail, and soon begin to fade. Life is short. Our hope is not in what the world has to offer, but that God has already provided for us to serve Him here and now, and for eternity. Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions - I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” The place for our permanent abode (house) is in eternity.

### The Four Species and Their Interpretation

The four species represent the four types of people that are gathered before the Lord. This is especially significant during the Millennial Reign of Christ where everyone will know Him. As it is written:

*“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*  
 Jeremiah 31:31-34

**Palm** - Spiritually, we are not to be like the palm, as it can only bear fruit (deeds), but is not fragrant (spiritual blessing).

These are people who live their lives by the letter of the law but have no love or compassion in administering it, for themselves or others.

**Myrtle** - We are not to be like the myrtle, as it only has fragrance, but can’t bear fruit. These are people who are “so heavenly minded they are no earthly good.” They may say spiritual things and may be very sweet people, but their lives don’t produce any real lasting fruit.

**Willows** - We are not to be like the willow, as it can neither produce fruit nor fragrance. These are people who are blown around by every wind of doctrine and never know where they are spiritually. Therefore, they produce no lasting fruit.

**Etrog** (citron) - We are to be like the etrog as it produces both fruit and fragrance. These are God’s steadfast believers who live a balanced life in wisdom before God and man.

Each day during the week the people take the lulav (four species) in their hands and make a circuit around the synagogue while reciting Psalm 118:25: *O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!* In reality we see this pictured in the book of Revelation. *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could*



count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and **palm branches were in their hands**; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-10)

### The Daily Water Drawing Service

During the intermediate days of Sukkot, gatherings for music and dance take place. They commemorate the drawing of water for the water-libation on the Altar of Burnt offerings, which is unique to this feast. Originally, water taken from the Pool of Siloam was taken up the Jerusalem pilgrim road to the Temple where it was poured out with equal amounts of wine upon the altar. There are a couple of allusions that can be drawn from Scripture regarding this event. The first one pertains to a prophecy in Isaiah.

*Then you will say on that day, "I will give thanks to You, O LORD; for although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation." Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation. And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted." Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; let this be known throughout the earth. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.* Isaiah 12:1-6

Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well connecting water with salvation.

*Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 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 4:14-14*

The second allusion pertains to the concept of true worship . . . both in Spirit and Truth. It can be thought of this way: The Spirit represents the Holy Spirit . . . the Truth represents the Word of God . . . both indwelling in a man thereby creating a pure form of worship. Jesus also commented to the Samaritan woman about this as well.

*Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:21-24*

### Hosanna Rabba – The Great Day of Salvation

The seventh and last day of the **Feast of Tabernacles** is marked by a special synagogue service in which **seven** circuits are made by worshippers holding their four species reciting Psalm 118:25.<sup>4</sup> *O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!* It appears that the people of God are crying out to Him for salvation for the benefit of all and it corresponds to the time of the Great White Throne Judgment of God.

#### **Hoshana Rabbah is the day on which the judgment that was sealed on Yom Kippur is "delivered."**

This is what Jesus said on **Hosanna Rabba** while He was ministering with His disciples. *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 7:37-39)*

Despite the appeal of Christ and the people of God, there will be those who do not accept His salvation. An example of those who might not, are the participants in the war of Gog and Magog. Immediately following the seven circuits of the synagogue the people beat their willow branches (no fruit – no fragrance) against the ground. This is emblematic of the destruction of people who do not accept the Lord's salvation.

<sup>4</sup> The context for Psalm 118:25 are the surrounding verses which gives this individual verse more strength and a fuller meaning. *The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly. I will not die, but live, and tell of the works of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and He has given us light; bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting. (Psalm 118:14-29)*

### The Message of The Feast – Dwelling with God

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)*

### Shemini Atzeret – The Eighth Day

The “eighth day” stands as an oddity in the “appointed times” of the Lord. It is **connected** to Tabernacles but technically not part of it because the “appointed time” of Tabernacles lasts for only seven days. However, the “eighth day” is a **Sabbath** day.

The mystery of the “eighth day” is this. The number eight represents a **new** beginning. In six days God created the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day God rested from all His work of creation. The number seven represents the completion of a cycle; therefore the number eight represents the beginning of a new cycle. Also when the number 8 is laid on its side (∞) it becomes the symbol for **infinity** (eternal or without end).

While the feast of Tabernacles represents the future reign of Jesus Christ on earth for a 1000-year period,<sup>5</sup> the eighth day begins with the Great White Throne Judgment when heaven and earth pass away and ends with God creating a new heaven and earth.<sup>6</sup> Jesus spoke of this day. **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” (Matthew 24:35-36)**

*Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com*

### The Word that Dwells Among Us on Simchat Torah (Joy of the Torah)

*Synonymous with Shemini Atzeret (The Eighth Day)*

*“Oh, how I love Your Torah; It is my meditation all the day. You through Your commandments, have made me wiser than my enemies . . . Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:97-98, 105*

**On this festive holiday of Simchat Torah (Joy of the Torah), the Jewish People are displaying their gratitude to God for giving us the great gift of His Word.**

The Jewish People have diligently preserved the Word of God for more than 3,000 years, and **Simchat Torah gives jubilant expression to the Jewish People’s love of the Torah.**

If they only knew that **the Word** they so joyously celebrate is none other than the Messiah **Yeshua (Jesus)**.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... and the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” John 1:1, 14*

As the Jewish People diligently study the Scriptures in the Torah as well as the prophets and other writings, trying to fulfill His teachings on their own, **they miss the very essence of God's Word that they so desperately seek to learn and obey.**

*Yeshua said, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me.” John 5:39*

Throughout the Tanakh (Old Testament), the Jewish people read that **the Word** of God in the Torah (first five books of Moses) is everything they need to live a righteous and long life. As it is written:

#### The Torah (the Word) is the Way

*“Teach them the statutes and the laws [torah], and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.” Exodus 18:20; see also Psalm 119:1*

#### The Torah (the Word) is Truth

*“Your righteousness is everlasting and your law [torah] is true.” Psalm 119:142*

#### The Torah (the Word) is Life

<sup>5</sup> The millennial reign of Christ on earth is the 7<sup>th</sup> 1000-year day from Adam.

<sup>6</sup> Revelation 20:11- 21:1

*"The teaching [torah] of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death." Proverbs 13:14; see also Deuteronomy 32:47*

### **The Torah is Yeshua!**

*"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6*

**In fact, whenever Yeshua refers to Himself as "I" we could replace it with "Torah" because they are one, just as Father God and Yeshua are one.**

*"I [Torah] and the Father are one." John 10:30*

Besides rejoicing, another central theme to this special day is **the completion of the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings.**

Today in Israel, the last portion of Deuteronomy 34 will be read.

But as soon as we end the cycle, we begin anew, and a portion from the first chapter of Genesis is read immediately afterward. This serves to remind us that our study of the Torah never ends.

### **Torah Points in the Right Direction**

**What is Torah?** This Hebrew word Torah is often translated in English Bibles as "Law;" however, this is a rather poor translation.

The word **torah** comes from the roots **arah**, which means to shoot, aim, or point to, and **morah**, meaning teacher.

*Torah = "A Walk with your Teacher"*

**Therefore, the Torah is God's instruction to His people.** These instructions teach us how to live on this earth and point us to eternal life through Yeshua, who as the Word in flesh, perfectly embodied God's teachings.

The Torah contains all the wisdom and instruction we need to live healthy, happy, successful, prosperous lives.

*Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions [Torah] Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do.*

*Study this Book of Instruction [Sefer haTorah] continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. Joshua 1:7-8*

### **Yeshua Fulfilled<sup>7</sup> the Torah**

**Because Yeshua is the Word (John 1:1), He is the ultimate fulfillment of the Torah (God's moral guidelines for mankind to live in righteousness).**

Some Believers in Yeshua think this means that the Torah is abolished. But Yeshua clearly taught that He did not come to abolish the Torah:

*"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the Torah of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill their purpose. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's Torah will disappear until its purpose is fulfilled.*

*"So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's Torah and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."*

Matthew 5:17-19

MessianicBible.com

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<sup>7</sup> **Fulfilled** – to be obeyed (*walked out*) as it should be (biblehub.com/lexicon/matthew/5-17); (ex. Matthew 3:13-15, "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him."<sup>14</sup> John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'<sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented.") (ex. Ezekiel 36:25-27, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules," and Galatians 5:25, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.").

## Additional Commentary Notes and Resources on the Feast of Sukkot:

*During the festival of Sukkot*, the priests poured out living water onto the alter while the people prayed, “Hoshana (*'save, rescue, savior'*), do save, we beseech You; O Lord, we beseech You, do send prosperity!” (Psalm 118:25). On the first six days of the festival, the worshippers encircled the alter with palms in hand while singing those words.

On the seventh day of the festival they encircled the alter seven times, chanting out a litany of “hoshana,” preparing for the final water libation. The worshippers shook their palm branches to create a rushing sound like wind and rain. They thrashed them against the sides of the alter. They regarded the entire celebration as a fulfillment of the passage in Isaiah (12:3) that says, “Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.” The rejoicing and ecstatic worship of all the previous days culminated in that seventh and last water-libation ceremony.

On the last day of the festival Yeshua stood up in the mist of the Temple courts and declared Himself to be the source of spiritual living water:

*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me, and let him drink who believes in Me.” As the Scriptures said, “From (Messiah’s) innermost being will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37-38)*

*And Note, the same day that Jesus was brought into the Temple, 40-days following His birth, at the Biblically required time of Purification of the woman who bears a male child, on this day known as “The Great Day of Salvation” – The Betrothal of Eternity (also known as the Feast of Sukkot):*

Mary waited the prescribed 40 days for her purification (read Leviticus 12:1-4) from the blood of childbirth before presenting her son, Jesus at the Temple. It was Thursday, Ethanim 21<sup>st</sup> (Ethanim is the seventh month of God’s calendar. It falls within our September/October time frame. The Jewish people currently call this month Tishri), of the Jewish year 3756 or our October 23, 5 BCE. The Jewish people call the day **Hossana Rabba** or “The Great Day of Salvation”. It is the last day of the **Feast of Tabernacles** (Sukkoth – tent, hut, tabernacle, or booth and indicates a temporary dwelling).

*Here is the Account of that Day – “The Great Day of Salvation”:*

Luke 2:22-38

### **Jesus Presented at the Temple**

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses (*Leviticus 12:1-4*), they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (*as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”*) <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation (*Messianic Salvation/Redemption*) of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation

<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> **a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel.”**

<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is

opposed <sup>35</sup> (*and a sword will pierce through your own soul also*), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

***During the festival of Sukkot (continued):*** Moses made water flow from the rock, and Ezekiel saw the water flow from the future Messianic Temple. Joel predicted that in the Messianic Era, “A spring will go out from the house of the Lord” (Joel 3:18). The Prophetic (haftara) reading for the first day of the festival of Sukkot, says, “And in the day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem” (Zechariah 14:8). Given the importance of these passages in the context of the water-libation ceremony . . . John 7:38 should be ascribed to the Temple, i.e., the verse describes living water flowing out of the belly of the Temple:

And in the day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem . . . (Zechariah 14:8)

Water was flowing from under the threshold of the house . . . (Ezekiel 47:1)

From out of its (i.e., the Temple’s) belly will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

The same image recurs in John’s apocalyptic vision (Revelation) of New Jerusalem. He sees “a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1). An invitation at the end of the vision declares, “Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Revelation 22:17)

*First Fruits of Zion*

### ***The House of The Water Drawing:***

*Simchat Bet HaShoavah (Isaiah 12:3)*

#### **Isaiah 12:(3) 1-6**

*The LORD Is My Strength and My Song*

<sup>1</sup> You will say in that day:

“I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
for though you were angry with me,  
your anger turned away,  
that you might comfort me.

<sup>2</sup> “Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.”

<sup>3</sup> **With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.** <sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to the LORD,  
call upon his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples,  
proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> “Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be made known in all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

The Water Libation Ceremony, known as Nissuch Ha-Mayim in Hebrew, was one of the most popular parts of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. This ceremony followed the daily sacrifices. It is no longer practiced today but it was being practiced during the Second Temple era and during the time of Jesus Christ. Jesus used this ceremony to make a bold statement.

## *The Water Libation*

By Eliyahu Kitov

In the times of the Holy Temple every burnt offering and peace offering sacrificed on the altar was accompanied by a flour offering and by the pouring of a prescribed amount of wine on the altar. During the seven days of the Festival of Sukkot, water too was poured on the altar as a libation accompanying the daily morning sacrifice.

The water libation is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah (*although prophetically alluded to in multiple passages throughout the Word of God – John 7; Zechariah 14:3-21; Ezekiel 47:1-22; Revelation 22:1-5*) but was accepted by our Sages as a *halachah l'Moshe mi-Sinai* - a law which Moses received at Sinai at the time that the Torah was given. As such, it has the status of a Torah obligation.

All of the observances of Sukkot are *performed joyously*, for we are commanded to rejoice on this Festival, and the Torah mentions joy with reference to Sukkot more than to any other Festival. No reference to joy is made in the verses that speak about the Festival of Pesach; when speaking about Shavuot, the Torah refers to the concept of joy only once. **When speaking about Sukkot, however, the Torah uses the word joy three times:**

*And you shall rejoice before Hashem your G-d (Leviticus 23:40); And you shall rejoice in your Festival (Deuteronomy 16:14); And you shall be exceedingly joyous (Deuteronomy 16:15).*

Of all the joy on Sukkot, the most intense joy was reserved for the *nisuch ha-mayim* - the pouring of the water on the altar to accompany the daily morning sacrifice. These three *lugin* of the "waters of creation" - for the water had not been affected by human intervention or preparation - were the focus of the efforts of the *kohanim*, *Leviyim*, and Israelites, of the elders, the pious, and men of good deeds.

A multitude of men, women, and children took part in the celebration which lasted for fifteen and a half consecutive hours, from the time that the daily afternoon sacrifice was offered until the next morning. The celebration was held every day of the Festival, with the exception of Shabbat and the first Festival day, for then the water libation was not accompanied by music and song.

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/4490/jewish/The-Water-Libation.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4490/jewish/The-Water-Libation.htm)

(On the final day of the Feast, the last Great Day (the Great Day of Salvation), today, the ascent to the Temple from the Pool of *Siloam* was flanked by all of the participants with their individual Species (*The Four Species are the Lulav (Date Palm Frond), Myrtle, Willow and Etrog (citron)*) gathered from each one of their Sukkas, with the High Priest descending to the Pool of Siloam to gather the Final Libation offering from the Pool of Siloam (also called the pool of the Sent One), where he collects the Water from the living Spring of Siloam, calling out, "Messiah Come, Messiah Come, Messiah, Come," as he then begins his ascent up to the Temple Mount to the Braisen Alter, as he begins pouring the Living Water into the Alter, as the entire community, in unison call out, "Messiah Come, Messiah Come, Messiah Come"; which during the time of Jesus' time on earth, was the same day that he cried out:

*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me, and let him drink who believes in Me." As the Scriptures said, "From (Messiah's) innermost being will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38)*

Which Jesus knew at his fulfillment of this very specific ceremony that He would be the answer to the community of faith's cry, "Messiah Come!")

### ***Description Of Ceremony:***

One reason the water libation ritual was so popular in Second Temple days was the accompanying ceremony of the water drawing, which took place at night when water was drawn from Siloam for the next morning's water libation. Each day for seven consecutive days a priest would walk up a ramp leading to the bronze altar located in the Temple Court and pour a jug full of water into a bowl that drained into the altar.

The ceremony of the water drawing was a jubilant occasion. The Mishna states, "He that has never seen the joy of the [ceremony of the water drawing] has never in his life seen joy." (Sukkah 51a) As the ceremony took place, Levite's played lyres, trumpets, harps, cymbals, and other instruments, while other Levite's sang. In the Temple area, three golden candlesticks nearly 75 feet high were lit by young boys climbing tall ladders, and the light from these candlesticks could be seen throughout all Jerusalem. Respected men of faith danced and sang in front of these candlesticks while carrying burning torches. As the ceremony progressed through the night, the priest blew the shofar three times. In the manner of the text

of Isaiah 12:3, **"Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,"** the evening was characterized by exuberant joy. It was a wonderful occasion that no one wanted to miss . . .

[https://jewishroots.net/library/holiday-articles/water\\_libation\\_ceremony.html](https://jewishroots.net/library/holiday-articles/water_libation_ceremony.html)

### **Significance Of Ceremony:**

It is important to know something about this water. It was taken from a spring just east of Jerusalem called the Spring of Gihon. This spring may have been used to anoint David's son, Solomon, King of Israel (1 Kings 1:45). King Hezekiah later redirected the water of this spring into the city of Jerusalem through a long underground conduit known as Hezekiah's Tunnel. Within the walls of Jerusalem, the waters of Gihon ran into a pool named the Pool of **Siloam**. (*Siloam* – 'a sending out,' 'gushing forth' (of water) – a fountain of sweet and abundant water)

Waters from the pool of Siloam were used in the ordinance of the red heifer described in Numbers 19, where Moses was instructed to mix "running" (lit. living ) water with the ashes of the red heifer. The water had to be fresh, able to give life, not stagnant. This mixture of water and ashes was sprinkled on those who had become unclean to purify them. This same Pool of Siloam is also referred to in the New Testament.

It was to this pool that the Lord Jesus sent a man, blind from birth, to wash off the clay that He had applied to the man's eyes. After washing in the pool, the man received his sight (John 9:6-7).

The Pool of Siloam not only held historical significance, but in Jewish tradition it also had a prophetic connotation. First, the Jewish Scriptures speak of a time when, like water poured "upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Isaiah 44:3). (*"The Pool of Siloam" is a Messianic Era Picture/Symbol – Jeremiah 31:34* (NIV) *"No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD.*") Because the waters of Siloam were used to anoint the kings of the house of David, and that anointing was symbolic of the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual (1 Sam. 16:13), the living waters of Siloam became associated with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Second, this outpouring is to take place during the days of the Messiah, the anointed one, a descendant of King David, through whom salvation will come to Israel. Based on Isaiah 12:3, the Pool of Siloam became known as the **"well of salvation"** and was associated with the messianic age. Thus, to the Jewish people of the Second Temple days, pouring water on the altar at the Feast of Tabernacles was symbolic of the Holy Spirit poured out during the days of the Messiah.

This custom became a controversial issue between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. When Alexander Jannai, who was both king and high priest and a follower of the Sadducees, publicly refused to pour the water on the altar, the congregation became so enraged that it pelted him with etrogim (fruit) (Sukkah 48b, Antiquities 13.13) In the aftermath of this incident, he is said to have massacred more than 6,000 of his fellow Jews.(3) This occurred approximately 95B.C.

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## **YESHUA AND THE SUKKOT WATER DRAWING FESTIVAL ONE FOR ISRAEL**

Sukkot is an eight-day long feast. That's a lot of feasting! The first evening and day are special, but the end of the feast even more so. In fact, the last day is the epitome of the Festival of Sukkot. "Hoshana Rabba" (a request for great salvation) is on the seventh day, followed by "Shmini Atzeret" (eighth day of the assembly) and "Simchat Torah" (Joy of the Torah). Yeshua went to celebrate the feast of Sukkot in Jerusalem, and John chapter 7 describes what Yeshua said and did at this climactic time, two millennia ago . . . But first of all, a bit of background.

### **SIMCHAT BEIT HASHOAVAH – THE JOY OF DRAWING WATER**

By the time of Yeshua, a water libation ceremony had become part of the tradition of the festival. This was called the "Simchat Beit Hashoavah" – **the water-drawing festival**. The priests would go down to the pool of Siloam in the City of David (just south of where the Western Wall is today) and they would fill a golden vessel with the water there. They would go up to the temple, through the Water Gate, accompanied by the sound of the shofar, and then they would pour the water so that it flowed over the altar, along with wine from another bowl. This would begin the prayers for rain in earnest, and there was much rejoicing at this ceremony. Here's how the Talmud describes it:

*"He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life. At the conclusion of the first festival day of Tabernacles they descended to the court of the women where they had made a great enactment. There were there golden candlesticks with four*

*golden bowls on the top of each of them and four ladders to each, and four youths drawn from the priestly stock in whose hands were held jars of oil... there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the place of the water-drawing. Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands, and sing songs and praises. And Levites without number with harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and other musical instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women, corresponding to the fifteen songs of ascents in the psalms...”*  
(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 51a and 51b)

The ceremony refers to this passage in Isaiah 12:

***“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”  
With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:2-3)***

One of the names for this day is “Hoshana Raba”, which means Great Salvation. And you may know that this is the exact word of Yeshua’s name – Salvation. **The Hebrew word literally says, with joy you will draw water from the wells of Yeshua!**

SO NOW LET’S SEE WHAT JOHN 7 TELLS US ABOUT YESHUA AT THE CLIMAX OF THE FEAST OF SUKKOT:

***“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” (John 7:37-38)***

The passage discusses all of Yeshua’s teaching at Sukkot in Jerusalem, and explains that **when he was speaking of this living water, he was referring to the Holy Spirit, which was to be poured out on the believers.**

How about that? No wonder it caused sparks to fly and discussions about whether he was or was not the Messiah. Yeshua was also referencing **Isaiah 55**, a chapter calling the people of Israel in particular to salvation. It begins like this:

***“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”***

This same theme appears again in the climax of our great story, in Revelation 22:

***“The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.” (Revelation 22:17)***

<https://www.oneforisrael.org/holidays/yeshua-and-the-sukkot-water-drawing-festival/>

**The Sacrifice is made on the Alter, the Water from the Pool of Silom and Wine are both Poured over the Alter and comingled together on leading up to “The Great Day of Salvation” as described in 1 John 5:7-9:**

**<sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. <sup>9</sup> If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.**

**Footnote: (optional)**

**Messiah In The Water Libation Ceremony:**

Finally, on what was probably the last day of the feast known as Hoshana Raba (May have occurred one day later on Shemini Atzeret) the climax of the entire week, Jesus made what some believe to be His greatest proclamation.

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” (John 7:37-38)**



This was no statement secretly whispered in the dark corner. The text says that Jesus "stood" to make His announcement, and He "cried" meaning He spoke with a loud voice. He wanted everyone to hear the good news. The stunned crowd did hear and they knew what He meant.

Jesus was declaring that He was Messiah and that everyone who would believe in Him would receive the gift or indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the "living water," not measured in terms of a trickling spring, the Spring of Gihon, but a flowing river-even numerous rivers!

Jesus was saying in effect "I am the reality that the water in this ceremony symbolizes-the true life giver through whom the Holy Spirit is also given."

Some may have also been familiar with Ezekiel's prophecy of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-27).

Even though this ceremony is not practiced today because there is no temple, the liturgy can still be found in some Jewish prayer books. One prayer said during the Sukkot holiday reads

"Please God! Those who pour water before you, from the springs of salvation may they draw water, save now and bring salvation now.

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